

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Awareness for EAL Learners: **TEACHER'S GUIDE**



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INTRODUCTION

The LINC classroom is for many newcomers the first step in their integration journey. An opportunity to establish connections, learn about Canadian culture and norms and even plant the seeds of belonging. Stage I LINC classes generally serve immigrants under family or refugee and humanitarian classes. Upon their arrival, many of these newcomers face additional barriers on top of language, such as lack of formal education, low literacy, being racialized in their new environment, change in socio-economic status, and loss of support networks. They may also be survivors of traumatic events. Historically, there are more female learners in LINC classes than male learners. According to Statistics Canada in 2018, 44% of women reported experiencing some form of psychological, physical, or sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetimes (Statistics Canada, 2021).

Given these numbers, the probabilities of encountering a student who has experienced Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Stage I LINC settings is high.¹

¹<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/reports-statistics/research/language-instruction-newcomers-canada-client-profile-performance-indicators/section-2.html>

Gender-Based Violence is a global problem...

...it occurs in all communities, regardless of socioeconomic status, culture, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or any other intersections. While newcomer communities do not report higher rates of GBV, they may be less likely to report violence due to racism, isolation, language and cultural barriers, immigration concerns, and lack or knowledge of community resources.

In the welcoming space of a classroom, learners can share their experiences and are receptive to new ideas and concepts. It is in these spaces where GBV conversations can occur, and the classroom could be an entry point for culturally sensitive, trauma-informed ways to create awareness and provide resources if necessary. Spaces where students remain in control and can learn about choice, rights, and safety.



THIS RESOURCE AIMS TO:

- **Equip** EAL instructors with tools and strategies for addressing and teaching GBV.
- **Raise** GBV awareness among immigrant, refugee, and newcomer populations.
- **Create** a safer and supportive environment in the LINC classroom where learners feel comfortable to share, listen, and express feelings.
- **Build** language competencies around discussing what happened, feelings about it, and options for Literacy to LINC 4 learners.
- **Empower** learners to make informed and confident choices about their lives in Canada.

This teacher's guide is not meant to be a comprehensive resource on Gender-Based Violence topics, nor to substitute more formal learning like courses or workshops, such as **Bridges to Safety**. Instead, its purpose is to support the implementation of the GBV EAL lesson plans and to address the most relevant challenges and concerns teachers have expressed when addressing the topic of GBV in the classroom.

The guide includes an overview of the lesson plans, a set of points, and suggestions for before, during and after delivering your lesson, a FAQ, and a resources section.



STRUCTURE

The lesson plans implement a storytelling, side-door, trauma informed approach. Learning through storytelling is particularly effective with cultures with rich oral traditions such as many in Africa, Middle East and South Asia, areas of origin of most of the refugee learners in ESL classrooms. These lessons move away from the one-sided approach where males are always the perpetrators and show more than one type of violence. The five stories created for the resource are:

- 1. Financial Abuse:** Ada's Story
- 2. Physical Abuse:** Mila's Story
- 3. Psychological Abuse:** Rana's Story
- 4. Sexual Abuse:** May's Story
- 5. Workplace Bullying and Harassment:** Marco's Story

The structure of each lesson plan is basically the same, but the story to tell and the plausible alternatives are specific for each case. The table below shows the outline for each lesson.

STEP	DESCRIPTION	FUNCTION
1	What is hurt? Introduction slide with concept of hurt.	Provides trigger warning.
2	Okay or not Okay? Listen and repeat, practise in partners.	Teaches language to express consent and being triggered.
3	Feelings Flashcard, matching, wordsearch, tracing, listening, speaking, and writing skill-building activities.	Identifies and articulates vocabulary for personal feelings and feelings in the story.
4	Feeling Sentences Speaking and writing skill-building activities.	Builds ways to express themselves before going to the story
5	Reflect + Predict Preview of the story.	Connects and applies concepts to story to come.
6	GBV Picture Story and Video Look and listen, listen and read, read out loud activities	Introduces a character going through GBV.
7	GBV Picture Story Comprehension Yes/No, cards, W/H, partner close and retelling activities.	Ensures the meaning of the story was understood.
8	GBV Picture Story – Options Vocabulary Teacher slides with flashcards, matching, tracing, writing, and listening skill-building activities.	Introduces options available for character in the story.
9	GBV Picture Story – Discussion Activities Discussion on feelings, options and empathetic responses.	Reflection and problem-solving as a group. Provides resources.
10	Skill-building and Assessment Tasks Listening, Speaking, Reading Writing tasks.	Builds on resources and introduces concept of safety planning and how to support someone experiencing violence.

APPROACH

Using a side-door approach, the lesson begins by discussing and building vocabulary about feelings as a gateway to GBV, providing learners the tools to express themselves during the lesson. As the lesson progresses, learners will also learn about:

- How to express feelings
- How to express empathy
- Concepts (GBV and trigger warnings without using those words)
- Canadian culture (laws, attitudes, and values without using these words)
- Life skills and community resources (how to get help)

Finally, the lessons incorporate a trauma-informed approach from the design and materials to the recommendations provided in this guide. One element woven through the lessons are regular check-ins to provide learners with the vocabulary for and model consent, act as trigger warnings and probe the comfort level of students providing the opportunity for them to opt-out or to choose their level or participation. This could look like pausing the lesson for a moment, offering the learner to take quick break, or providing an alternative activity for the student altogether.



Here are other elements included in each of the lessons and its purpose, from the point of view of scaffolding and learning:

Element	Purpose
Trigger Warnings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the concept and language of trigger warnings, a necessary and recurring idea in the CHECK-INS throughout the lesson for ALL levels • Personalize and apply the concept and language of trigger warnings in different situations • Enable learners to express their comfort level throughout the lesson • Allow instructors to gauge learner comfort now and throughout the lesson • Ensure trauma-informed teaching • Skill-build toward speaking assessment
Feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an accessible and necessary gateway to the topic of GBV for ALL levels • Enable learners to both understand the GBV story and express their feelings about it • Enable learners to express their feelings during the trigger warning CHECK-INS throughout the lesson in both discussion and reflection activities • Allow instructors to gauge learners' feelings now and throughout the lesson • Ensure trauma-informed teaching • Introduce the grammatical structure: subject + feel/s + adjective • Personalize and apply feelings vocabulary in different situations • Skill-build toward speaking assessment
GBV Story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce learners to the concept of GBV through pictures and storytelling • Practise listening and reading for main ideas, specific details, and key vocabulary (e.g. feeling words) • Provide a concrete example of GBV to enable learners to think about and discuss the issue, as well as their feelings and opinions on it, in a safe and hypothetical way • Provide an open-ended problem scenario for learners to freely brainstorm solutions
Your ideas + how to get help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce learners to community resources for GBV • Discuss feelings and opinions about the GBV scenario in a safe and hypothetical way • Brainstorm options in an open and judgment-free environment • Skill-build toward writing assessment
PBLA skills using & assessment activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess learners' understanding of the concepts and language learned. • Give learners further opportunities to independently apply their learning in real-world tasks. • Enable learners to reflect on their learning and their teacher's feedback. • Provide artifacts for PBLA portfolios. • Provide additional information about community resources (how to get help) in a public service announcement (CLB 3/4 listening) and checklist on what take when leaving an abusive situation (CLB 1/2 and CLB 3/4 reading).

Here are some points to consider before delivering any of the GBV EAL lessons:

LEGAL BACKGROUND

You are not expected to be an expert in Canadian laws related to GBV. However, a basic awareness is important. For example, that GBV is not acceptable, it can take many forms and support services are available. Your role is not to explain the law or provide legal advice, but to create a safer learning environment and connect learners to trusted supports when needed. If you want to further explore the Canadian laws and rights on the topic you can go to: **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms** (Sections 15 & 28), the **Canadian Human Rights Act** (Section 14) and the **Criminal Code of Canada** (Sections 264-273).

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Minimize trauma triggers by addressing the physical space. Ensure exit is accessible and unobstructed for learners. Minimize loud or sudden noises. Adjust the level of light, if possible, to something pleasantly illuminated where they can read without straining their eyes. Pay attention to any source of smells, or even better, make your classroom scent-free.

VOCABULARY

Choose language mindfully to avoid triggering or shaming learners. Use person first language like the term “person experiencing violence” rather than labels like “victim”. When referring to the person who harmed, refer to their behavior (e.g., “behaved abusively”) rather than labels like “abuser” or “perpetrator”. Although terms like “violence” “abuse” or “Gender-based violence” can cause learners to flinch; it’s important to name the problem as it is and to state that is not okay.

RESOURCES

Check the list of resources listed at the end of the guide as a start. Ideally, identify and reach out to a colleague from the Gender-Based Violence sector beforehand. Someone you can refer your learners to in case they need support. Prepare a list of province- or city-specific resources to share with learners.

Here are some points to consider before delivering any of the GBV EAL lessons:

AWARENESS & BIAS CHECK

Take time before the lesson to reflect about your own perceptions and biases of GBV. Take time to explore your and your learners' intersectionality to spot areas when you might hold different beliefs. Ask yourself, what beliefs do I hold? Are they true? Then, scout for resources such as the ones shared in this guide to dispel any misconceptions. Guide your ongoing learning by asking: what is something I would like to know more about?

SELF-CARE PREPARATION

Have a plan for your own support. Identify colleagues for debriefing if needed. Select self-care activities you plan to do, such as planning something restful or taking breaks.



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SELF-CARE PREPARATION

Have a plan for your own support. Identify colleagues for debriefing or clinical supervision if needed. Select self-care activities you plan to do, such as planning something restful or taking breaks.



BEFORE LESSON DELIVERY

TIP 1 WE STRONGLY ENCOURAGE YOU TO DELIVER THIS LESSON WITH A CO-FACILITATOR, LIKE A SETTLEMENT WORKER, CLASSROOM ASSISTANT, VOLUNTEER, OR OTHER LINC COLLEAGUE. THIS WILL ALLOW SPACE FOR YOU TO STEP OUT AND CARE FOR A LEARNER WHO FEELS DISTRESSED OR NEEDS SUPPORT.

TIP 2 IF YOU THINK THE MAKEUP OF YOUR CLASS WILL IMPOSE BARRIERS FOR LEARNERS TO ENGAGE WITH THE MATERIAL OR MAY CAUSE RETALIATION, CONSIDER SPLITTING YOUR CLASS BETWEEN MALE LEARNERS AND FEMALE LEARNERS.

TIP 3 MAKE THE LIST OF RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO ALL BUT LEAVE IT UP TO THEM TO TAKE IT OR NOT. CONCEAL THE LIST AS A BOOKLET OF ANOTHER TOPIC AS AN EXTRA PRECAUTION. YOU CAN HAVE THIS RESOURCE ALWAYS AVAILABLE DURING THE TERM FOR STUDENTS TO TAKE.

TIP 4 PLAN YOUR LESSON IN A WAY THAT YOU HAVE SPACE AFTER, LIKE A BREAK, OFFICE HOURS, OR AN EARLY DISMISSAL DAY IN CASE A LEARNER WANTS TO FOLLOW UP WITH YOU. THIS WAY, YOU CAN GIVE THEM YOUR FULL TIME AND ATTENTION.

TIP 5 MARKET YOUR LESSON WITH A POSITIVE AND WELCOMING LANGUAGE SUCH AS: SAFETY, RIGHTS, AND SUPPORT IN CANADA TO AVOID CAUSING FEAR OR DISCOMFORT. NEVERTHELESS, BE TRANSPARENT AND MAKE SURE LEARNERS KNOW AND UNDERSTAND BEFOREHAND WHAT THE LESSON IS ABOUT, SO THEY CAN MAKE AN INFORMED CHOICE ABOUT PARTICIPATION.



DURING LESSON DELIVERY

TRANSPARENCY

Provide trigger warnings at the start of the class, informing learners that the session involves scenarios where someone gets hurt (physically, emotionally, or psychologically). Depending on the level, you could write the word “hurt” on the board and ask learners what they think it means or show pictures of different kinds of hurt (e.g. physical injury like a broken leg, someone crying because they are emotionally hurt). Explain with simple and straightforward language that the purpose of the lesson is to learn about rights, safety, and resources in Canada and the role that everyone has in stopping GBV, whether it’s you, a friend, a family member, a colleague or a neighbour.

SET GROUND RULES

Establish clear expectations for respect and confidentiality at the beginning of the lesson. Let people know that information shared in the group should not be shared outside of the group and even so, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed when personal information is shared in a group setting. Add that if a learner wants to disclose something more personal related to GBV, they can reach out to you or a colleague after class, in a private, safer space, to support confidentiality. Additionally, let them know about Duty to Report: if there’s suspicion of a child (under 18) being abused or neglected, you must report it.



CHOICE OF PARTICIPATION

Actively foster opportunities for choice and control. The lesson plan has several check-in points, so use them to offer learners an option to opt out as the lesson progresses. Remind participants they can step out for a water break or if they need a moment. Encourage non-verbal participation methods, such as drawing, doodling, or fidgeting during the session. Reiterate that they do not need to share personal information.

DURING LESSON DELIVERY

NAVIGATING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Approach the material using an anti-racist, anti-oppressive lens and cultural humility, you can find many resources to expand your learning on these approaches at www.ngbv.ca. Discuss differences and similarities in social norms. You can begin with a simple, concrete example of cultural differences, e.g. food, clothing, etc. to ease into the topic and highlight that it is not a matter of right and wrong, or good and bad - it's just different. When discussing gender roles, emphasize that while different approaches exist globally, in Canada, it is not acceptable when someone is forced to conform or experiences violence or lack of consent. Always connect discussions of unacceptable behavior back to Canadian laws. Check **"How can I navigate cultural and gender roles differences between Canada and learners' countries of origin?"** In the FAQ section.



REFRAIN FROM BEING PRESCRIPTIVE

The lessons scaffold from vocabulary around feelings and expressing being okay vs. not being okay to a problem-solving mindset where they should provide options to the character of the story. This is where different approaches and ideas may arise. Be respectful of the options suggested, and refrain from offering advice. The intention is for them to first know about the options, then observe where the classroom consensus may lead, and finally form their own criteria. Remember this may be the first time they are confronted with ideas that may go against their beliefs.



DURING LESSON DELIVERY

RESPONDING TO INAPPROPRIATE COMMENTS

Be prepared to manage inappropriate comments or jokes. Respond politely, disagreeing and redirecting if necessary (e.g., "I can't agree with you on this, but as we were saying..."). Reframe comments to avoid reinforcing stereotypes. Encourage participants to use "I" statements not "you should." Stay neutral and acknowledge multiple perspectives but then redirect to learning objectives.



STAY CALM

Pay attention to your own feelings. It is paramount you stay calm during the session as your students will notice your mood and mirror it subconsciously. Take long breaths and anchor yourself on a sensation, like rubbing your hands as if you were washing them, to ground yourself and stay focused.



SCAN THE CLASSROOM CONSTANTLY

Pay attention to any signs of distress in your learners (body language changes, withdrawal, sudden emotional responses, leaving the room, over-sharing, etc.). Check in with learners who look anxious or stressed after class. Let them know you noticed their discomfort, that you care for them and that they can talk to you if they need support.



RESPOND CALMLY TO ANY LEARNER'S DISCLOSURES

As much as possible, make sure disclosures occur in a private space. If you sense a learner is about to share personal information, let them know gently that they can continue the conversation privately if the learner feels like it. Remind them that they do not need to share all the personal details and that your role is to provide support and access to experts or services if needed. If a learner shares something personal, evaluate if the intention of sharing were to inform the discussion at hand or ask for support. Thank them for trusting you and the class with this information. Validate the importance and courage taken but without judgment or over-reactions. You can say something like "Thank you for sharing," "That is so insightful" or "I appreciate your strength." Then, redirect the attention of the group. If you notice this is a call for help, add: "This is important. Let's talk privately after class so I can help you to find support." Do not ask follow-up questions in front of others and return the focus to the topic.



RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURE

If a learner discloses GBV, actively listen to them and **do not dismiss the disclosure**. If the disclosure happens privately, follow protocols for responding. Say, "**I believe you,**" and "**It is not your fault**". Suggest a referral with an anti-violence expert through a warm referral. Discuss options like calling a crisis line or going to a shelter. Critically, you must **follow the learner's lead** on what they want to do, acknowledging that it is normal not to want to report or leave an abusive relationship immediately. Avoid taking control or making choices for them; instead, offer clear information so they can make informed choices. Accessing support after disclosure can help to prevent further violence for survivors who continue to be exposed to GBV. However, negative, or unsupportive responses to GBV disclosure can be harmful to a survivor's well-being, safety, healing, and recovery. Judgemental, disbelieving, and dismissive responses to GBV disclosure can undermine a survivor's confidence and decision to seek help; it may also contribute to re-traumatization or secondary abuse. Such responses can cause self-blame and shame, compound the harmful effects of violence, prevent the survivor from seeking help from others, and keep them in situations where they are at risk of GBV.



AFTER LESSON DELIVERY

DUTY TO REPORT

Be aware of and mention Duty to Report laws, particularly regarding child protection issues. Child protection laws protect children from living free of violence, including witnessing violence, neglect, emotional violence, and physical/sexual abuse. If you receive information that raises concerns about child abuse, ensure you follow your organization's required reporting protocols.



FOLLOW UP

Check in briefly and sensitively with any learner who has confided in you. Also, follow up with the settlement worker, counsellor, or GBV staff you refer to, and check if there are any additional supports to provide.



MANAGING VICARIOUS TRAUMA

Engage in self-care strategies, which may include using grounding techniques, breathing, meditation, or movement. Debrief with trusted colleagues or supervisors to manage difficult feelings and vicarious trauma. Practice self-compassion and remember the limitations of your role. You are not a counsellor or social worker; your role is creating awareness, being an ally and providing further resources, including accurate information about Canadian laws and rights.



AFTER LESSON DELIVERY

HOW TO RESPOND TO DISCLOSURES

1. LISTEN WITHOUT JUDGEMENT.
2. BELIEVE AND VALIDATE THEM.
3. STAY CALM, AVOID STRONG EMOTIONAL REACTIONS.
4. TELL THEM IT IS NOT THEIR FAULT.
5. PROVIDE CHOICES, RESIST THE URGE TO 'RESCUE' THEM, AND AVOID REPLICATING CONTROLLING BEHAVIOURS.
6. REDUCE THE NUMBER OF TIMES A CLIENT HAS TO TELL THEIR STORY.
7. BE PATIENT AND RESPECT THEIR RHYTHM.

SUPPORTIVE STATEMENTS YOU CAN USE:

- "IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT."
- "HOW CAN I HELP YOU?"
- "WHAT DO YOU NEED?"
- "I BELIEVE YOU."
- "THANK YOU FOR TRUSTING ME."
- "LET'S FIND RESOURCES TOGETHER."

AVOID USING ANY OF THESE HARMFUL EXPRESSIONS

AS IT REINFORCES STEREOTYPES AND MYTHS:

- "RAPE CAN'T HAPPEN IF PEOPLE ARE MARRIED."
- "WHY WERE YOU OUT AT NIGHT BY YOURSELF?"
- "HE'S SUCH A NICE GUY, HE WOULDN'T DO THAT."
- "THEY ARE SUCH A NICE PERSON, THEY WOULDN'T DO THAT."
- "IT'S BETTER FOR THE CHILDREN IF THE FAMILY STAYS TOGETHER."
- "WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST LEAVE?"
- "WHY WAS HE ANGRY AT YOU?"
- "WHY DIDN'T YOU FIGHT BACK?"

AVOID "WHY" TYPE QUESTIONS AS THEY TEND TO PUT THE BLAME ON THE PERSON EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE, CAUSING FURTHER HARM.

CONDUCT A BASIC SAFETY PLANNING:

- REASSURE THEM THAT THERE IS HELP AVAILABLE.
- MAKE A FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT WITH THEM OR A REFERRAL.
- ASK IF THEIR NUMBER IS SAFE TO CALL - IF NOT, IS THERE ANOTHER WAY TO COMMUNICATE?
- ASK IF THEY FEEL SAFE WHERE THEY ARE STAYING AND WHETHER THEY WOULD LIKE TO ACCESS A SHELTER.
- PROVIDE A 24-HOUR HELPLINE NUMBER.



What kind of vocabulary can I use to avoid triggering my learners?

The reality is that there is no way to guarantee learners will not be triggered by the content of the lessons. Nevertheless, having a calm approach to the subject and being comfortable with certain terms and definitions can help. For example, we suggest you familiarize yourself with the definitions of sex vs. gender to start with (see box). We also suggest using “person experiencing/who has suffered violence” instead of “victim/survivor” and “person who has used violence” instead of “abuser/perpetrator” to steer away from stigmatization and/or defensiveness.

SEX • GENDER • GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Sex refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define males, females, and intersex persons. **Gender** refers to the roles and behaviours society associates with being female or male. Gender is a social construct and as such is fluid, varies from culture to culture and changes over time. **Gender-Based Violence** then, is any physical, psychological, sexual, financial, or spiritual harm someone has experienced because of their gender, gender expression, gender identity, or perceived gender.

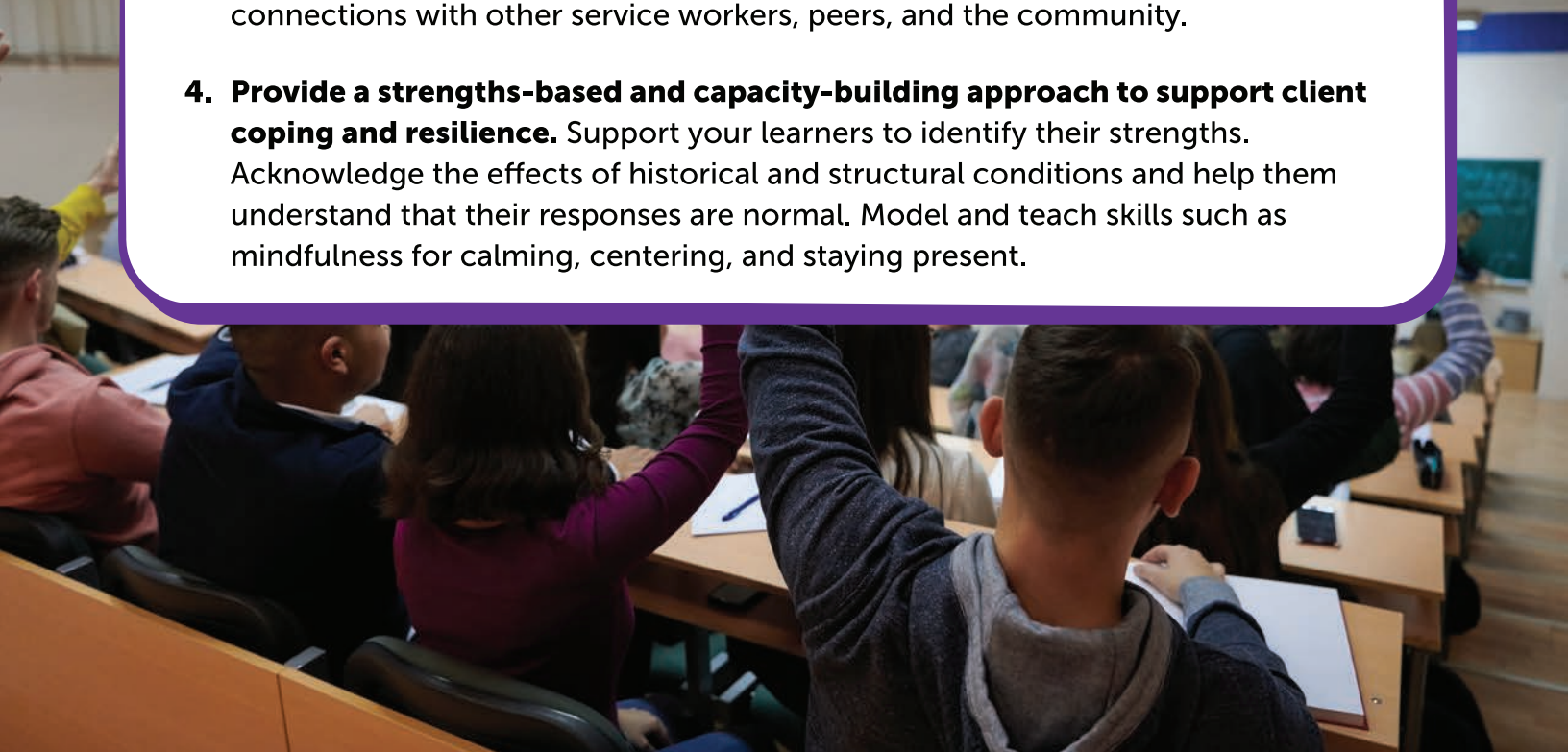


What trauma- and violence-informed approaches should I keep in mind during these lessons?

Trauma and violence-informed approaches recognize the profound links between violence, trauma, and negative health outcomes. A trauma-informed approach focuses on increasing safety, control, and resilience in participants. Using a trauma-informed approach in all aspects of your practice supports everyone.

FOUR TRAUMA-INFORMED PRINCIPLES FOR THE CLASSROOM:

- 1. Understand trauma and violence and their impacts on people's lives and behaviours.** The impact of trauma in development and learning, the strategies people use to cope and survive trauma and the relationship between trauma and physical and mental health.
- 2. Create emotionally and physically safe environments.** Safety and trust can be established with everyday practices, such as inviting physical spaces, providing clear and consistent expectations, and using non-judgmental communication.
- 3. Foster opportunities for choice, collaboration, and connection.** Dignity, self-determination, and personal control are key. Offer choices without imposing, involve learners in decision making and support them to establish safe connections with other service workers, peers, and the community.
- 4. Provide a strengths-based and capacity-building approach to support client coping and resilience.** Support your learners to identify their strengths. Acknowledge the effects of historical and structural conditions and help them understand that their responses are normal. Model and teach skills such as mindfulness for calming, centering, and staying present.



What are the types of violence?

According to the GBV Responders Networks there are five categories of GBV: Physical, Sexual, Emotional, and/or Psychological, Social-Economic Violence and Harmful Traditional Practices.

- **Sexual Violence.** Any completed or attempted sexual act against a person's will or against a person unable to give consent.
- **Physical Violence.** An act of physical violence that is not sexual in nature. Usually occurs in intimate partner relationships. It can include forms of violence or neglectful acts that cause physical pain or injury.
- **Emotional and Psychological Violence.** Infliction of mental or emotional pain or injury. It intends to frighten, intimidate, terrorize, manipulate, hurt, blame, injure or wound to maintain control over a person.
- **Economic Violence.** Abuse perpetrated in a non-physical manner that denies women and girls access to income/earnings and social opportunities for advancement.
- **Harmful Traditional Practices.** Acts that can be included in the types of violence aforementioned but that are specific to cultures in which girls and women are severely undervalued, considered second-class citizens and have fewer rights. Includes Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C), early or forced marriage, so-called "honour" killing, female infanticide or neglect.



What are some challenges women in my classroom may be facing to access GBV services?

Your learners may face the following barriers to report violence or access services^{2,3}:

- Social isolation
- Lack of knowledge about anti-violence services
- Lack of information about laws in Canada and legal rights, lack of access to justice
- Concerns regarding immigration status / fear of deportation
- Fear of police
- Fear of stigma if they speak up about gender-based violence
- Fear of losing their children
- Economic exclusion
- Language barriers
- Concerns about racism and cultural stereotyping from service providers
- Family and cultural expectations
- Lack of accommodation in services for cultural or religious needs
- Underemployment / lack of recognition of foreign credentials
- Lack of coordinated services between different sectors
- Barriers for men to access services
- Additional barriers for LGBTQIA+ people

² <https://ocasi.org/sites/default/files/ocasi-gbv-toolkit-english-online.pdf>

³ <https://www.immigrantandrefugeenff.ca/violence-against-women>



**What is the cycle of abuse?
Why is it relevant for this context?**

Being in a situation of abuse can make the person experiencing violence feel confused, upset, and overwhelmed.

Intimate partner violence and family violence can both follow a "cycle of abuse", where the person using violence moves back and forth between being affectionate or kind, and then violent or abusive. This cycle can be very confusing and manipulative. It can make it difficult for the person living it to recognize that abuse is happening.



In your work with learners, it is important to notice if there is a pattern in moods and behaviours of your students, to recognise if someone is experiencing the cycle of abuse in their life.

How can I navigate cultural and gender roles differences between Canada and learners' countries of origin?

Start by stating that everyone has the right to live free from violence and making it clear that when someone gets hurt, it is not okay. Mention that abuse happens in all communities (you can share statistics of GBV in Canada to support your statement). Do not assume or make links between abuse and race, culture, or religion. Do not dehumanize the person inflicting harm with labels such as "barbarian," "monster," "backwards," or "animal," but keep consistently saying that what they are doing is wrong.

THESE ARE SOME PHRASES YOU COULD USE:

- "In Canada, the law says..."
- "Canadian law protects everyone by..."
- "In this country, people have the right to..."
- "Here, you can access these services..."
- "Many countries have different views, and in Canada..."
- "Everyone has the right to live a life free from violence..."
- "Nothing justifies gender-based violence..."



Use the Acknowledge, Inform, Empower approach to bridge cultural differences:

ISSUE	ACKNOWLEDGE	INFORM	EMPOWER
In my culture men make the decisions and women stay at home.	"Different cultures have different family structures."	"Canadian law gives everyone equal rights - in marriage, work, and decisions."	"Everyone can make choices about their own life here."
It's private. / It's a family matter.	"I understand in many places, family matters are kept private."	"In Canada, there are laws to protect people from violence, even in families."	"You can choose to get help. Services are confidential and respectful."
I will risk my status in Canada.	"I understand your fear about your immigration process"	"In Canada, you can get help even if you don't have permanent residence. Shelters and crisis lines do not check immigration status."*	Provide specific information about rights for temporary residents and refugees.

*Although different organizations provide support for individuals who are not permanent residents, there are still accessibility barriers. People with Permanent Residency often have more options and better protection than people with precarious status, or non-status refugees and immigrants.

How can I navigate cultural and gender roles differences between Canada and learners' countries of origin?

Use the Acknowledge, Inform, Empower approach to bridge cultural differences:

ISSUE	ACKNOWLEDGE	INFORM	EMPOWER
I do not trust police	"I acknowledge that not everyone feels safe seeking help from the police"	"Police officers' job is to maintain peace and order and enforce the law."	"You have not done anything wrong. If it helps, you can request someone to accompany you when you go to the police."
I don't have a way to support myself.	"I understand leaving can mean losing financial security."	"In Canada, there are programs to help: housing, food banks job training."	Provide specific resource information. Support learners in connecting with relevant organizations and services but do not pressure them to leave.

Note: Even when there are laws and codes to protect people experiencing GBV or punish people perpetrating GBV in Canada, abuse still happens here, too. Make sure to convey that this is an issue that concerns us all, globally, and locally, not something isolated happening elsewhere in the world or a newcomer issue only.

What is Duty to Report?

Duty to report is an obligation we have as service providers to inform the authorities when there is suspicion that child abuse or neglect is happening. Each province has its own law to dictate what to do, where to report, and the information you will need. We all have a role to play in stopping child abuse. Also, check your organization's policies in case they have additional guidelines. Protocols may also be in place to deal with learners who impose a danger to themselves or others.

How can I address the topic in a mixed classroom without making my male learners uncomfortable or defensive?

Frame GBV as affecting everyone: men can be survivors of GBV, too. Discuss healthy relationships, not just violence. Acknowledge societal pressure on men. Emphasize that most men are not violent. This is about rights and safety for all.

I am hesitant about delivering these lessons, what if I do more harm than good?

It can feel overwhelming to think about supporting someone who is living with abuse. However, you don't have to be an expert to make a difference. Everyone has a role to play in supporting survivors of gender-based violence and connecting them to appropriate services.

Here is a table adapted from **Responding When Concerned - Neighbours, Friends and Families** - Western University that can support you to overcome doubt.

POINTS OF CONCERN	POINTS TO CONSIDER
You feel it's none of your business.	It could be a matter of life or death. Violence is everyone's business.
You don't know what to say.	Saying you care and are concerned is a good start.
You're worried about sounding racist.	You can learn anti-racist ways of offering support.
You're afraid his violence will turn to you or your family.	Speak to her alone. Let the police know if you receive threats.
You feel overwhelmed that you'll have to support her all by yourself.	This work is meant to be a team effort. Get support from your supervisor and from others at your agency. Collaborate across sectors.
You're afraid that she'll become angry with you.	Maybe, but she will know you care.
You're afraid that her partner is a nice guy.	But she is living in fear.
You believe that if she wanted help, she'd ask for it.	She may be too afraid or ashamed to ask for help.
You think it's a private matter.	It isn't when someone is being hurt.

What if one of my students decides to call the police without realizing of the consequences?

The lessons provide a list of possible alternatives the characters of the story can take, including calling the police. As instructor, you are not telling them what to do (or what the character of the story should do). The group will work together to find out what would be the best solution for the character, this discussion also provides a sense of where people lean in their beliefs. It is important than during the discussion the students also learn of the consequences and to advice that if they or someone they know are facing a similar situation, they must understand what asking for help also entitles such as any legal, financial, or safety consequence."



HELPLINES & RESOURCES

1. **ESVA Canada's Getting Help.** endingviolencecanada.org/getting-help
Repository with a list of crisis lines, sexual assault centres, and provincial and territorial organizations.
2. **Shelter Safe.** www.sheltersafe.ca provides a map with shelters and transitions houses.
3. **National Suicide Prevention/crisis support.** <https://988.ca/> Call or text at 988.
4. **i heal app.** www.ihealapp.ca/ Helping Canadian women who have experienced abuse find personalized ways to stay safe and be well.
5. **Kids Help Phone.** www.kidshelpphone.ca/ Phone 1-800-668-6868 or text 686868 to connect with Kids Help Phone, 24/7 e-mental health service offering free, multilingual, and confidential support to help all young people.
6. **211.** www.211.ca Repository with resources in over 150 languages to reach local information and referral services to health, human, and social service organizations. Available by phone, chat, or text 24/7, 365 days.
7. **Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline:** Call 1-833-900-1010 for support and services. Available 24/7, this hotline connects victims and survivors with local services and law enforcement. <https://canadianhumantraffickinghotline.ca/>
8. **Temporary Residence Permit for Victims of Family Violence program.** Offers specific supports and protections for individuals to escape violent situation and think about next steps.
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrat-e-canada/family-sponsorship/fees-permits-victims.html>
9. **National Gender-Based Violence Settlement Sector Strategy Project** www.ngbv.ca This project is dedicated to raising awareness about Gender-Based Violence and to offer tools and resources for the settlement sector in collaboration with the anti-violence sector.
10. **Neighbours, friends, and families** www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca
Community focused public education campaign to provide information and resources for the prevention of intimate partner violence (IPV). NFF offers practical tools and information to support people in recognizing warning signs, understanding risks, and taking safe steps when someone may be experiencing harm or using harmful behaviours.
11. **Government of Canada support services for those affected by gender-based violence.**
<https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/gender-based-violence/additional-support-services.html>

QUICK REFERENCE CHART

Situation

Your Action

Student discloses in class

Thank them, redirect to private conversation, give resources to everyone

Student wants to talk privately

Listen, believe, provide resources, explain confidentiality limits

Child safety concern

Follow mandatory reporting protocol immediately

Student disagrees with Canadian laws

Acknowledge their perspective, clarify what law requires, don't debate

Cultural practice conflicts with Canadian law

Use Acknowledge, Inform, and Empower: honor culture while teaching Canadian context

Learner asks you for legal advice

Explain clearly that you cannot provide legal advice and refer them to appropriate services

Student asks, "What should I do?"

Provide options and resources, not directives; support their decision-making