

Community Based Training Guide

A Trauma-Informed Approach

This document was designed for double-sided printing.

The Trauma-Informed Community Based Language Guide

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A Trauma-Informed Approach

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Section 1



Community Based Training Guide

A Trauma-Informed Approach

Introduction

The *Trauma-Informed Community Based Training Guide* provides practical strategies, resources, and ideas that can be integrated into classroom and community settings in order to support immigrants and refugees who have experienced trauma. This guide includes a framework developed by Amea Wilbur, EdD and Diana Jeffries and encompasses three separate yet interconnected themes: Control, Connection and Meaning.

The first theme, **Control**, is designed to help a student gain a sense of personal dominion and agency so they are better able to make decisions, feel a sense self-security, and self-empowerment.

The second theme, **Connection**, is designed to help students gain a sense of belonging and connection with others in the classroom. Through creative approaches, students can gain a greater sense of community through the safety of their classroom experiences providing students with an opportunity to connect with others in meaningful ways.

The third theme, **Meaning**, is the recognition that many students who have experienced great adversity and trauma have vast experiences and fortitude that can help them to engage in the broader community beyond the classroom and reclaim a sense of purpose and meaning as they re-establish themselves here in Canada.

Teacher's note: Please feel free to photocopy from this document at your leisure. We suggest you cover the teacher's note when photocopying for your students.

Who is this guide for?

This Guide is mainly for community based and settlement adult educators, workshop facilitators, librarians, and others who work with newcomers such as conversation circle facilitators, tutors, and teaching assistants.

How to use it?

The Guide could be used in both formal and informal language and learning spaces. You can pick and choose from the Sections as they pertain to your specific area of work. We do, however, encourage you to read through **Section 2** carefully in order to understand the principles, framework, and context of trauma-informed work.

How is the guide organized?

The Guide is organized into five sections:

Section 1 provides an introduction and outlines the objectives of the Guide.

Section 2 describes the context, key concepts, the framework, and the principles of adult education, which have influenced the design of the Guide.

Section 3 contains strategies for the instructors, facilitators, volunteers, and tutors to work with participants to support their learning using a trauma-informed lens.

Section 4 includes a section on recognizing our own challenges, opportunities, and boundaries as educators in working with participants who have experienced trauma.

Section 5 contains a bibliography of resources we have found particularly useful for our work as facilitators and instructors.

Objectives of the guide

- To develop an understanding of trauma and how it may impact learning.
- To increase awareness of the challenges and opportunities of working with people who have experienced trauma.
- To build capacity in the settlement sector to better support a broad range of students, including those with trauma and other barriers to learning.
- To provide strategies that can be used in learning environments to support people who have experienced trauma.

Confidentiality

It is very important that we all adhere to the following confidentiality principles in our work. Please read below and respect these principles when working with the guide.

- Confidentiality is important to establish and maintain trusting and lasting relationships.
- Confidentiality is the cornerstone to ensure that privileged information is accessible only to those authorized to have access by students, clients, and co-workers.
- Confidentiality acknowledges respect for an individual's right to privacy.
- Confidentiality builds respect for relationships in which personal information is shared.
- Confidentiality assumes the pledge to safeguard confidential information.

Section 2



Definitions of trauma

People have a range of capacities to deal with overwhelming experiences. Some people are able to disappear into a fantasy world, to disassociate, to pretend it never happened and are able to go on with their lives. And sometimes it comes back to haunt them.

~ Besser van der Kolk

There are many different ways that cultures, communities, spiritual practices, and individuals, understand traumatic experiences and how trauma not only impacts our own lives, but also our families, and our communities at large. One of the predominant ways we look at trauma in Western culture is through the medical model. Although the definition of trauma has changed considerably over time, it is often framed as a deficit model meaning there is a tendency to focus on individual's weaknesses or disabilities rather than strengths and resiliency. However, times are changing and physicians, health practitioners, educators, law enforcement, and researchers are beginning to recognize that the medical model does not fully embrace the various traumatic experiences that people can face. The Trauma-Informed Practice Guide defines trauma as "experiences that overwhelm an individual's capacity to cope," which broadens the definition of trauma to those who may experience it through social, economic, or political upheaval (British Columbia Centre of Excellence for Women's Health, 2013). http://bccewh.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/2013_TIP-Guide.pdf

In Canada, we can see the effects of trauma in many communities. For example, Aboriginal communities have been inflicted by residential schools, forced migration from their homeland, and systemic racism from settler societies.

Experiences of trauma can be compounded by poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of oppression, and for

those of us working in language classes and settlement service agencies, we require particular skills such as empathy, cultural humility, social awareness of intersectionality, and an overall understanding of the needs of the students and clients we serve. It is important to approach our work whereby we move beyond rigid cultural assumptions and instead ask more questions, and foster continuous critical thinking and reflection of ourselves and others. By gaining awareness and understanding of the social, economic, and political injustices that people have experienced, we can further understand how adversity and trauma can impact learning. We can also learn how people have tremendous resiliency that can foster a renewed sense of confidence and personal pride.

Lastly, we want to acknowledge the work being done in the area of post traumatic growth. This term was developed by psychologists Richard G. Tedeschi and Lawrence G. Calhoun and “holds that people who endure psychological struggle following adversity can often see positive growth afterward.” <http://www.apa.org/monitor/2016/11/growth-trauma.aspx>

Intersectionality and connection to trauma

Intersectionality is the critical theory that people have multiple identities and the relationship between identity, discrimination, and exclusion intersect, thus creating gender, race, and socio-economic inequality that cannot be examined separately from one another. As we move through this Guide, it’s important to be aware that many of the individuals we work with have unique circumstances, barriers, and multiple identities. They may experience prejudice and discrimination in various forms that impact their identity and agency in their personal lives.

The intersection of negative experiences as a result of racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination can be part of a person’s trauma and marginalization they experience.

Principles of adult education

This guide also follows the principles of adult education. These principles include:

- Adults have the need to know why they are learning something.
- Adults learn by doing.
- Adults are problem-solvers.
- Adults learn best when skills/topics are of immediate use.
- Adults come to their learning with a variety of life experiences, formal and informal education, and identities.

Post traumatic growth (PTG)

Post traumatic growth is defined as the “experience of individuals whose development, at least in some areas, has surpassed what was present before the struggle when crises occurred. The individual has not only survived, but has experienced changes that are viewed as important, and that go beyond the status quo” (Tedeschi and Calhoun, 2004). Individuals have described profound life changes in their view of “relationships and how they view themselves and their philosophy of life” (Joseph and Linley, 2006).

Role as teacher/facilitator

The roots of resilience...are to be found in the sense of being understood by and existing in the mind and heart of a loving, attuned, and self-possessed other.

~ Diana Fosha

Traumatic events are almost impossible to put into words and a person who has experienced trauma, who is suppressing their emotions and feelings, is fundamentally at war with themselves. Hiding feelings takes an enormous amount of energy and therefore can make it impossible for them to pursue worthwhile goals such as learning English, socializing, and pursuing a new life in the community. If you have a student who has trauma

you may be called upon to respond to a person who you feel is struggling in and outside of the classroom. A student or client might be alternating between being inhibited by others, anxious about the demands made on them, or being reactive and explosive in class. Although you are not a counsellor and should never take on a role as therapist, it is your ethical duty to listen and support your students, and then to make referrals accordingly. As the instructor or facilitator it is critical to recognize that you have power and privilege in the learning space and therefore it is your responsibility to share knowledge and resources for those who are struggling. Seek out the opportunities to help your students, connect with them, and get the support they need. Never turn away from a chance to help others.

Core elements of the guide

Our framework is heavily influenced by Judith Herman who states:

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. They confront human beings with the extremities of helplessness and terror and evoke the responses of catastrophe (Trauma and Recovery, 1992).

We therefore have built our framework around the idea that in order for us to work with people who have experienced trauma we need to follow certain tenets (Wilbur and Jeffries, 2016).

These include:

Control: Trauma can rob people of their sense of control and power over their lives. One of the first steps in supporting people with trauma is to provide a sense of safety and an empathetic space.

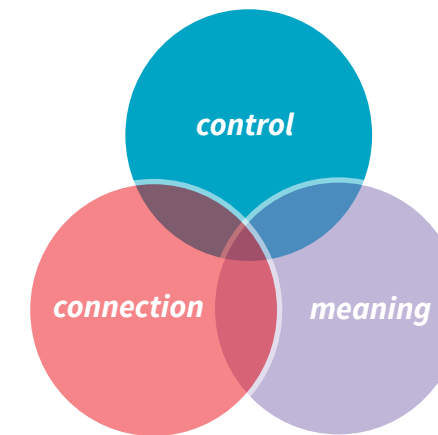
Connection: Trauma can destroy the bonds between an individual and their community. One means of supporting students who have experienced trauma is in providing opportunities to connect with others and build new relationships.

Meaning: Trauma can dismantle one's sense of value in the world. We need to support students in regaining a sense hope so they can look toward the future.

Section 3



The three guiding themes



Some people's lives seem to flow in a narrative; mine had many stops and starts. That's what trauma does. It interrupts the plot... It just happens, and then life goes on. No one prepares you for it.

~ Jessica Stern, Denial: A Memoir of Terror

The key areas we can help students/participants in are building a sense of control, developing connection, and helping individuals create new opportunities for meaning in their lives. In this section we explore these areas more in depth and offer ways to implement this framework into learning spaces.

We have broken down the framework by theme and then offer four strategies or activities for each theme. We have also included objectives, materials, processes, and ways to adapt each activity to create an inclusive and flexible experience.

For more resources and additional information on our three guiding themes, please see the following online resources:

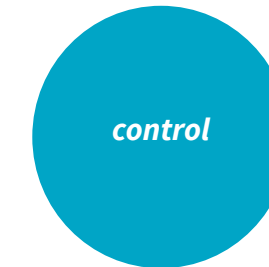
https://cmascanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/1467063427_01_beyond_trauma_complete_1.pdf

Beyond Trauma: Language Learning Strategies for New Canadians Living with Trauma (2016)

<https://www.decodac.ca/wp-content/uploads/Trauma-Informed-EALr.pdf>

Trauma-Informed EAL: PIRS Teacher's Guide to Trauma-Informed English as an Additional Language (2017)

Control



*It is too dangerous for me to put these things into words.
I am afraid they might then become gigantic and I be no longer able to master them.*

~ Erich Maria Remarque, All Quiet on the Western Front

Trauma can break down the connection between the mind and body, and can inhibit one's sense of personal agency and safety. In this section we explore the idea of building a sense of control through various activities and strategies.

This involves building or rebuilding a better mind-body connection.

The following activities can support all English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners to create and build a sense of control. These are just a few activities that can help students feel connected to their own body and mind.

Activities:

1. Making the Alphabet
2. Mind and Body
3. Breathing
4. Mindfulness
5. Photo-Voice

Making the alphabet activity

Objective:

This activity can help students focus on their learning environments by building on kinesthetic approaches to learning. Being physically active while learning will also help students stay present and engaged. Many non-literate or pre-literate learners have an ability to actively learn and by physical movement and productivity, students will have a greater sense of satisfaction. Students can work on this project over a longer period of time, and do not need as much supervision once they get started. Other than materials, the only thing required is a space that is large enough in the classroom while the project is in process.

What you will need:

- Large piece of cardboard (ideally the size of a whiteboard)
- Smaller cardboard pieces
- Exacto knife
- Paper mache
- Paint
- Paint brushes

How it is done:

1. Prior to the lesson you will need to cut out the cardboard into the shapes to form the letters of the alphabet. Make half-moon shapes and rectangles.
2. Place the shapes on the table and have the students put together the letters of the alphabet using the shapes like a puzzle.
3. Once they have formed the cardboard letters and you have reviewed with them, have the students glue the pieces of the letters together and put them into alphabetical order.

4. Then have the students glue the alphabet in order onto a large cardboard piece, such as a large collapsed box, a refrigerator box, or a whiteboard box. Once the letters are glued to the cardboard, then students paper-mache over the letters.
5. Paint the background (negative space) one colour (preferably black). Once the paint has dried, paint the letters in multiple colours. This can take a few weeks to finish. It is an opportunity for students to not only learn the alphabet by brushing over the letters with paint but the teacher can also help with phonics at the same time.
6. Remember, this can be an ongoing project. It doesn't need to be completed in one week. Allow time for the materials to dry after paper mache and painting.
7. Once the paint is dry, you will be able to hold up the mural or mount it on a wall. Use it as a barrier to create stations, prop it up on a chair so that students can refer to it. Have students point to the letter based on the sound the teacher is making. This is an ongoing, movable, and re-usable resource that students will enjoy using since they have been the ones who created it.

Mind and body activity

Objective:

Sensory activities can be helpful to support self-regulation and relieve tension and anxiety. It grounds the entire class of students and brings everyone into the learning space collectively. You can also incorporate this with a lesson on body parts when you are teaching a unit on health and wellbeing.

Furthermore, this activity will also help a common physical pain that affects women, particularly if they are lifting small children, pushing strollers, or just self-conscious about their chest. The exercise will help to stretch out the muscles around the shoulders and chest plus increase muscle strength along the upper back. This will generate an open and more upright body posture.

How it is done:

Have the students stand facing you.

1. Ask the students to hook their two thumbs together and stretch out and front.
2. Have the students pull their thumbs away from each other without breaking the link of their thumbs.
3. Keeping their thumbs linked, ask the students to lift their arms above their heads.
4. Then ask them to again pull their thumbs apart without breaking the link of their thumbs.
5. Pull, pull, pull.
6. Ask the students to unlink their thumbs and face their palms inward (like a clap), and then have them bring their hands shoulder width to their sides.

7. Face the palms front, and stretch the arms back, really opening up the chest.
8. Finally, bring their arms down to the sides of the hips.
9. Repeat the exercise 10 to 20 times.
10. Go slowly, allow the students to strengthen their back muscles by pulling on their hooked thumbs for a few seconds, and allow them to stretch throughout each action.

Breathing activity

Objective:

The purpose of this activity is to learn how to do a conscious breathing exercise. Meditation can be very challenging, particularly if you are new to the practice. However, conscious breathing can really help students with self-regulation and calm the nervous system. After you do some guided exercises such as the one above, have the students do the following breathing activity.

How it is done:

1. Place your right thumb against your right nostril.
2. Breathe in and out through your left nostril 10 times and then change sides so that your left thumb is placed over your left nostril and breathe 10 times.
3. Then breathe 10 times through both nostrils.
4. Have the students count as they go as this will help them to concentrate on the breath and not be so easily distracted. It is also best if students can close their eyes but only if they feel comfortable.

Mindfulness activity

Objective:

Mindfulness is about bringing us back to the moment in a non-judgmental way. It can allow us to better understand the connection between our mind and body. It can be a useful tool for reducing stress and enhancing emotional regulation. This particular activity allows students to reflect on their experiences and understand how they can feel both pleasant and unpleasant sensations in their mind and body. It also builds on a more inquiry-based and an experiential approach to language learning.

What you will need:

- Handout

How it is done:

1. Introduce the idea of awareness of a pleasant event eating an apple, hearing some good news, coming to our language class on a sunny day.
2. Tell the students about a pleasant event that happened to you recently. Describe how your body felt, how you felt emotionally, and how you feel now as you talk about it.
3. Ask a few students to share a pleasant event with the class.
4. Ask the students to tell their partner about a past event where they felt good. Perhaps it was walking in the sunshine, sitting on a bench in a park, or waking up well rested. It doesn't have to be a big event such as a wedding day or a birthday party. It can be as simple as taking a warm bath.

5. Give the students the following handout and ask them to fill out this chart for the week. Remember you don't want to put pressure on them and add to their stress but encourage them to fill out as much as they can over the week.

Follow-up next class:

1. Ask the students to get into pairs and have them share one of their events with their partner.
2. Have students come back to the whole class and debrief by asking "How did your body feel? What are some of the feelings you had?"
3. Thank the students for sharing their event with you.

Handout – Speaking

Name _____ Date _____

What was your experience?	How did your body feel?	What moods, feelings and thoughts did you have?	What are your thoughts right now as you write this down?
Example:			
Washing my face	My face felt relaxed, cool and clean	Calm and happy to have a clean face	Remembering it makes me feel better and more awake
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

Adapted from Jon Kabat-Zinn, Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness (2013).

Options and variations

If you are working with lower level students you will want to provide them with the language. You may also ask the students to fill this form out only for the weekend so they are not too overwhelmed by the task demands in class.

Alternatively, you can take your students to a local park in warmer weather and have them do simple activities such as standing on the grass without shoes or socks, paying attention to the sun and breeze that hits the face, listening to the sounds of the trees or birds. If possible, have the students sit in the park and write what they feel physically and how it feels emotionally.

Photo-voice activity

Objective:

Narrative storytelling can be a powerful tool in working with people who have experienced trauma. Personal narrative can offer an opportunity for understanding and reorganizing our sense of self, as well as, building a student's vocabulary. This activity also allows students to pick what story they want to share.

What you will need:

- Photos from smartphone camera of student or discuss an object student has in class or something they are wearing
- Handout

How it is done:

1. Ask the students to choose a photo from their smartphone camera. If you don't have a photo, is there something in your bag or is there something you are wearing that has a story?
2. Ask the students to send the photo to you (teacher), or take a picture of the object and send it to you through email.
 - a. Ask the students to get into pairs.
 - b. Have them tell their partner about the photo or object.
 - c. Have them answer the following questions:
 - d. Where were you?
 - e. Why did you take the photo or why do you have the object?
 - f. Who were you with? Did someone give this to you?
 - g. How did you feel? What were you thinking at that time?
 - h. How do you feel now, looking back on it?
 - i. Do you have good memories when you look at it?
 - j. Do you think your life is different now? How is it different?

Handout – Writing

Name _____ Date _____

This is a _____

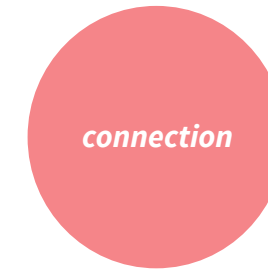
I look at this _____ and I feel

I am writing about this because I _____

I took this photo in _____

I remember it was _____

Connection



Trauma creates changes you don't choose. Healing is about creating change that you do choose.

healthyplace.com

One means of supporting learners who have experienced trauma and adversity is by providing opportunities for connections with others. We are social learners and we rarely learn in isolation from each other. Educators now understand and recognize that everyone can interpret the same information in different ways and therefore we need to respond to a diverse community of learners.

It is important, particularly for those who have experienced trauma, to recognize and highlight examples of people who have faced experiences similar to their own. The classroom learning model isn't always an idea space for learning, but it is a great space for students to build social relationships with people they can identify with and also learn from and share in experience. We need to approach the classroom space as an opportunity to help students make connections so they can feel supported not only by their teachers, teaching assistants and outreach workers but also by classmates.

The following activities can be used as a way of building capacity for students to better connect and engage within the classroom setting.

Activities:

1. Community/classroom agreement
2. String activity
3. Supporting each other
4. Applying for a small grant

Community/Classroom agreement activity

Objective:

Classroom agreements allow for a collaboratively created framework for expectations and norms in the classroom.

What you will need:

- Flipchart paper
- Marker

How it is done:

1. Ask for student opinions and ideas; you may want to prompt them with a few examples i.e. no cellphones unless there is an emergency.
2. Summarize student ideas; facilitate a class discussion to gather feedback from the students before moving on to the next step.
3. Turn ideas into classroom agreements; create a poster or anchor chart to display the finalized ideas. The guidelines will likely include: actively listen to the speaker, be kind, be respectful, etc.
4. Review the contract regularly; ask students to assess progress and determine if any contract amendments should be made.

String activity

Objective:

This activity is similar to other cultural and religious practices such as thinking beads or rosaries. The purpose of the activity is to focus a student's attention to the task at hand and allow the student to physically move an object that represents an idea. It is also to build language skills through a listening and speaking activity.

What you need:

- Twine or thick wool string
- Scissors

How it is done:

1. Cut a piece of string approximately 12 inches long. It doesn't have to be exact but enough so that you can make three to four knots spacing them approximately 3 inches apart from each other.
2. Once you have made three to four knots, give one piece of string for each member of the group.
3. Have the students sit across from each other in pairs.
4. Get them to pull the string through their fingers and when they reach a knot, get them to say a statement about what they want, what their goals are, what they feel gratitude for, what they want to learn, etc. It could be anything that you want the student to take a moment and focus on. It's a great activity for self-reflection and sharing so as to make a more intimate connection with a classmate.

Supporting each other activity

Objective:

This is a good higher level activity for building support systems and rapport in the class. It also helps develop problem solving skills and language (offering solutions, advice and demonstrating empathy). This activity is for higher level students.

What you need:

- Handout

How it is done:

1. Review modals with the students: must, shall, will, should, would, can, could, may, and might.
2. Put students in pairs and ask them to read through the scenarios.
3. Ask the students to come up with some ideas and advice for the people in the scenarios.
4. Finally, debrief with the whole class and have them share their ideas.

Handout – Speaking

Scenario 1 (Read the scenario out loud to your partner or group)

I'm really anxious all the time. I feel like I can't really stay calm and relax. I try to do the activities that my doctor told me, like meditation, but I really can't concentrate for more than 10 seconds. I start to think of how my life was so hard back in my country. If I hear any loud noises I jump, if I drop something and break it, I cry. I don't know what is wrong with me. My father says I just have to forget about what happened before but I can't.

Scenario 2 (Read the scenario out loud to your partner or group)

I feel so bad these days. I don't know exactly why but I just feel really down. I get up to go to school and I feel like going back to bed and not going to learn English. I stay up late and watch TV from back home. This always makes me feel sad because the situation there isn't very good. People are really stressed out and scared and that makes me feel really guilty and depressed. I don't feel like doing anything. I just want to sit in a chair and not talk or eat. I just want to sleep all the time.

Scenario 3 (Read the scenario out loud to your partner or group)

I'm not feeling so great these days. I finally have a moment to relax now that I have finished my English classes and I have a good paying job. I think a lot about my friends and family back home and I feel really guilty that I am here and everything is okay for me. I don't have many friends now that I finished my English classes and it's really difficult to make friends at my job. I can't really concentrate on anything anymore. I feel really depressed in Canada. People always say Canadian people are so nice but I think people here are very cold.

Apply for a small grant activity



Objective:

The Vancouver Foundation provides grants from \$50 to \$500 to support projects in different neighborhoods in Vancouver, Abbotsford, Burnaby, Maple Ridge, the North Shore, North Surrey, Richmond, South Okanagan, Squamish, Clayquote Sound, and Victoria. The grants are intended to bring people together, share skills and knowledge, build a sense of belonging and responsibility, and respect and celebrate diversity in the community. Applying for a small grant is easy. You don't need to have any experience in the community.

How it is done:

Go to: <http://neighbourhoodsmallgrants.ca/grant/neighbourhood-small-grants>

Neighborhood Small Grants are for projects that:

- 1. *Connect and engage neighbours***
Examples: Social gatherings such as clothing swaps and potlucks.
- 2. *Share skills and knowledge***
Examples: Collaborative art making or storytelling sessions.
- 3. *Increase sense of belonging and responsibility***
Examples: Neighbourhood walking tour or removal of invasive plant species.
- 4. *Respect and celebrate diversity***
Examples: Multicultural community kitchen or project that connects newcomers with Indigenous communities to share cultures.

The eligibility criteria are designed to ensure that Neighbourhood Small Grants support a diverse range of community-focused projects.

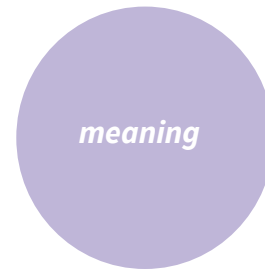
- You must live in a participating community - check our community map.
- Main applicants can apply for one Neighbourhood Small Grants project per year, and only within your community. Co-applicants can only be used on two applications.
- Two applicants living in the same community but from different households are required on every application. Both applicants are responsible for managing the grant money.
- Your project must be free, accessible and welcoming to all. You may not charge entrance fees, request donations, or fundraise for other projects and/or organizations.
- Except for community gardens, projects involving infrastructure building or upgrading or purchasing of large equipment such as computers are not eligible.
- Projects involving therapy and counseling support are not eligible.
- You may not profit financially from the project. Registered organizations and businesses are not eligible to apply. These grants are specifically for individuals and small volunteer-based neighbourhood /community groups.
- You must begin your project after the grant decision is made. Projects are not supported retroactively.
- Preference will be given to new projects, or those that have been funded for fewer than three years in a row.

Budget

Please consider the following when calculating your project budget:

- Grant requests are expected to be under \$500.
- Grant money may be used to pay people for services (also called honorariums) to help with the project. An example may be a carpenter or face painter. Total honorarium(s) may not be more than \$100 per project.
- When creating a project budget, you should determine the actual cost of items to be used, and think resourcefully about how to obtain materials through borrowing or donations.
- You are responsible for keeping expense receipts to account for all project costs.

Meaning



When all is lost, the future still remains

- Christian Nestell Bovee

Trauma can dismantle a person's sense of value and purpose in a new community. Often everything a refugee or immigrant has ever known and understood is turned upside down when starting over in a new country and they have to begin to re-invent themselves away from anything familiar.

You have the opportunity to help students regain a sense of meaning, opportunity, and hope so they can look forward to the future rather than ruminating on their past life experiences and losses. A key component to fostering a greater sense of well-being after traumatic experiences is fostering participation in the wider community – beyond the classroom. By helping students find a sense of meaning, they may begin to know they are relatively safe, supported, and have the confidence they need to feel hopeful.

For people with trauma, finding a sense of renewal and meaning may take time. They may come from cultures where gender norms are very prescribed and now they are in Canada, they may face uncertainty in where they can fit into the new environment.

Help students realize that it is okay to dream, be creative, and foster their sense of hope and renewal in a cultural climate that is, perhaps, safer for them. This will create a pathway towards a future with a sense of purpose and achievement.

Activities:

1. Vision Board
2. Setting Goals for the Future
3. Volunteer Opportunities
4. Meetups in the Community

Vision board activity

Objectives:

A vision board can really inspire students to look toward a positive future. The vision board should focus on how students want to feel, not just on the things they want. It's great to include the material desires, but make sure that students recognize that this activity is more about having a positive and purposeful future and material wealth will only provide a nominal amount of that.

What you will need:

- Glue sticks
- Card stock paper
- Magazines for cutting out images and words
- Various pens and pencil crayons

How it's done:

This activity can help students reflect on the current year or identify areas they want to improve in their lives. Draft a list from your students of what they want for their future. Is it to travel, get a job, be a better parent, volunteer, make new friends, get healthy?

1. Distribute magazines and ask students to cut/tear out images and words that represent what they envision.
2. Place the images on the vision board whichever way looks good.
3. Students will tend to rip out huge pictures but ask them to make space for important words they want to write, and other images they can overlap on each other. This will make it more interesting.
4. Ask students to take their vision boards home and take some time to reflect on it. Tell them to add words or pictures as they like. The objective here is to inspire and help them to look forward to their future.

Setting goals for the future activity

Objective:

Have students set specific goals for their future. This can help students to find purpose and meaning in their lives. It might be something like, improving English, losing weight, getting a job, having a more spiritual religious practice, but whatever it is there are some things that need to be in place for goals to be achieved.

Goals need to be specific. A good way to understand goal setting is through creating SMART goals. Go to <https://www.toolshero.com/time-management/smart-goals/>. It needs to be more than a personal value otherwise there won't be enough of a commitment to stick to achieving a goal.

What you will need:

- Colour paper or cardboard
- Handout

Goal: _____

I will achieve this goal by _____
Date

Four ways I can achieve this goal

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

I will start today by _____

I will ask my _____ to help me achieve my goal.

Sign _____ Witness _____

Goals also need to be achievable so there is a successful outcome. For example, a tangible goal might be to move up a Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) level in 6 months. Or to eat 3 vegetables a day. Goals need to be more than a personal value, but rather something to focus on and work towards success, otherwise there won't be enough of a commitment to stick to achieving the goal.

How it is done:

1. Brainstorm and discuss what are some achievable goals for newcomers to Canada.
2. When students have filled out their goal setting task, have them cut out the card and mount the paper on a coloured paper so they can easily find it and refer back to it when they get off track.
3. It is something your students can keep in their notebooks or find a safe and visible place to keep it at home.

Volunteer opportunities activity

Objectives:

Connect students with volunteer opportunities close to their home by researching possibilities that will fit with their schedule and interests.

What you will need:

- Access to the Internet or printed copies of possible volunteer positions in the community
- Handout

How it is done:

1. In class brainstorm ideas that can help students find volunteer opportunities. Is there a outreach worker or settlement worker that can facilitate in your program for this? If so, connect with them to do a workshop with your class.
2. If there is no outreach or settlement worker available, have your students discuss in groups the following questions:
 - What do you desire to do the most?
 - Have you set any goals for yourself?
 - How can you find ways to connect with the community outside of work?
3. Have the students then go and research areas of interest to see if there are any volunteer possibilities.
4. Have the students fill out the task sheet below with the information they need for volunteering.

Some ideas are:

Food Bank	Hospitals
Block Watch	Non-profit organizations
Festivals	Childcare centres
Settlement agencies	Community Centres
ESL classes	Libraries

Handout – Writing

Name of organization	_____
Contact name and phone number	() _____
Volunteer position	_____
Time and date available for volunteering	_____
Duties	_____ _____ _____
My level of confidence to do the job From 1 – 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Days in a week I can volunteer for this.	M T W Th F Sa Su
When I will contact this organization.	Today Tomorrow Next week Next month Never
I need help from my teacher to make contact with the organization	Yes - No

Meetups in the community activity



Objective:

If you go to <https://www.meetup.com/> you will find a plethora of possibilities that students can use to find and make new friends and enjoy other activities in their community. There are so many Meetup groups with activities and special interests such as outdoor and adventure, family, language and culture groups, writing groups, music groups, etc. These are possible ways for newcomers to access experiences outside of their cultural community and enjoy some newfound friendships and acquaintances. This can really help student with trauma to find new avenues for leisure and enjoyment, and possibly providing a sense of renewal and interest to move forward with life.

What you will need:

- Discussion questions on how to meet new people in Canada
- Access to the internet

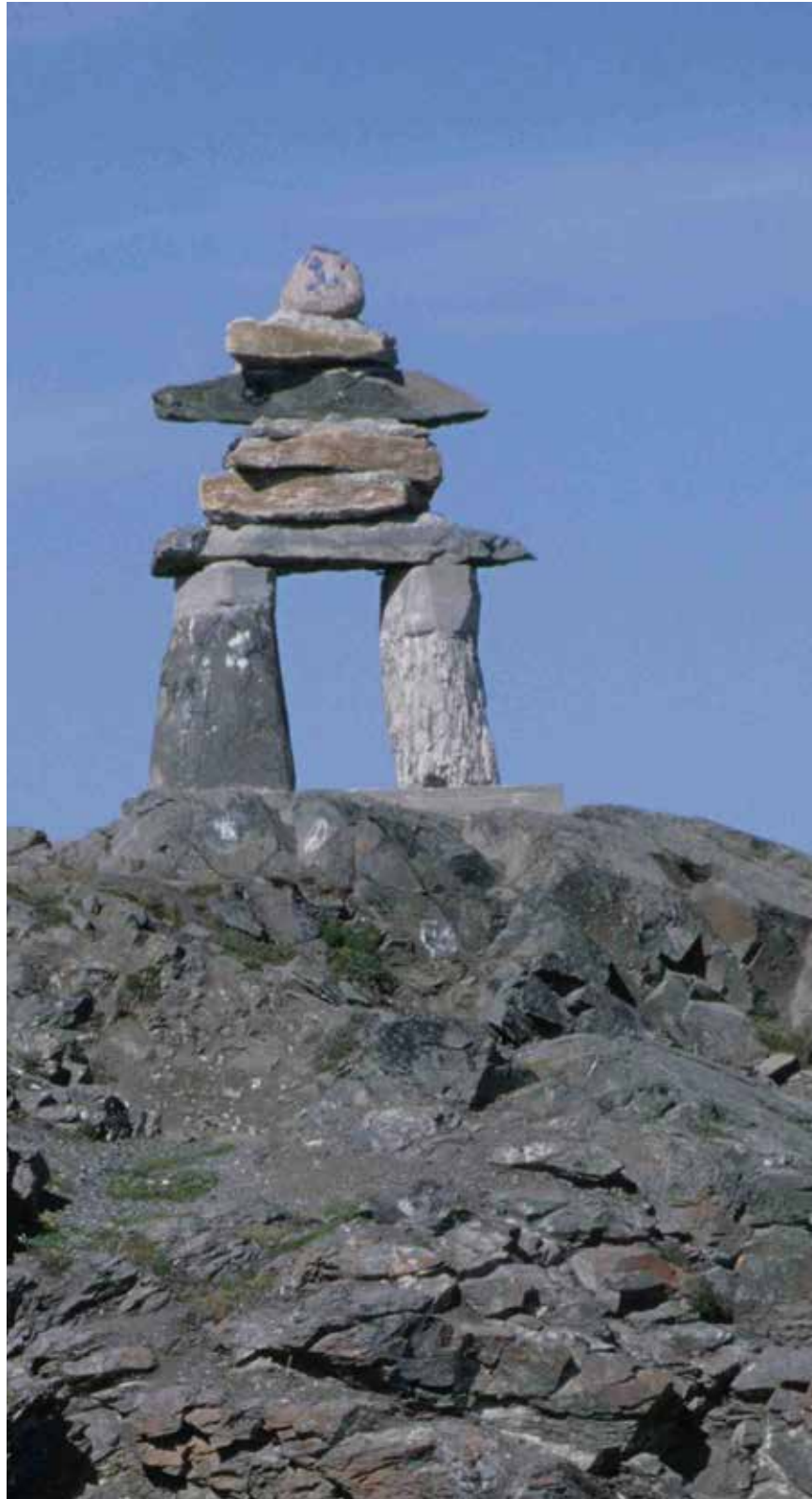
How it is done:

Go to <https://www.meetup.com/>

1. Have students work in pairs to explore possible Meetups that they would like to join.
2. Get the students to answer the following questions.
 - What meetup category am I interested in?
 - What meetup group am I interested in?
 - When is the next meetup for the group?
 - Where is the next meetup for the group?
 - What do I need to bring?
 - Can I go alone?
 - Will this be difficult for me?
 - Do you think I will have fun?
 - Do you think this will help me?

- Do you think I can meet new people?
3. Once the pairs have answered the questions for themselves, have the students report back to the class on which Meetup group they want to join. If possible, have the students do a presentation using the SMART Board technology and the Meetup they chose.

Section 4



Self-care for mind, body and soul

As we begin to re-experience a visceral reconnection with the needs of our bodies, there is a brand new capacity to warmly love the self. We experience a new quality of authenticity in our caring, which redirects our attention to our health, our diets, our energy, our time management. This enhanced care for the self-arises spontaneously and naturally, not as a response to a “should”. We are able to experience an immediate and intrinsic pleasure in self-care.

~ Stephen Cope, Yoga and the Quest for the True Self

Vicarious trauma

When we experience overwhelming information or are exposed to a participant’s traumatic experiences, our bodies adapt to help us cope. Everyone has stress in their lives and deals with it differently but when one experiences vicarious trauma we undergo a personal transformation and our views of our experiences, people, the world, and ourselves are negatively affected. When we are working with people who have experienced trauma and great adversity, and they tell us about their experiences, we can begin to experience the same traumatic effects which can be expressed through the body and mind. This is vicarious trauma and it can greatly affect one’s ability to cope.

Burnout

When we feel mentally and physically exhausted and are no longer competent at doing our job, we experience burnout. You may feel cynical or critical every day about the work you are doing. You may feel irritable and impatient with co-workers, students, and clients. You may feel you lack the energy to be consistently productive and you lack satisfaction and feel disillusioned by your workplace, then perhaps you are experiencing burnout.

Compassion fatigue

When we feel overtaxed by others suffering our compassion for others gradually lessens over time. We can no longer care about others in distress and we become dismissive of others suffering.

What are the signs that you might be experiencing this?

- insomnia
- increased susceptibility to illness
- anger and irritability
- avoidance of students
- emotional exhaustion
- distancing (avoiding friends and family; not spending time with

Colleagues in a social setting

- reduced ability to feel sympathy and empathy
- intrusive imagery
- hypersensitivity to emotionally charged stimuli
- insensitivity to emotional material
- loss of hope
- difficulty separating personal and professional lives
- failure to nurture and develop non-work related aspects of life

Silencing effect

Because of compassion fatigue, burnout or vicarious trauma, we can diminish, ignore, ridicule, or override others' experience of suffering. When we demand that our student or client fall into line, or we interrupt, judge, or bully, we may unintentionally silence those that need our support. We need to reflect on our language, body posture, and expressions so as not to cause more harm to those affected by trauma.

ABC of self-care

- Awareness–be aware to one's own needs limits, and emotions
- Balance–balance between work, rest, and play
- Connection–connect to oneself, to others, and something larger

Self-care doesn't have to be costly. It's nice to have the holidays, massages, spa days, gym memberships etc. but self-care simply requires you only to be consciously looking after yourself on a daily basis so that you don't have to suffer from the effects of vicarious trauma, burnout, or compassion fatigue.

An important note: Self-care should not be thought of as just another thing to add to the list of things you need to take care of. Self-care is important because it is an aspect of life that reflects your feelings of self-worth but don't punish yourself if you don't have the time to implement self-care strategies. The whole point of self-care is to feel good – not burdened.

Some strategies might be:

1. **Outside activities.** Walking in nature for 30 minutes calms the brain and heals the body. According to the David Strayer's hypothesis "being in nature allows the prefrontal cortex of the brain to dial down and rest, like an overused muscle." <https://www.straight.com/news/676281/david-suzuki-nature-calms-brain-and-heals-body>
2. **Journaling.** Keeping a journal of thoughts and feelings can help to dig out the root of a problem. It can distill negative feelings down to a specific cause such as self-doubt or disappointment. By writing down thoughts and feelings, issues can be addressed head on. Journaling can almost always improve your mood and leave you feeling calm, relaxed, and capable.
3. **Meditation, mindfulness.** There are many mindfulness and meditation practices that you can do. Many can be found on YouTube such as Meditation For Beginners: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mtsdz_jhB7c

4. **Limit use of social media.** Social media can add a lot of stress to people who tend to compare their lives to others. What we see and read on social media can negatively affect feelings of self-worth and value.
5. **Take time to be at home.** Don't over schedule your life.
6. **Hobbies and interests** will help you define your identity outside of work.
7. **Eat healthy.** Eat a whole food and plant-based diet as much as possible. Avoid fast food and sugar. Studies have shown that unhealthy foods negatively affect the brain and can be a cause of anxiety and depression.
8. **Friends, family, and supportive colleagues** can really help you to feel supported and talk about your feelings. Be sure that you set good boundaries and avoid people who cause you to feel negatively about life. Be discerning and recognize that you have the right to choose how you want to have your relationships.
9. **Be conscious of things that trigger negative feelings** whether that be people in your life, movies, stories you listening to outside of work that upset you. Be mindful of the movies, books, the news and other sources that cause you to get upset. Find deeper, critical news sources and read for pleasure.
10. **Support at work.** In addition to self-care strategies, there is a need for workplace strategies designed to promote a supportive work site. You need to feel you can talk to co-workers and managers so that positive relationships can be established. Try and support each other across the spectrum from management to support staff. We need each other.
11. **Create an ethical practice** – Probably one of the best ways to resist burn out is to make sure that you have the

resources you need to do what is ethical in the context of social justice. If you have the support and you believe that what you are doing is right and ethical then you can sustain hearing traumatic incidents. By having human connections and an openness to your own personal growth and transformation over time, you will resist burnout merely because you are able to contribute and make a difference in others lives in a positive, inspiring way.

12. **Practice gratitude** – The key to joy is in the practice of gratitude. When we rank ourselves against others, when we are unwilling to be empathetic, when we decide we don't want to belong to our communities, we lose the ability to self-care. "When you are grateful for what you have then I know you understand the magnitude of what I've lost." (Brown 263)

A final note:

I have known and worked with refugees all my adult life. I have had deeply meaningful and personal relationships with people who have been forced to journey along many roads and have found themselves, here, the place we call home.

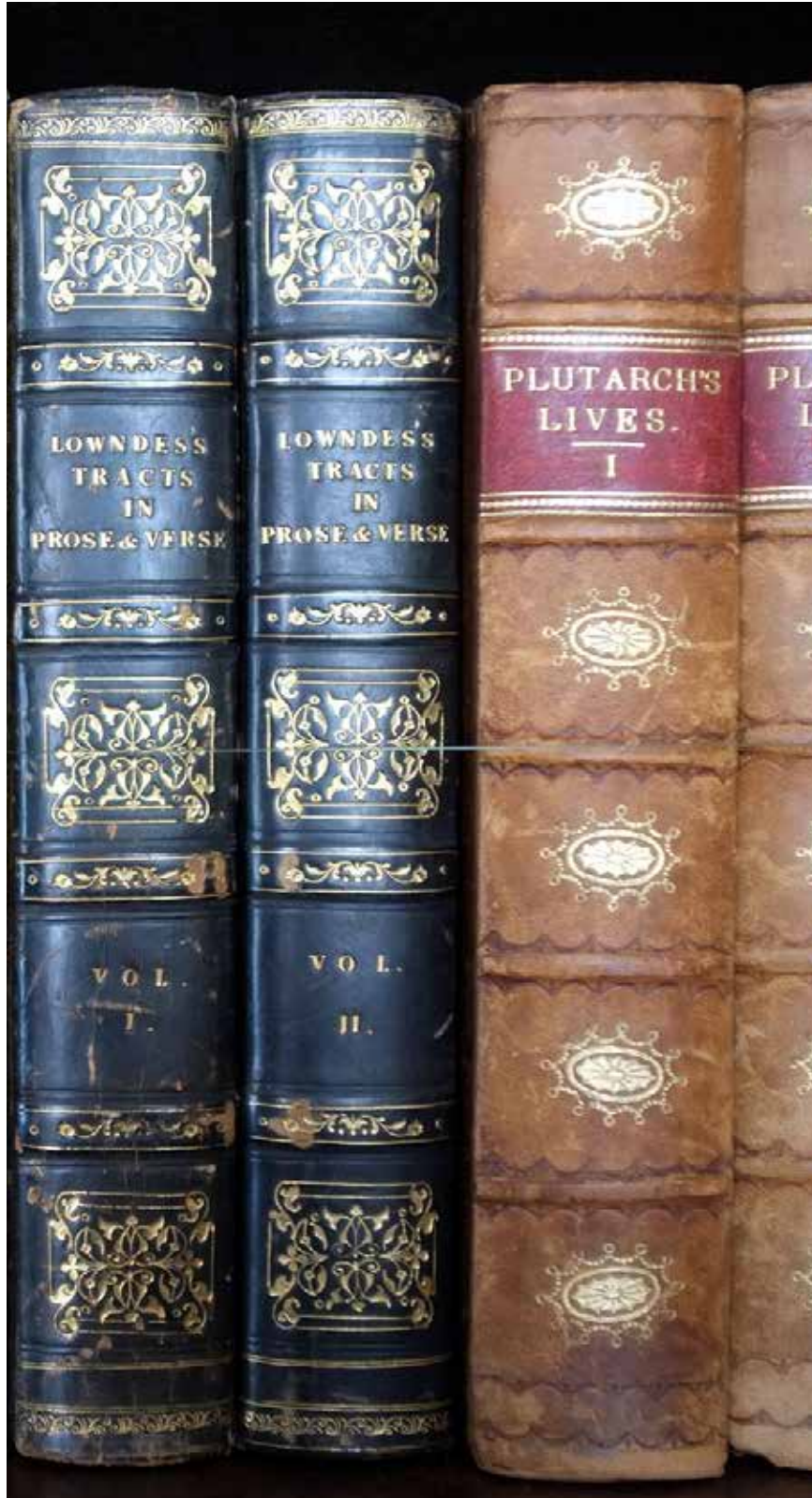
I have learned of what some of those migration journeys must've been like but more importantly I have had the privilege of connecting with people in spite of our differences in cultures, and values.

I have found that the work and the people I have known in this field has done more for my own ability to find my sense of belonging to the wider world and to know that the human spirit has the inspiration, the resiliency, and the right to belong everywhere.

You have the opportunity to help build the capacity for belonging for all. Don't waste your privileged position. Hold on to those spirited connections you make with others and know that you will not be forgotten by those you have honored.

DJ

Section 5



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