



# NEWSLETTER

Spring 2015 | Issue 30

## Engaging with Vulnerable Newcomer Populations

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## Our Mission

LISTN empowers its members, throughout the province of British Columbia, to help their clients achieve language and resettlement goals by providing leadership, communication networks, and resources.

## Our Vision

Excellence in Settlement Language Services

Our values reflect our passion for education and support our success.

- Excellence
- Diversity
- Unity
- Communication
- Accountability
- Teamwork
- Ethics

## LISTN

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The LISTN Newsletter is available in PDF format on the LISTN website: [www.listn.info](http://www.listn.info).

Cover photo credit Barbara MacLean (top photo) and Burnaby Family Life (bottom photo).

## Newsletter Team

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# LISTN Update

## Update from the Executive Director

*Brenda Lohrenz, LISTN*

Some of you may have joined the Nov 2014 BC / Yukon Integration Summit where a number of presentations and facts were offered (see <http://www.bcyukonintegrationsummit.ca/resources/><sup>1</sup> for more). The following are some statements from the BC and Yukon Settlement Overview which provide a glimpse of the importance that newcomers play in making up our social fabric:

- BC is the most linguistically diverse province in Canada, with 26.5% speaking a non-official language as their mother tongue. The most common mother tongues are Punjabi (4.5%), Cantonese (3.2%), Chinese (2.9%), Mandarin (2.2 %) and German (1.8%).
- In 2012, BC welcomed 711 Government Assisted Refugees from 20 different countries. The top source countries were Iran (26%), Afghanistan (26%), Somalia (14%), Iraq (14%) and Bhutan (4%).
- BC has a higher share of family class immigrants, with an average of 30% compared to 25% for the rest of Canada.
- Since 2008, BC has accepted more temporary foreign workers than permanent residents each year.
- Between 2003 and 2012, the number of international students entering Canada increased by 51%, from 69,215 in 2003 to 104,777 in 2012. BC has the highest number of international student entries within CIC's Western Region and the second highest number across Canada.
- Between 2010 and 2020, there is expected to be over 1 million job openings in BC. Internationally trained workers and workers from other provinces are expected to fill about 1/3 of jobs opening during this time.
- It is estimated that 2/3 of BC's net population growth will come exclusively from immigration by 2017.

A fundamental change in the skilled immigrants class whereby employers will be directly involved in

immigration selection (Express Entry) has also been recently introduced. It is obvious that immigration and attracting new talent to our province and to Canada continues to be of high priority. We are looking at vast changes to our system as government attempts to meet looming social and economic imperatives in coming years. Here in British Columbia, we strive to rise to the challenge that these changes present. We want to ensure that new arrivals have access to the services and programs they need to not only become gainfully employed individuals but also to become successfully adapted families that feel socially engaged and connected to their BC community.



That is where our newsletter theme of Vulnerable Populations comes in. We have individuals and groups in our BC communities making a difference to the experience of those who find themselves in overwhelming situations. As attested to in these articles, vulnerable newcomers can be quite isolated. So how can we better bridge the gap between surviving and thriving? "Meeting learner needs in the classroom" is a constant mantra; multi-barriered learners certainly add to that complexity. I appreciate some of the ideas being explored in these pages: introducing enhanced settlement classes, incorporating mindful breathing, learning from vulnerability (the value of taking risks and sharing of oneself), building inclusive environments for LGBTQ learners, etc. We also have a number of model programs we can learn from including Moving Ahead and Burnaby Family Life Pre and Post Natal Services that work more on a holistic approach with 'wrap-around' services that provide such things as health literacy to support from the inside out. To round this out, you will find our feature article on intersecting differences illuminating, with a reminder that we are multi-faceted human beings attached to more than just a cultural heritage or a particular gender-based identity. Read on for more, and a sincere thank you to all our committed and passionate contributors!

<sup>1</sup>Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2014). Settlement Overview [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/1DPh3L1>

# Feature Article

## Intersectionality and Vulnerable Populations

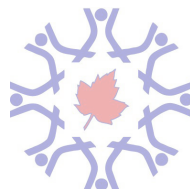
By Robert A. Daum, PhD, UBC

In the late 1980s critical race feminists began to write about “intersectionality,” as a result of a growing recognition of the inadequacy of using only one analytical lens, such as gender, to explain the phenomenon of discrimination against women. A “single lens” approach misses, for example, how gender identity intersects with other categories, such as class, sexual orientation, and race. For example, impoverished or underemployed, racial minority women, who are raising children in a single-parent household, are likely to face particular challenges as newcomer language students, as a result of the very particular intersection of categories to which these women belong. Adding other factors to the household mix, such as physical disability, mental illness, spousal abuse or other trauma, further complicates the picture. Moreover, how these categories intersect in an individual student might not be at all apparent, even to the student. Intersectional theorists have noted that intersectionality is not simply a quantitative leveler, which merely multiplies factors contributing to a person’s social situation. An extreme problematic manifestation of any one of these factors might cause a massive disadvantage. For these and other reasons, it is important to emphasize that diversity is embodied in individuals.

Intersectional analysis takes account of the myriad ways in which differences of diverse

kinds intersect in individual persons. And it also accounts for the rigidity of, and in some cases, the harm caused by conventional categories of gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, and so on. And a student might be carrying a hidden burden of marginalization at home, within a particular community, or in lack of access to critical information or support services in her first language. A teacher, agency, or government policy might be contributing to some of the dynamics of oppression affecting individuals whose identity does not fit easily into dominant notions of particular categories, such as race, religion, gender identity, age, and so on. As a result of being at the margins of even one category, a student might be experiencing harm that can become more evident only from a nuanced, contextual analysis.

It is also important to examine how one’s own intersecting differences (of gender identity, sexual orientation, race, nation, class, spiritual outlook, languages, physical ability, mental health, cultural assumptions, and so on) intersect with, and complicate, one’s capacity to understand another person’s intersecting differences. Self-reflection for the teacher is essential, given the power imbalance inherent in the relationship of student and teacher. Nuanced, contextual, intersectional analysis of oneself and the other enables teacher and student to learn together, creating the conditions for deeper, transformative learning.



# Feature Article

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## Engaging with Vulnerable Newcomers in the LINC Context

*By Kathryn Rockwell, LISTN*

All of our newcomer students are vulnerable. The very nature of the settlement experience entails loss of status and loss of social networks. Students in our classrooms often report feeling frustrated and infantilized because of their lack of language ability. They report feeling helpless and exposed as they try to meet their needs within the dominant English-speaking community.

However, when these language barriers are compounded by other barriers, such as experience of trauma, low levels of first-language literacy, and small children to care for, the effect is exponential. Furthermore, laws, policies, and other social structures often penalize those most in need of support.

For example, in our LINC context, funder-mandated attendance policies put students with multiple barriers at greater risk of dropping out or being asked to leave the program than their less vulnerable classmates. The increasingly long wait lists at LINC schools are especially intolerable to students who have to prove they are studying English in order to continue receiving financial assistance. Cutbacks to social services also hurt the most vulnerable. As you will see throughout this newsletter, there are organizations that you can refer students in need to, but they are underfunded, few, and often geared to people in the dominant, English-speaking culture.

Those who work in LINC are compassionate and passionate people, who are eager to engage with and support their students, especially the most vulnerable. In my work with LISTN, I frequently get requests for information and referrals from teachers who want to reach students whose ability to learn has been impacted by trauma, mental illness, or learning disabilities. LINC teachers want to refer students who are struggling to meet their basic needs for adequate housing, child care, food, and health care, but find that fewer and fewer programs mean longer and longer wait lists.

If we're not careful we may be susceptible to burn out. But if we are careful and look after ourselves and our colleagues, there are several things we can do to stay positive and engaged in our work with our students. We can stay informed. We can create safe and inclusive spaces in our schools and classrooms. We can find creative ways to be flexible in our programming. We can connect students to settlement programs and service organizations. We can celebrate each other's successes. We can collaborate. We can continue to speak up for more for our students.

We can continue to make a difference.



# Programs for Vulnerable Newcomers

## Vulnerable Newcomer Populations: a definition

This edition of the newsletter proposes to help LINC workers better engage with vulnerable populations. However, this is a complex undertaking because the very idea of what constitutes a “vulnerable newcomer population” is contested. The assigning of a label such as “vulnerable” is itself a political act because it is usually assigned by those in a position of greater power than those it purports to describe. Many have grappled with defining the term vulnerable newcomer. In BC, the Immigrant Integration and Multicultural Branch (IIMB) published the *Vulnerable Newcomer Populations Reference Group Report* (Ashworth, 2011), which purposes re-defining vulnerable populations because it’s “not so much about who vulnerable populations are, but about what kind of barriers they are facing. (ibid, p. iv)”

The IIMB definition that we have used as a framework for this newsletter is as follows:

*Certain immigrant populations can be vulnerable or at risk of being marginalized because they may be more isolated, may have unique service needs, or may have significant barriers to successful settlement and integration. Examples of significant barriers include physical or mental health problems, first-language illiteracy, complex cultural issues, past experiences of trauma, violence or abuse, or a lack of life skills, employment skills and financial means. Some newcomers may face particular challenges to settlement and integration due to a combination of such linguistic, cultural, social or economic barriers. (ibid, p. 3)*



## Engaging with Vulnerable Populations

*By Cindy Buhler, Abbotsford Community Services*

Vulnerable newcomers begin English classes with good intentions. They realize they need English in order to be successful in this new country. They need better language skills to get a job. They need better language skills to get training to get a better job. Everything comes down to language. Sometimes, however, after being in class for a few weeks there is a family crisis—they need to withdraw from classes for a little while. But the “little while” turns out to be years. When they try to return, another emergency comes up and they are exiting classes once again. Since their minimum wage job helps their family to survive, English classes are put on hold until later.

At Abbotsford Community Services, we see this scenario play out on a regular basis. Nevertheless, we also see a team of service providers rally around those newcomers who are struggling. It is not uncommon to see an individual receiving service from two or three different programs in addition to their English classes, like Sam—who came to the Community Connections Program to play some soccer. Later, he needed some support to develop reading and writing strategies to succeed with the citizenship test. When he disclosed more personal struggles, a “wrap around” support plan was developed for him with another program. As we work together, pooling our resources, we can give these vulnerable immigrants the support they need to move forward.

# Programs for Vulnerable Newcomers

## The VIPP Alliance: A Collaborative Approach

*From the Vancouver Immigrant Populations Program Alliance's Newsletter, Volume 1, October 2014 (with permission)*

The BC Vulnerable Immigrant Populations Program (VIPP) Alliance consists of six leading immigrant and refugee serving organizations committed to the successful integration of refugee and immigrant newcomers facing multiple barriers. VIPP Alliance Agencies are Abbotsford Community Services, DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society, ISS of BC, MOSAIC, S.U.C.C.E.S.S., and Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS).

Each agency provides Moving Ahead Case Management Services that support clients in navigating Canadian systems and culture and connecting to services and resources. Moving Ahead services provide clients with one-on-one support to address a range of complex barriers and connect clients to the resources they need. Representatives from each agency meet regularly to discuss challenges and best practices, and pool resources to build community capacity to welcome and support vulnerable immigrant and refugee newcomer populations.



Photo credit: VIPP

## Moving Ahead Programs: Contact Information (April, 1 2014 - March 31, 2016)

Abbotsford Community Services  
Abbotsford

phone: 604-859-7544 ext 227

[Palwinder.Kelay@abbotsfordcommunityservices.com](mailto:Palwinder.Kelay@abbotsfordcommunityservices.com)

[www.abbotsfordcommunityservices.com](http://www.abbotsfordcommunityservices.com)

DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society  
Surrey, Langley, North Delta

phone: 604-954-4015

[movingaheadreferrals@dcrs.ca](mailto:movingaheadreferrals@dcrs.ca)

[www.dcrs.ca](http://www.dcrs.ca)

Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISS of BC)  
Tri-Cities, Maple Ridge

phone: 778-383-1438

Vancouver, Richmond, South Delta

phone: 604 637-1307

Burnaby, New Westminster

phone: 604 522-5902

[movingahead@issbc.org](mailto:movingahead@issbc.org)

[www.issbc.org](http://www.issbc.org)

MOSAIC

Burnaby, New Westminster

phone: 604-636-4712

[movingahead@mosaicbc.com](mailto:movingahead@mosaicbc.com)

[www.mosaicbc.com](http://www.mosaicbc.com)

S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

Vancouver, Richmond, South Delta, Tri-Cities & Maple Ridge

phone: 604-760-5090

[movingahead@success.bc.ca](mailto:movingahead@success.bc.ca)

[www.successbc.ca](http://www.successbc.ca)

Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS)  
Victoria

phone: 250-361-9433 ext 223

[Leanne@vircs.bc.ca](mailto:Leanne@vircs.bc.ca)

[www.vircs.bc.ca](http://www.vircs.bc.ca)

Moving Ahead provides service in more than 40 languages including S'gaw and P'wo (Karen languages), Nuer and Nuba, Somali, Arabic, Assyrian, Kirundi and Kinyarwanda, Chin, Farsi, Dari, Pashto, Nepali, French, Vietnamese, Burmese, Swahili, Oromo, Amharic and Tigrinya.

# Programs for Vulnerable Newcomers

## The Moving Ahead Program for Vulnerable Immigrant Populations

*An Interview with Marc Larrivé*  
Senior Manager Specialized Programs, MOSAIC

### What is the Moving Ahead program?

The Moving Ahead program is funded by CIC to serve vulnerable newcomers who face multiple barriers to their settlement. We also offer the [Moving Ahead Free Running](#) program for youth age 16 - 25, as we find that their needs are different from those of adults. We use a case management service model with outreach and in-home consultations, in order to reach and support isolated newcomers.

### Who is eligible?

We serve Government Assisted Refugees (GARs), privately sponsored refugees, and immigrants. We are unable to serve refugee claimants until their status has been approved by CIC. Clients must have multiple barriers such as low literacy, financial hardship, and chronic health conditions across life's domains (defined as family, housing, education, financial, immigration, social benefits, health, legal, labour market, and adaptation/integration). To be eligible, clients must be facing a minimum of five barriers.

### What services are offered?

A client is assigned a case manager who completes a needs assessment. The case worker then connects the client with wrap-around services and programs that will meet those needs. Clients are usually supported for a year or more.

### What if a client doesn't speak English well?

All of our services are offered in the client's first language. If a client speaks a language that is not spoken by any of our case managers, and if the client can't receive services in English, we refer them to other Moving Ahead Providers elsewhere in the lower mainland.

### How do you get new clients?

Most of our clients hear about us through word of mouth. We also receive many referrals from other settlement and social agencies. We outreach regularly to these agencies by attending team meetings and distributing our [multilingual brochures](#).



**MOSAIC**

### Can LINC staff refer students to your program directly?

Sure. Go to our website and download the [referral form](#) and fax it back to us.

### What are some of the challenges and joys you experience working with vulnerable newcomer populations?

The best part of this job is working with our staff and clients. We learn so much from them. They tell us of the tremendous impact the Moving Ahead Program has not just on them as individuals, but on their entire community.

One of the biggest challenges is the disconnect between the individualistic culture of Canadian society and the expectations and experiences of our clients. Our clients face a huge learning curve as they come to understand that in Canada people are expected to navigate the system (health, employment, education) on their own.

### Can you share some suggestions for making language centres safe and inclusive spaces for vulnerable newcomers?

Vulnerable newcomers are quite isolated, so anything that can get them connected to the community and to services would be beneficial. There is a big need for more pre-literacy and literacy-specific language classes. Sometimes our clients do better with a less formal option, such as English conversation circles. Use bilingual bicultural workers to help bridge the gap and to teach about cultural expectations.

Many of our clients suffer personal and cultural shame, so they need opportunities to have their cultural knowledge and expertise valued, and to learn about other cultures. Help them see themselves as able to achieve success. Celebrate small steps in order to build confidence and self-esteem.

### How can we better serve our vulnerable immigrant populations?

We need programs targeted to vulnerable populations that have an employment focus. MOSAIC will be hosting a networking event with refugees and employers, not as a job fair aimed at hiring, but rather to raise awareness.



# Programs for Vulnerable Newcomers

## Building a New Life in Canada

*From the Vancouver Immigrant Populations Program Alliance's Newsletter, Volume 1, October 2014 (with permission)*

Michelle is a Government Assisted Refugee or GAR who arrived in Canada in the summer of 2013 with her nine-year-old daughter, brother, and two teenaged nephews. They all lived together in a refugee camp for over 12 years, fleeing war and famine.

While in the camp, Michelle volunteered as an interpreter with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, supporting those with limited English. For years Michelle and her family dreamed of moving to Canada and now they are here, keen to start their new lives.

While Michelle and her family begin to enjoy the relative safety and stability of life in Canada, they still face many challenges adjusting to life in an urban, western society and accessing affordable housing and food.

Moving Ahead is supporting Michelle with intensive 1:1 case management, working with her to create an action

plan, and supporting her to take steps toward achieving her settlement goals. In the beginning, Michelle's Case Manager accompanied her as she learned how to safely navigate the city on foot and public transit, helping her become familiar with rules for traffic lights, stop signs, and other features of the urban landscape.

Once Michelle had enough knowledge to get around independently, Moving Ahead staff supported her to build a solid foundation for her new life in Canada, assisting her to arrange school for her daughter, identify sources of affordable food, find a family doctor, sign up for a telephone plan, and enroll in English classes. Moving Ahead staff continue to support Michelle to stay connected to mental health resources to assist her in coping with the difficult and sometimes tragic circumstances that brought her to Canada.

Even as she manages numerous challenges in order to meet her most basic needs, Michelle makes every effort to be engaged in her community, working with Moving Ahead staff to connect with volunteer opportunities. Volunteering helps Michelle gain the Canadian experience she needs to find paid employment, and helps her achieve her goal of giving back to her new community, in large part by sharing her optimistic outlook.

## Meeting Learner Needs with Enhanced Settlement Classes

*By Caroline Pendleton, ISSofBC*



The Enhanced Settlement Class (ES) at ISSofBC in NewWest and Burquitlam is a specialized Literacy-CLB 2 LINC class supporting the unique challenges of multi-barriered learners. These students may struggle with complex physical and mental health issues, often as a result of trauma linked to their refugee experiences. They may suffer from high rates of poverty, a lack of social support and literacy and formal learning skills along the low end of the literacy continuum. This class supports both their English language acquisition and their adaptation to life in Canada.

The following quotation is crucial for all of us working with these learners to keep in mind:

Most LIFE (Learners with Interrupted Formal Education) have had an enormous range of experiences in their lives, often including trauma or witnessing trauma, and all have managed to negotiate survival and to make their way to a new country. What they lack in formal education, they will often compensate for in courage, determination and experience.

What differentiates the ES class from a mainstream LINC class? The ES class meets the specific needs of each learner and refers learners to onsite settlement workers. The class environment is low-stress and super-reassuring, with a slower pace and flexible expectations around student participation in activities. This builds trust. And this increases motivation.

Also key, the instructor is aware that print is not yet a useful tool for most students. As a result, the focus is always on listening and speaking tasks. The explicit teaching of classroom readiness skills is also key. The learning is also highly differentiated. In the same class, some learners may have no phonological awareness while others may be able to read simple phrases.

Challenging for the instructor? Yes, but also manageable with planning. Differentiated learning demands the teacher relinquish some control, set up leveled tasks, and circulate to support learners. These are just some of the main components of the ES Class and how LINC at ISSofBC seeks to support multi-barriered learners.

For more information about the ISSofBC Enhanced Settlement program, contact Caroline Pendleton at [caroline.pendleton@issbc.org](mailto:caroline.pendleton@issbc.org).

# Literacy

## Strategies for Working with Literacy Learners: 10 things that work for me

By Linda Peteherych, Burnaby School District

1. **Allow translation:** Translation between classmates is very helpful for students with very little listening and speaking ability in English, and for non-teaching issues, translation is crucial. Literacy learners often have a variety of settlement difficulties that require translation before they can make school a priority. For example, program attendance policies, and eyesight and hearing issues may need to be addressed with translation.
2. **Focus:** Limit the language and tasks to only the real-world content that is required according to the CLBs. The learners will then have a solid grasp of some language rather than a poor grasp of a lot.
3. **Simplify:** Even the simplest dialogues or reading and writing tasks can require a lot of very gradual skill building in order for learners to be successful.
4. **Use differentiated activities:** In order to meet the needs of all learners, ensure that learning activities of differing levels are taking place around the room at the same time.
5. **Use pictures for everything:** The content of videos, photos and realistic illustrations should be uncluttered and obvious. Also teach the learners how to understand stylized images and symbols by relating them to more realistic pictures.

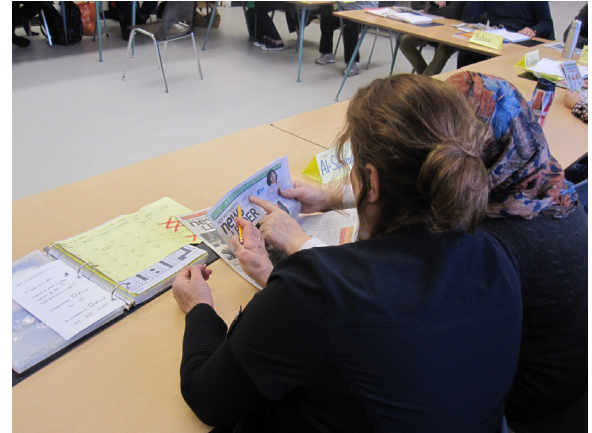


Photo credit: Linda Peteherych

6. **Use manipulatives:** Real objects, picture & word cards, student-made booklets, cut-up sentences, posters, game boards and dice, play money, base-10 math blocks, toy & card clocks, rulers & measuring tapes, thermometers, and the like, are all excellent resources for your classroom.
7. **Teach organization and study skills:** These skills need to be explicitly taught. Teach the classroom routine, binder organization, the use of a reference section and a calendar, dating all papers, filing papers systematically, referring to previous work, and bringing all school supplies to each class.
8. **Practice & review:** Prepare a variety of listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities for learning and practicing new language. Then review that language on a regular basis. Card reader machines are great for language practice. Students can also collect and review the words they can read in a word bank using their own sandwich bag of word cards.
9. **Make your own resources:** If you can't find prepared materials that use the language your students need, then make your own. A collection of templates makes this easier.
10. **Have fun:** Play games, use humour, do creative projects, sing, rap, role play, cook, celebrate student achievements and life events, get students up and moving, enjoy being with your students and laugh at every opportunity.

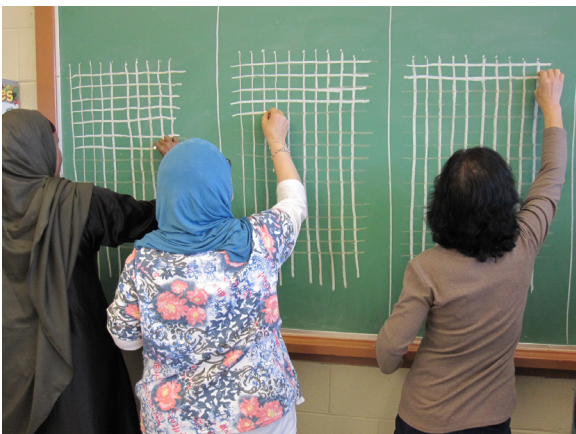


Photo credit: Linda Peteherych

# Literacy

## Resources and PD Opportunities for Literacy

### ESL Literacy Network

This website, developed by Bow Valley College, is a comprehensive resource for teaching adult ESL learners with interrupted formal education. From the basics of understanding the levels of ESL literacy, to developing a program, to curriculum, to classroom strategies and materials, this resource can answer many of the questions you might have about teaching adult ESL learners with low literacy.



### Adult ESL Literacy Teacher's Survival Guide

This guide identifies and provides suggestions on how to approach 12 big challenges of teaching literacy. It also gives sample lesson progressions for each.

### ELSA Net (LISTN) Active Living Video and Active Living Video Teaching Resources

There are three teaching resource packages for literacy level that go with this video: "How Do You Come to School?" "Making Healthy Food Choices" and "An Active Lifestyle." These resources can be accessed on the LISTN website (LISTN ► Resources ► Resources for Teachers ► LISTN Resources).

### SEN Teacher Literacy Printables

Here are some great printable, adaptable, and shareable worksheets and activities for the literacy classroom. The site is free to use and does not require a login.

### Decoda Literacy Solutions Professional Development Community

Decoda Literacy offers webinar and training opportunities for literacy practitioners with online resources for teaching literacy. Their books can also be borrowed through the mail for free.

**Decoda**  
LITERACY SOLUTIONS

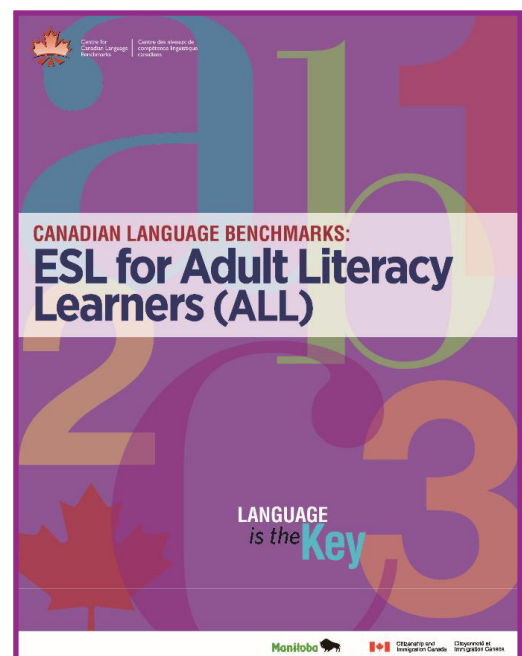
### Tutela Past Webinars

Log in and go to the professional development section on Tutela. You will have to look through all the past webinars but here are the literacy-related ones:

- Self-Discovery and Language Learning in the ESL Literacy Classroom
- Making Teaching Multilevel Literacy Class Fun
- Examples of Project-Based Teaching for Literacy Learners
- ESL Literacy: Oral Language First and Flashcard Use
- Teaching ESL Literacy Foundation and Phase 1

### **NEW!** The Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks has revised the CLB 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners.

The new literacy benchmarks, ESL for Adult Literacy Learners (ALL) 2015, can be downloaded from the CCLB website. The new document is colourful, easy to use, and full of teaching tips and suggested tasks.



# Trauma

## How LINC Instructors Can Better Support Trauma Survivors

By Amea Wilbur, UBC Doctoral Student

Trauma exists everywhere in the world. Therefore you are likely to find yourself teaching students who have experienced trauma in your LINC classroom. Judith Herman asserts that “Traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection and meaning. Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life.” (Herman, 1992, p.33).

Although trauma can affect anyone, refugee students and women who have experienced domestic violence may be more susceptible. Students’ experience with trauma may impact their learning in various and complex ways. This may include absences from class, withdrawal from participation, lack of focus, evidence of drug or alcohol abuse, reaction to what might be triggers, and dramatic changes in progress.

There are various things that can be done to support your students who have experienced trauma. First, you can advocate for the reinstatement of programs that support specialized mental health intervention. These programs were run through VAST, Family Services of Greater Vancouver, and the Bridge Refugee Clinic. Second, you can ask your employer or professional organizations for more professional development to better understand trauma and how it affects LINC students. Third, you can become more aware of the diversity of life experiences and struggles our students faced before arriving in Canada and in their lives now that they are here. You can do much more to learn about trauma and by doing so you will have taken the first step toward helping your students make successful transitions to safe, healthy lives in Canada.

## Mindful Breathing: A Positive Part of Daily Learning

By Diana Jeffries, ISSofBC

I always start my class with a breathing activity. We form a circle and I ask my students to close their eyes and breathe deeply five times. This is the very first task of the day. From this simple breathing technique, I have found all of my students are more firmly rooted and present in my class. It is an amazingly useful technique, especially for those students suffering from trauma. The breathing technique is a well-known therapeutic tool for counsellors working with traumatized individuals. I adopted the technique as I have a number of students who have experienced or are still experiencing trauma in their lives.

Students in my classroom contend with diagnosed and undiagnosed PTSD, depression, anxiety, OCD, and other mental health issues. This requires me to have a heightened sense of awareness, and not only regarding the acquisition of language. I must also identify the reasons students are not learning as quickly as others and acknowledge that their learning strategies are different as a result of their trauma. I believe that with the right teaching technique, intuition, and attitude towards those suffering with trauma, teachers can make the LINC classroom into a tremendously helpful environment. It is a place where all students can feel safe, not subjected to ridicule or isolation. And although some students’ efforts to achieve their language learning goals can cause stress and anxiety, they do have the support from classmates and teachers to feel more connected and rooted as they continue to heal from the traumas they have suffered.



Photo credit: Diana Jeffries

# Trauma

## Learning from Vulnerability

By Becky Brown, S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

Surrey is a growing centre for diversity. Classes are filled with students from Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe. Many places in the world are stricken by war, including places like Iraq. And, every class at some point has students from the Iraqi community. In this diversity, it is evident that students who have experienced war trauma in their past are vulnerable and learn differently from those who have been able to learn uninterrupted, in peace.

As bad as this is, being in a vulnerable condition poses unique opportunities for collective human growth. Owen Barfield, an undersung contemporary of the well-known authors J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, believed that human consciousness and language evolve in harmony with one another. If language evolves in the classroom (from mundane grammar points to fantastic student presentations), then human flourishing coincides with this development. Barfield saw imagination as a way to connect the immaterial, or the spirit, to the material.

What I observe in many of my vulnerable students is that story, expression, and imagination not only allow them to cope with irreconcilable events from the past, but offer a genuine form of hope. Expression and story materialize into a tangible hope that connects one student to another. Getting creative in the classroom may sound crazy to some students, but creativity and imagination allow non-traditional learners to excel.

Vulnerability often has a negative connotation. However, there is a wealth of expression which many of us could learn from vulnerable populations: the value of story, the impact of music, taking risks and the sharing of oneself. In performing these tasks, humanity connects--one soul to another.

## Resources: Adult Learning and Trauma

To find more resources, you are invited to contact the Decoda Literacy Library at [library@decoda.ca](mailto:library@decoda.ca). Library services are available free of charge to all adults in BC.

### [Trauma and the Adult English Language Learner](#)

This digest describes trauma and abuse in immigrant communities, discusses the effects of trauma on learning, and suggests ways in which practitioners can modify their practice to facilitate learning among victims of trauma and violence.

### [“But I’m Not a Therapist” The Challenge of Creating Effective Literacy Learning for Survivors of Trauma](#)

This paper explores the effects of violence on students’ learning and participation in literacy classes. The writer interviews literacy workers, learners, therapists and others who have involvement in the students’ lives. She asks them about the impacts of trauma and how this might be addressed in literacy programs.

### [Fear and Learning: Trauma-Related Factors in the Adult Education Process](#)

The body and the brain’s reactions to fear and threats and how this affects learning are examined in this excerpt from The Neuroscience of Adult Learning.

### [Classroom Strategies For Students Exposed to Trauma \(PowerPoint Presentation\)](#)

This PowerPoint presentation looks at trauma and offers some ideas on how to deal with it in the classroom as well as on an organizational level.

### [Best Practices for Adult Refugees in the ESL Classroom](#)

This is a great website with lots of information on culture shock, students dealing with trauma, and working with refugees in the context of the ESL classroom. You can also find downloadable classroom lesson plans and assessment rubrics in the Curriculum section of the site.

### [Visions: BC Mental Health and Addictions Journal: Trauma and Victimization](#)

The relationship between traumatizing events—including being a victim of crime—and mental health/illness is complex. This issue of Visions Journal on Trauma and Victimization looks at some of these complexities as well as the effects of trauma, treatment and support options, a sub-focus on post-traumatic stress disorder, and how to respond sensitively to certain populations.

### [Managing Stress to Improve Learning](#)

This website focuses on how chronic stress and trauma affect ABE students, including ESL students, and what educators can do to help students manage the stress that interferes with learning. It includes information on classroom environment, class policies and routines, classroom content, program policies, and staff development.

# Mental Health

## The Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre: BC's Information Source for Children, Youth and Families

*By Meredith de Freitas and Kimberley Korf-Uzan, BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services*

The Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre is a provincial information and resource centre for children, youth and families experiencing mental health and/or substance use challenges. Through a partnership with the [FORCE Society for Kids' Mental Health](#), staff at the Kelty Centre provide information, resources, peer support and system navigation to help families across BC access appropriate child and youth mental health services in their community. The Kelty Centre also supports people of all ages with eating disorders.

In an effort to support the mental health information needs of families from various cultural backgrounds, including those who speak different languages, the Kelty Centre has developed many translated mental health resources. Fact sheets, videos, frequently asked questions, and toolkits are available in French, Punjabi, Traditional and Simplified Chinese, Korean, and Farsi through the [cross-cultural landing page](#). Examples of these resources include the following:

- The [Families, Together](#) video shows families sharing their experiences supporting a child with a mental health challenge (the video's [discussion guide](#) can be used to discuss the video's themes).
- The [Healthy Living Toolkit](#), is a guide to healthy living for families with sections on sleep, healthy eating, stress management and physical activity.

In addition to the many translated mental health resources available through the Kelty Centre, we will soon be adding a translated video for families about how to navigate the mental health system and what to expect during a first appointment with a mental health professional. So keep an eye out for that exciting and important resource on the website.

If you are looking for information or resources on child and youth mental health, you can reach the Kelty Centre by email at [keltycentre@bcmhs.bc.ca](mailto:keltycentre@bcmhs.bc.ca), by phone at 1-800-665-1822, or by visiting [www.keltymentalhealth.ca](http://www.keltymentalhealth.ca).



## Resources for Mental Health

### [Here to Help: Mental Health and Substance Use Information You Can Trust](#)

HeretoHelp offers multilingual resources and referrals. The self-help resources page has information sheets on topics such as, cross-cultural mental health, trauma, and depression.

### [Crisis Centre BC](#)

Crisis Centre offers a 24-hour multilingual distress services. The free BC-wide phone number is 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433).

### [BC 211](#)

211 is a confidential, multilingual, 24/7 phone service that provides free information and referrals to a range of community, social and government services.

### [Settlement and Mental Health](#)

The [settlementatwork.org](http://settlementatwork.org) wiki provides basic information on mental health for those who work with immigrants and refugees.

### [Healthy Minds Curriculum](#)

This mental health curriculum with classroom-ready materials was created by ELSA Net for CLB levels 3 and 4.

### [CBC Manitoba EAL Lesson 69: Talking about Mental Health and Mental Illness](#)

This lesson is on mental health across cultures. Listen to a short interview and complete follow-up activities.

### [Mental Health First Aid - PD Opportunity](#)

The Mental Health First Aid Program offers courses that help you recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health problems and teaches you how to provide initial help and guide someone towards professional help.



# Learning Disabilities



**Idabc** • Learning Disabilities  
Association of British Columbia  
*The right to learn, the power to achieve*

## Strategies for Supporting Students Who May Have ADHD

### Helping students by avoiding labels

Avoid jumping to conclusions. Diagnosis of ADHD is extremely difficult, and can only be done by trained medical professionals after a detailed history and assessment. Many ADHD-like behaviours may result from other factors, such as anxiety, trauma, substance use, learning disabilities, and literacy challenges.

### Helping students who need to move around

Plan activities throughout the lesson where students can get up and move around the room. Many things that students do at their seats can be posted on the walls around the classroom. For example, cut discussion questions in strips and post around the room. Allow pairs to circulate and discuss. Take frequent “brain breaks.” Have students stand up and do a few simple exercises. [Here](#) are some examples. Provide some sort of physical release tool such as one of those small stress balls you squeeze.

### Helping students pay attention and stay organized

When concentration is needed, reduce distractions by enforcing some quiet work time, being aware of the ambient sound. Perhaps some students would like to use ear plugs when they are concentrating. Keep activities that require intense focus short. Help students keep their binders and work area organized. They will need constant reminders. Use visual cues, such as photos of putting papers away, sharpening a pencil, etc.

### Helping students manage impulsivity

If some students speak too loudly and interrupt others, develop a signal between you and them to help them remember to speak more softly or to wait their turn. Make sure it is discrete so as not to cause embarrassment. Develop a routine of “Think, pair, share” where before anyone answers a question, or starts a task, there is a built-in quiet minute or two for thinking about what they are going to say. Then have students practice what they are going to say in pairs. Finally, have the pairs share their ideas with the group.

## Resources for Helping People with Learning Disabilities

### [LD and the English Language Learner](#) - Recommended by [Decoda Literacy Solutions](#)

This paper, written by Robin Schwarz, addresses the following questions: How do learning disabilities affect an ELL? What are the problems in identifying learning disabilities in an ESL learner? How can adult education programs support these learners? For a quick review of these points, read the Bow Valley College [Learning Disabilities Checklist](#).

### [Understanding Learning Disabilities](#)

This overview of learning disabilities from the [Learning Disabilities Association of Canada](#) defines the term “learning disability” and provides some useful charts that provide examples of how cognitive impairments are manifested.

### [Learning Disabilities Association of BC](#)

The LDABC is the provincial network for people with learning disabilities and those who support them. They have online resources and PD opportunities, and provide community programs. Currently there are chapters in Victoria, Vancouver, Surrey, Coquitlam, Vernon, Williams Lake and Fraser Lake Northwest.

### [Disabilities Network of BC for Post-Secondary Education](#)

This organization is committed to providing programs and services, professional development, resources and news events for adult learners with disabilities. Look for typical challenges and suggested accommodations for students with a variety of barriers to learning.

### [HeretoHelp: Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder in Adults](#)

This multilingual fact sheet outlines how to recognize and support adults with ADHD.

### [Health Link BC: ADHD in Adults: Behavioural Strategies](#)

This webpage offers practical tips for supporting adults with ADHD.

### Borrow the following books from [Decoda Literacy Solutions](#)

Norris, Christine (1999) *Adult ESL Learners with Learning Disabilities: An Instructors' Resource Book*

This resource book provides a background to the difficult task of identifying, assessing and accommodating learning disabilities in adult ESL students. It includes observation checklists for learning disabilities, information on formal assessment, and suggestions for classroom strategies.

Thomley, Juline, et. al., (2003) *Taking Action: A Resource Guide for Instructors Serving ESL Adults with Learning Difficulties or Learning Disabilities*.

This guide covers ESL trends, learning disabilities definitions and applications, language acquisition, factors that impact learning, and best practice strategies for ESL learners. It also includes a screening tool for ESL adults, a reading assessment for preliterate adults, and a model for LD assessment of ESL learners.

# Health Literacy

## A Call for Change

By Nancy Clark, PhD, Health Literacy Advisory Committee

Many newcomer refugee groups come to Canada with histories of trauma, violence and political oppression. But even after migration and resettlement, refugee groups continue to experience significant barriers in accessing formal and informal supports that are needed to support their mental and physical health and well-being. There is an urgent call to reconceptualize trauma as not only concerning individual experiences but also its relationship with structural policies and practices during resettlement. For example, forms of discrimination based on lack of adequate language resources vis-à-vis interpreter services, as well as barriers related to level

### Changes suggested

- more intersectoral collaboration
- flexible service mandates
- inclusion of refugee perspectives
- health literacy education
- increase knowledge of service providers

of language proficiency in English and French have contributed to the growing inequities in settlement and health care for refugee groups that are in the minority. This article proposes the need for a policy framework that is culturally safe and trauma and violence informed. Such a framework would discuss several

strategies that can be used by service providers to mitigate retraumatization of refugee groups. It is argued that increased intersectoral collaboration, flexible service mandates, and the inclusion of refugee perspectives can reshape social policies that are in keeping with the needs of refugees during resettlement. In addition, educational strategies that foster health literacy can empower refugee groups and increase knowledge of service providers to promote social justice and education.

## Burnaby Family Life: Pre and Postnatal Services

By Lisa Lotian, Burnaby Family Life

Burnaby Family Life is a non-profit organization. We have been serving Burnaby and New Westminster for over 40 years focusing on supporting these communities' most vulnerable populations.

Our Pre and Postnatal programs offer services to high risk pre and postpartum women and their children (babies 0 - 6 months). Each group meets once a week with over 60 families receiving the services of an Outreach worker, a Public Health Nurse and a Registered Dietitian. Each of our clients and their children are fed a nutritious and balanced lunch, which is followed by a seminar on an education topic related to each program. Nutrition and healthy eating are priorities in our program. We strive to provide health and development education as well as work in collaboration with many partners and stakeholders to engage and strengthen our community.

Some of the barriers that our clients face are food security, financial instability and low income, a history of trauma, homelessness, varying situations of abuse, lack of language skills, and addictions. Most of our participants (about 75%) have immigrated to Canada from countries all over the world, particularly Afghanistan, China and Iraq.



Photo credit: Burnaby Family Life

We consistently receive more requests for service than we are able to look after, due to a lack of funding. After registering, many women are put onto our waiting list as the program is always running at capacity. Some of the women on our waiting list will receive services, but many of them will not. We have recently turned to crowd-funding to try and raise awareness and find more resources for this program.

For more information about this Burnaby Family Life Program contact Lisa Lothian at 604-500-0493, or to donate go to <http://www.burnabyfamilylife.org/donate.htm>.



# Health Literacy

## Health Literacy Resources

### [ELSA Net Healthy Living for Multicultural Communities Resource Packages](#)

These resource packages have lesson plans and classroom-ready materials on topics such as healthy eating, physical activity and diabetes.

### [ELSA Net Accessing Community Health Services Video Resources](#)

Each of these resources has a video and corresponding lesson plans and materials. They accompany the [Accessing Community Health Services Videos](#).

- [Active Living Video \(Literacy\)](#)
- [Calling 9-1-1 Video \(CLB 2\)](#)
- [Walk in Clinic Video \(CLB 3\)](#)

### [ELSA Health](#)

This series has workshops for At the Clinic/Calling 9-1-1 (CLB 2/3), BC Poison Control (CLB 4), Using 8-1-1 Healthlink BC (CLB 5/6) and additional resources.

### [ISSofBC Talking about Pain](#)

This ESL Lesson Package has lessons and materials for literacy to level 5 as well as corresponding videos on the ISSofBC Talking about Pain YouTube channel.

### [An Introduction to Health Care in BC for Newcomer Women](#)

BC Centre of Excellence for Women's Health has produced fact sheets and videos about health insurance and accessing health care services for all immigrant women. The fact sheets and videos are available in English, Farsi, French, Korean, Mandarin and Punjabi.

### [Healthy Living in Canada](#)

#### **(Karen Healthy Living YouTube Channel)**

These YouTube videos were produced with and for Karen Refugees by Sharon Kavanagh and Langley Community Services Society. The videos are in Karen with English subtitles. Here is a list of the videos:

- [Balanced Eating](#)
- [Sugar](#)
- [Fat](#)
- [Healthy Living](#)
- [Kids](#)
- [Food Safety Introduction](#)
- [The Danger Zone](#)
- [Storing Food and Kitchen Safety](#)
- [Preparing and Serving Food](#)
- [Cleaning and Microwaves](#)

### Active Living Video



### 911 Video



### Walk In Clinic Video



# LGBTQ

## Best Practices: Creating LGBTQ-inclusive Language Centres

By Jennifer Dodds, MOSAIC Burnaby Learning Centre

As with all LINC providers, the MOSAIC Burnaby Learning Centre is committed to helping vulnerable adults overcome obstacles during their settlement into Canada. We have recently examined what supports are in place specific to meeting the needs of our LGBTQ clients. Knowing that awareness-raising and training for frontline staff is a clear priority, MOSAIC liaised with QMUNITY, a community-based agency, to facilitate Queer Competency Training for several instructors and support staff. Through this training, we developed increased understanding, language, and skills to better support LGBTQ newcomers.

Highlighting the importance of providing multiple methods of support, we have also liaised closely with MOSAIC's Settlement Services. MOSAIC has recently implemented I BELONG, which is a pilot settlement program that aims to identify the needs of LGBTQ newcomers. Khim Tan and Roja Bagheri, who have spearheaded the program, have been instrumental in providing direct client support as well as helping Burnaby Learning Centre staff work toward developing a greater understanding of challenges specific to LGBTQ newcomers.

We recognize that our ability to provide positive and inclusive language services to LGBTQ newcomers is dependent upon the genuine commitment and knowledge development of our staff as well as clearly-defined organizational strategies. While we may not fully be there yet, all efforts will hopefully build toward creating a safer and more welcoming environment for LGBTQ newcomers.

## LGBTQ Resources

LGBTQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual/transgender, queer.



### [Our City of Colours](#)

Our City of Colours aims to increase the visibility of and address the issues facing LGBTQ people in a variety of linguistic and cultural communities. Our City of Colours has multilingual posters and other media materials.

### [Qmunity: BC's Queer Resource Centre](#)

Qmunity provides resources and support for queer youth, adults and seniors. They also work with programmers and educators through workshops, guest speakers and consultations.

### [Here to Help: Self-help Resources](#)

This link leads to resources and information about mental health and substance use in the LGBTQ community.

### [OCASI Positive Spaces Starter Kit](#)

Although this kit was created for Ontario settlement service providing organizations, it includes practical tips and tools for creating safe and inclusive schools and workplaces that can be used in any province.

### [I Belong - MOSAIC](#)

Funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, this project, being piloted in Burnaby and New Westminster, aims to support LGBTQ newcomers by seeking to address how criminalization and colonialism intersect with sexuality, gender, race, cultural diversity, and class.

### [LISTN's Resources for Higher Levels \(CLB 5-8\): LGBTQ Communities and Events](#)

This resource sheet suggests resources for use in the classroom, including lessons from CBC Manitoba, a vocabulary match, and a LGBTQ rights timeline activity.

# Youth

## Supporting Newcomer Youth through LINC and Adult Education

By Jennifer Reddy, Settlement Workers in Schools Program, Vancouver School Board

All newcomers to Canada face challenges. But young people who arrive in Canada in their teens face unique challenges. One of the most difficult challenges they face is graduating before turning 19. Involuntary displacement, learning English, establishing peer connections, navigating a new culture, re-establishing identity, and family transitions are only some of the issues facing this group. Coupled with these challenges is a fierce desire to learn, excel, and contribute as new Canadians. When youth are faced with the reality of “ageing out” of the K-12 education system, they search for opportunities to work and/or continue their studies. The pathway to Adult Education is established and many choose to take Foundations classes to improve their language and obtain their Dogwood before



searching for further education and employment. As Jherrise Lorence S. Visda explains, “I’m in adult ed. now, studying English Foundations. I can complete level 6 and get credit for English 10 before entering English 11. It’s hard. I need a place to practice English. At home, my mom tells me to practice my English for five or six hours.” While we know the value of LINC classes for adults, the content is not always relevant for young adults. For example, discussing parenting or groceries may not be as relevant to young adults as relationships, driving or civic engagement. The link to and from Adult Education is well established for young people, but the pathway to and from LINC stands to be strengthened.

LINC can be a supportive space for young people to practice English while building confidence. We look forward to building deeper connections with Adult Education and LINC centers to ensure that the transition for young adults is clear and supported. We hope we can create new partnerships and connections to support this deserving and ready group of young newcomers.

## Finding Her Own Path—Moving Ahead Youth Program Client Sara Shares Her Story

From the *Vancouver Immigrant Populations Program Newsletter*, Volume 1, October 2014 (with permission)

I suddenly found myself homeless with nowhere to go” says Sara. “I was living at a youth safe house for a month, and my time there was coming to an end very quickly. Each youth was allowed to live there for only one month at a time.”

“I was becoming very desperate and incredibly frightened for my future. The fact that I might have to return to the abusive home that I had lived in terrified me more than anything. At the time, I never knew there were community services such as supportive youth housing and the Moving Ahead Program.”

Sara found housing with assistance from a series of community youth workers, one of whom referred her to

Moving Ahead: “They introduced me to two youth workers from the Moving Ahead Program that had excellent connection to the outside community.”

“From the Moving Ahead youth workers I was able to be connected to the Muslim community, and to volunteer. Along with that I was connected with the community, the food bank, as well as other Moving Ahead group programs and the youth centre.”

Sara has found meaning in the difficulties she has faced. “In all my life I had never been happier than those days when I was kicked out of my father’s house, and had to go find my own path through life.” She says Moving Ahead and services like the local youth centre and housing supports “gave me the opportunity to meet and get to know so many inspirational people that gave me courage, and the strength to start dreaming again of a positive future.”

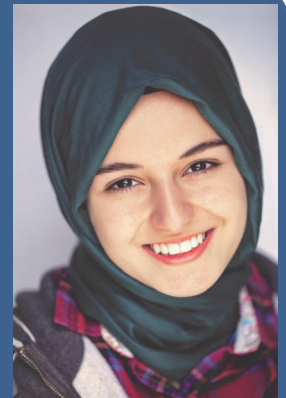


Photo credit: VIPP

# Families with Young Children

## Transformative Learning Eases Social Isolation

By Barbara MacLean, Vancouver Formosa Academy

Have you ever parented alone for any length of time? Challenging? Yes. Distressing at times? Yes, again. It can be a lonely and depressing life. But try doing that in a different country when you don't have the native language, friends or family to back you up.

Studies of vulnerable immigrants identify seniors, youths, and women as the most at-risk groups for poverty and poor physical and mental health. Social isolation is considered one of the primary conditions for contributing to the problems. Single mothers face experiences that may lead to depression and deteriorating health.

Vancouver has a high percentage of female immigrants who are raising their children alone. They often arrive without much English and they have to navigate life alone. Many women in our classes have struggled with depression or ill health since arriving in Canada. They rarely go out. They worry about their children. They have few opportunities to explore the brighter side of the city.

### Helpful Learning Experiences

- group discussions
- collaborative learning
- interactive activities

After some time in the classroom, though, they begin to make connections with both students and teachers. They start to learn the survival skills they need to improve daily life and they learn about resources in the community. Above all, socially isolated individuals not only learn English; the experience can be personally transformative. In a small study\* of immigrant women, students reported they had positive learning experiences that increased their self-awareness, confidence, assertiveness, and self-esteem. They also learned about others through intercultural sharing.

The author of the study states, "All of the women emphasized exposure to other people's experiences, including other immigrants and residents of the host



Photo credit: Barbara MacLean

country, through friendship, collective group work, participation in discussion, and simply sharing one space, as instrumental for their transformative learning." (Fursova, 2013, p.6)

The students identified the most helpful learning experiences to be group discussions, collaborative learning situations and interactive learning activities such as role-plays, group projects and hands-on projects. They described unhelpful learning conditions such as "low quality" or "too basic" materials or activities, and not having their previous education or skills acknowledged.

### Unhelpful Experiences

- "low quality" materials
- "too basic" activities
- not having previous education or skills acknowledged

Supporting our students with meaningful, collaborative learning opportunities can have a significant impact on students' self-knowledge, knowledge of others, and an improved ability to cope with their new lives. Lasting, supportive relationships between students and their peers can help these women manage their lives with resilience.

Fursova, Julia. "A Journey of Her Own: A critical analysis of learning experiences among immigrant women: assessing transformative learning and women's resilience in community-based education programs." A working paper. [http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/rcis/documents/RCIS\\_WP\\_Fursova\\_No\\_2013\\_3.pdf](http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/rcis/documents/RCIS_WP_Fursova_No_2013_3.pdf)

# Families with Young Children

## Supporting Immigrant Children with Special Needs and Their Families



Many newcomer families go through a challenging transition when starting life in a new country, but when a family has a child with special needs, they can be particularly vulnerable. As one of the first points of contact, your program's support is vital to the success of newcomer children with special needs. Here are some ideas for ensuring that your offers of help meet the needs of your clients.

### Approach the topic of a special need carefully and respectfully.

Newcomer families may or may not seem open to communication about their child's special needs for a variety of reasons. They may or may not be aware that a special need exists, or they may not feel comfortable discussing concerns. They may also consider the special need a private family matter, or it may not have been an issue in their home culture.

### Take the time to develop a relationship with the family.

Remember that no one knows the child better than the family. By making an effort to get to know the family,

you will learn about the child's individual needs and behaviours and will be able to create a more supportive environment for them.

### Keep the lines of communication open.

To ensure that children get the support they need, it's important to note and communicate any observations about a suspected special need as early as possible. However, the subject should be approached in a delicate and respectful way.

### Reach out for additional support.

Remember that there are [settlement services](#) (find them on the Welcome BC website) available to help newcomer families access local resources for children with special needs. You can find services in your community [here](#) or on the Welcome BC interactive map.

To find out more, check out the complete collection of CMAS [special needs information and resources](#) on the CMAS website. You can also learn more about various special needs at [www.connectability.ca](http://www.connectability.ca). The CMAS special needs consultant is also available for individualized support. Please call the office at 1.877.677.6899 for help.



Photo credit: CMAS

# Family Violence

## Family Violence in Newcomer Families

By Kathryn Rockwell, LISTN

The vulnerable are never more vulnerable to real harm than they are in situations of family violence. Family violence cuts across all cultural, religious, and socio-economical lines; however, newcomer women and children may be more at risk because of economic dependence, language barriers, and social isolation. Some obstacles a newcomer woman may face include

- threats of more violence
- fear of deportation
- lack of English
- less family support than the abuser has
- fear of authority
- lack of knowledge about the legal system
- fear losing custody of her children

Sadly, these fears are based in reality. Women without permanent residence status are at risk of deportation. For example, by leaving the relationship the abused woman may be in breach of a landing condition that she marry within 90 days, or it may put her at risk of sponsorship debt if she sponsored her husband. Often the threat of a phone call to immigration is enough to keep a woman and her children stuck.

As LINC providers and instructors, what can we do if we suspect someone is in a situation of family violence? Here are some suggestions:

- **Keep safety your priority** - both hers and yours. Be careful about giving her brochures, sending her emails or leaving voice messages about family violence. These could be discovered by the abuser, and may provoke an attack.
- **Post help-line numbers** in the school - the Domestic Violence Helpline in BC is 1-800-563-0808, and is multilingual.
- **Learn** about the legal system and community services in your area. Excellent fact sheets are available from the [Legal Services Society](#).
- **Teach** all of your students the truth about Canadian immigration and family law. Excellent classroom resources are available at the [Law-Related ESL Wikibook](#).
- **Respect her decisions**. Regardless of whether she stays or if she leaves, your classroom may be a respite from difficult circumstances, and leaving can be extremely dangerous.

In our work, we can best serve all of our students and our communities by creating safe spaces for newcomers to learn and grow; spaces where our students can learn about their right to be free from violence, and develop the self-confidence to make changes in their lives.

## Family Violence Resources



Call the free **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELPLINE**  
**1-800-563-0808**  
 Confidential • 24 hours / 7 days • Multiple Languages

### [Domestic Violence: It's Never OK](#)

This website provides a comprehensive and annotated list of family violence prevention and response programs in BC.

### [Ending Violence Association \(EVA\) of BC](#)

EVA provides support to family violence response and prevention programs, performs research, houses resources, and facilitates innovative projects.

### [Outreach Services for Women and Children in BC](#)

There are more than 50 outreach services programs in BC that respond to the needs of women and their dependent children who have experienced or are at risk of violence. These programs deliver services that include supportive counseling for women, referrals to community services, assistance with local transportation, and accompaniment and advocacy. Some agencies specialize in outreach to multicultural communities.

### [Department of Justice: Family Violence](#)

This website provides information about family violence, the laws relating to family violence and the kind of help that is available to someone experiencing family violence. Find publications on various topics, including the multilingual [Abuse is Wrong in Any Language](#).

# Family Violence

## [Public Health Agency: Stop Family Violence](#)

Find links to services in your area, information for professionals, and more.

## [BC Housing: How to Access Emergency Housing](#)

A list of transition houses, safe homes and second-stage housing is available on the BC housing website.

## [Learning and Violence](#)

Originally developed by adult literacy practitioners, this website looks at the impact of violence on learning and offers practical ideas to make it easier to learn or teach when violence has been a part of life. In addition to information for teachers, tutors and administrators, there is material available for learners. There is a lot to find on this website that isn't obvious at first glance.

## [Law-Related ESL Wikibook](#)

Produced by ELSA Net (LISTN) and the People's Law School, this wikibook contains lesson plans and classroom-ready materials for CLB 4-8 on topics related to family violence:

- Elder Law
- Family Violence and Abuse
- Marriage, Separation and Divorce
- Young People and the Law

**KidsHelpPhone.ca**  
**1 800 668 6868**

**Kids Help Phone**

## “Shameless” Shopping

*By Maple Lee, Coquitlam Continuing Education*

No, this is not about being a shopaholic. It's the opposite. It's about people who shop out of necessity, often with little income since they are refugees, food bank recipients, or on welfare, and when things go wrong, they don't have the confidence to get what they need because they lack the English language skills.

Recently, to culminate what we learned in our shopping unit, my LINC 3/4 class decided to go to a nearby shopping mall that they were familiar with to do something they would usually not do: go to the customer service desk to ask for information about store policies. As we arrived together and sat around the food court tables conversing in English, the atmosphere was buoyant, as if we were at a party or a big coffee meet-up with friends. Students were equipped with English vocabulary and phrases for possible situations, a pen, assignment sheets, and a class partner.

As expected, some customer service people were friendly and helpful, some were impatient or rude; but the key moment was when the students reconvened at the food court, using comparatives and superlatives to talk about their different experiences with customer service—the students who received poor customer service did not blame themselves or their level of English communication skills. And at the end,

when the students came up to me to say goodbye, one said, “Teacher, thank you for your hard work and this field trip. Today, I am happy because I can speak English without shame.”



Photo credit: Maple Lee

# Announcements



## TEAL Charitable Foundation

*"Promoting the teaching and learning of English as an additional language."*

## Tears to Smiles: Fundraiser for Refugee Students

By Michael Galli, BCIT, BCTEAL

On May 21, 2015, the TEAL Charitable Foundation (TCF) will hold a Wine & Cheese Reception to raise funds for the Taiga Galli Memorial Refugee Award. After three years of fundraising, and with matching financial support from BC TEAL, the TCF will have reached their \$100,000 endowment goal. During the past three years, it has become apparent that there is a very compelling need for an award like this because none of the past recipients have yet completed their post-secondary studies.

Refugee families are often unable to financially support their children who wish to study at the post-secondary level. And the students themselves can't afford tuition for post-secondary studies because they must work to support their families. But this sustainable award will now help a young refugee student graduating from secondary school wishing to pursue post-secondary studies.

This award will also function as a memorial to Taiga Arakawa Galli, the son of Michael and Yuka Galli, who passed away on October 13, 2013. These funds are managed by the [Vancouver Foundation](#), with which the TCF has maintained a 29 year relationship.

The Wine and Cheese Reception for this award will be held at the Creekside Community Centre in the Olympic Village on the Thursday evening prior to the 2015 BC TEAL Conference. This event will be attended by a very special guest, Kim Phuc, the world renowned "Girl in the Picture". Ms. Phuc, originally from Vietnam, is a refugee to Canada and a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, and she will be a keynote speaker at our BC TEAL Conference. We are also very pleased to announce that former Premier of British Columbia, Ujjal Dosanjh, will be our feature speaker at this event.



Tickets cost \$25 and include wine, refreshments and a many exciting door prizes. To purchase tickets, please contact the BC TEAL office at: [admin@bctéal.org](mailto:admin@bctéal.org) or (604) 736-6330. For more details on [BC TEAL](#) and the [TEAL Charitable Foundation](#), please visit: [www.bctéal.org](http://www.bctéal.org).

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