



THE STORIES OF US

# Storytelling x LINC Curriculum



v1.0

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## HOW TO SET UP THIS WORKSHOP SERIES

### Make it a part of an existing LINC curriculum

This curriculum is most effective when integrated into an existing LINC program, rather than promoted as a standalone series. The former instills the idea that storytelling is an important part of the language learning process, which students often understand by the end of the series but isn't as intuitive at the beginning of the process. It adds legitimacy to the storytelling activities and helps increase workshop attendance. In the pilot with MNLCT, the storytelling curriculum was delivered for 6 weeks on Wednesdays from 9:30-11:30AM with the LINC 3/4 class and 12:30-2:30PM with the LINC 5/6 class. The LINC teachers for these classes also built on workshop activities to inform their lesson plans for the days in between workshops and to design PBLA assessments.

### Size of class and sharing

LINC classes tend to vary in size, with some classes that have less than 10 students on any given day to others that have upwards of 25 students. The activities in this curriculum, particularly the sharebacks from individuals to the larger group, can take different forms depending on the size of the class. Whereas smaller classes can afford time for all students to present to the class, larger classes can be accommodated with partnered or small-group sharing. Given the realities of newcomers' lives, life circumstances might prevent them from attending all the workshops. In this case, it is useful for the teacher to connect with students who have missed workshops to get them up to speed before the next workshop.

### Ideal amount of time

Each workshop is designed to take no less than 2 hours. The pilot workshop series consisted of workshops that were 2 hours long, which sometimes included a 10 min break. Given that so much of the value of this series is in sharing the stories that participants write, the LINC teachers often used the class(es) after each workshop to continue the process of sharing, for example, through class presentations or listening / speaking assessments.

### Brave Space

Setting up a space that invites participants to be brave in what they share is key. *F YX* *h M`ck` h`* ; *f Yb` h`* is an effective tool for empowering participants to judge for themselves which stories they want to share and which to keep to themselves. ; *f Yb` h`* stories are the stories that we tell all the time. We're comfortable with them and we know them like the back of our hands. *M`ck` h`* stories are the ones that require us to be brave. We have processed them for ourselves, but we haven't shared them with many or any people. *F YX` h`* stories tend to be rife with emotion and often involve trauma. They are the stories we haven't yet processed and it may feel unsafe or unhealthy for our own wellbeing to share them with others. In these workshops, we encourage participants to share their yellow light stories. We invite participants to step outside of their comfort zone, only to the extent that they feel they can handle. It is also important to acknowledge out loud that what makes up a red, yellow, or green light story is different for everyone. It's not about comparing whose story is better or worse, but rather empowering each participant to share what feels brave to them.

## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

**Workshop 1:** Mapping key moments in the overall arc of our lives.

**Workshop 2:** Unpacking the concept of ‘home’ and its many dimensions.

**Workshop 3:** Describing the journey to Canada, from the moment we decided to immigrate to the moment we landed in Canada.

**Workshop 4:** Detailing the first few weeks in Canada, including any discrepancies between our expectations vs. reality.

**Workshop 5:** Identifying our strengths and exploring how they can help us build a future in Canada.

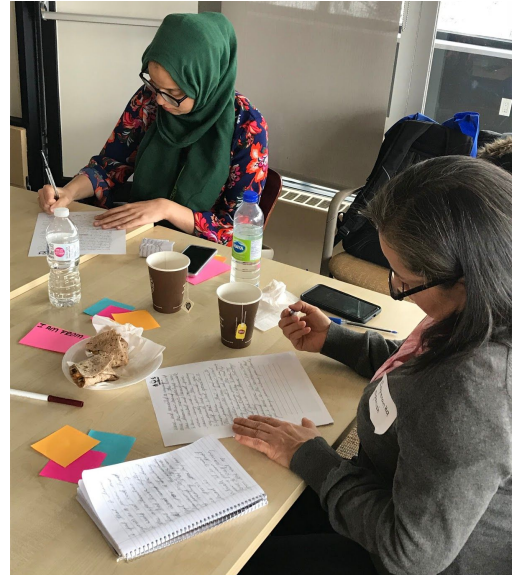
**Workshop 6:** Celebrating our stories and the storytelling process

## OVERALL WORKSHOP FORMAT

**All of the workshops in this series follow a similar format:**

1. Oral storytelling circle\*
  - Starting with Oral Storytelling can be a good warm-up to a session, and depending on the prompts that are chosen, allows students to share stories that may not be directly related to their immigration journey. It allows students to get to know each other beyond their identities as newcomers.
2. Explanation of the session’s theme and activity
  - It is important to share with students how the theme for each session builds on the previous sessions and contributes to their story.
3. Individual writing
4. Break
5. Sharing our writing in a group\*

\*For Steps 1 and 5, stories can be shared to the full class, in small groups, or in partners, depending on the number of students in the class and the time available. Partnered sharing can be especially effective for students who may not feel comfortable presenting in front of the whole class.



## WEEK 1

### Objectives:

- To begin to seed the idea that we all have stories.
- To map out key moments in our lives, which will serve as fodder for future story-writing.
- To provide participants an opportunity to share their journey as they experienced it, instead of assuming a journey based on their country of origin, age, race, gender, etc.

### Session Flow:

- Oral Storytelling Circle (Full group / Small group / In partners)
  - Example Prompt: What is a story of your name?
- My Life As A River Activity (Individual)
- My Life As A River Shareback (Full group / Small group / In partners)

### Activity Templates

- See My Life as a River description below

### Facilitator Notes

- During the Oral Storytelling Circle, it is useful to have the teacher share their own story in response to the prompt first, as a way of building trust and modelling vulnerability with the students.
- This session can be framed as laying a foundation for a house before starting to build up.
- Given that starting to write one's story can be an intimidating task, this session is designed to map out all the moments one can expand on, without diving into the task of writing out all the details.
- The initial sessions can bring up comments from students like "I don't have a story" and "My story is not interesting". This is normal. This process is designed to *glck* participants that they have a story worth sharing, rather than telling them. As they begin to remember and write the details of their story, and as they share and receive validation from their peers, they will come to recognize the unique value of their story. This shift might happen in the first session, during the last, or anywhere in between.

## ACTIVITY: MY LIFE AS A RIVER

### AIMS

- To encourage participants to think of their whole life as potential material that can be used in creative writing
- To provide a metaphorical space in which participants can explore life events at a safe distance

### METHOD

1. Hand out 11x17 paper to each participant and ensure that they have access to pens, markers, and post-its to aid them in creating their river.
2. Introduce the idea of imagining one's life as a river, spend some time explaining how they might unpack the river as a metaphor:

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*F J Yfg'UFY VtbgfUblm]b'a ch]cbz'h Yma cj Y'Zca 'cbY'd'UMV'hc Ubch Yfz'gca Yh]a Yg'h Yma cj Y' ]b'Us  
gfu][ \h']bY'UbX'ch Yf'h]a Yg'h Yf'dUa ]g'k ]bX]b[ "H Yma ][ \hVt'a Y'Zca 'h Y'a ci bhU]bgz'VY'U'ga U's  
ghfYUa 'cf'U'gYf]Yg'cZfUd]Xgzk UYfZU'g'UbX'k \]f'dcc'g" #ia ][ \h'fUj Y' h'fci [ \ Zc'fYg'g'cf V]Y'g's  
h'fci [ \ 'U\_Yg'UbX'i bXYf'Vf]X[ Yg'z'ci h]b]hc 'h Y'cWU'ub'cf'a UhVY'Yj Yb'ZccX"*

3. Encourage participants to draw their river in a way that feels true to their experience of life. Invite them to note and/or draw key life experiences along the river banks. The post-it notes can be used to explain certain key points in a bit more detail. Any other decorations or craft supplies that you have at hand can also be used in whatever way the participants would like.
4. Before inviting participants to draw their rivers, model what an example river - ideally your own - might look like. Modelling in this way helps participants get a better sense of what they are being asked to do, as well as builds trust by sharing a bit of your own story. Remember that in sharing both ups and downs, positive and negative moments of your life in the example river, you are giving participants permission to do the same.
5. Once you've modelled the example river, give participants 30 minutes to complete the exercise. Give participants a heads-up before the 30 minute mark so that they are able to ease out of the activity.
6. Invite participants to share their rivers with the rest of the group. Ask questions about the things you are curious about (though don't push them to say more than they are comfortable with). Encourage a celebratory atmosphere in which everyone's experience is valid and worthy of attention. A round of applause can go a long way in validating an individual's experience and encouraging other participants to share in kind.



7. Conclude the activity by thanking everyone for their participation and explaining that the rivers they've created are a vast resource that can be used in the participants' story-writing process. The experiences that make up their lives are the most fertile ground for possible writing. They can return to the rivers as a source of material many times and in many different ways.

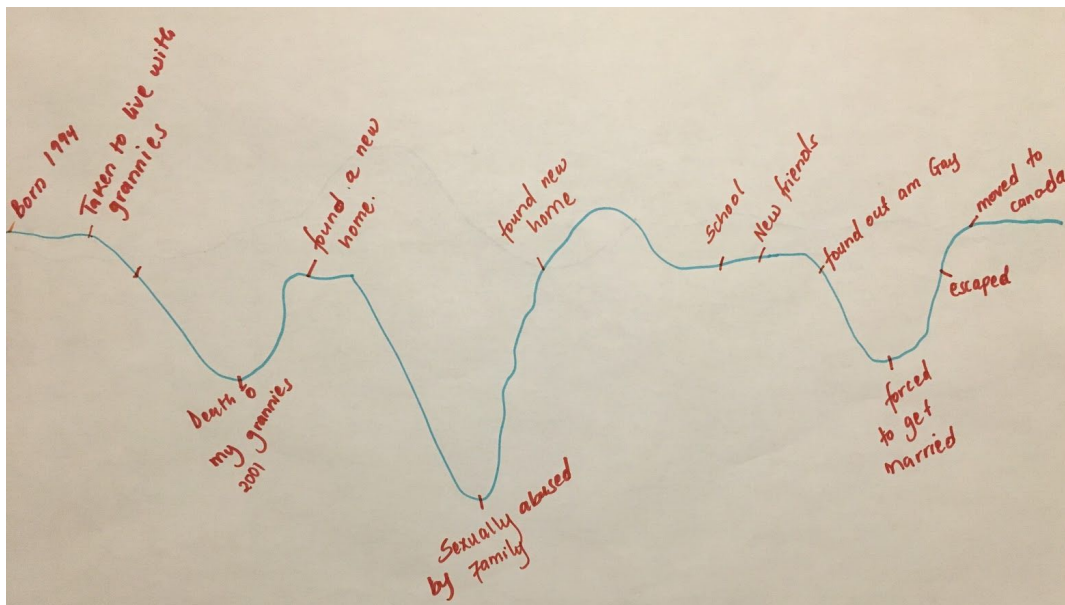
## MATERIALS

- 11x17 paper for each participants
- Pens, markers, post-its

## FACILITATOR TIPS

- Let participants know that they can start their river whenever they would like (i.e. It doesn't necessarily have to be from birth). Given that some participants may not want to revisit past traumas or certain life experiences, this gives them the option to start their river at a more hopeful moment in their lives (e.g. when they arrived to Canada). They can also choose to start their rivers from birth and symbolically represent or skip over the parts of their lives that are/were traumatic.
- After participants have shared their rivers, you can build on this activity by:
  - asking participants where they would like their rivers to go in the future.
  - asking participants to choose one point in their rivers to write about. Give them five or ten minutes to do a free-write around this experience.
- This exercise can be adapted and made more specific by introducing a theme (e.g. employment, love, family , etc.) and getting participants to draw rivers that represent that particular aspect of their lives.

Adapted from: <https://www.arvon.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Mother-Tongues-Resource-Pack.pdf>





## WEEK 2

### Objectives:

- To question the unidimensional understanding of ‘home’ as a spot on a map and describe a more multidimensional picture of home and where we are from.
- To give participants an opportunity to experiment with poetry as a form of writing.

### Session Flow:

- Oral Storytelling Circle (full class, in small groups, or in partners)
  - Example Prompt: What is an early memory you have of your childhood?
- Participants populate <ca Y'A ]bXa Ud with responses to =Ua Tca K f]h[ 'Dfca dthg (Individual)
  - Participants can draw or write their responses to the =Ua Tca K f]h[ 'Dfca dthg on their <ca Y'A ]bXa Ud's
- Participants pick their 10 favourite responses to the prompts and make them into an =Ua s Tca ""DcYa .
- Participants share =Ua Tca ""DcYa g (full class, in small groups, or in partners)

### Activity Templates:

- See =Ua Tca ""K f]h[ 'Dfca dthg below
- See <ca Y'A ]bXa Ud Template below
- See =Ua Tca ""DcYa Template below
- See Examples =Ua Tca ""DcYa g below

### Facilitator Notes

- Teachers should review all of the =Ua Tca K f]h[ 'Dfca dthg with the group before allowing time for individual writing onto the <ca Y'A ]bXa Ud. As you are reviewing them, it is helpful to model responses to some of the prompts to give the students a sense of how they might answer them (e.g. =Ua Tca ""h Y'ga Y`cZ]YX'cb]cbgVtc\_]b[ ž=Ua Tca ""h Y'cWUub VfyYnYž=Ua Tca U'dUMVs k \ Yfy'a Yb UbX'k ca Yb k Yfy'fyUYX'X]ZYfybhñāYHVs

  - Pre-exercise: Where possible, teachers may want to spend a preceding class reading through =Ua Tca ""DcYa g of other newcomers (see below for examples), to prime the students for writing their own poems.

- It is important to acknowledge that the idea of ‘home’ may not hold positive associations for all, at all times, and encourage students to express themselves without placing value judgements on their experiences.s
- In some classes, students find it helpful to partner up and discuss their answers to the prompts verbally before writing their responses. This form of sharing can be helpful in eliciting deeper responses as students build on each other’s ideas.
- Students might experience some dissonance when writing their =Ua Tca ""poem, in cases where the lines of the poem don’t make sense when taken literally. E.g. “I am from coconuts and pineapples” → Participant: “I’m not Tca those fruits, we just eat them back home.” In these instances, it is useful to explain to the students that poetry is different than prose and there are fewer rules around grammar and more freedom to express oneself artistically and with imagery.

## I AM FROM...POEM EXAMPLES

### Aura's Poem

I am from a place where heat comes from the land, its people, and conflict.  
I am from a protected home open wide to the sea breeze and the salty ocean calling me to swim.  
I am from my mother's delicious kitchen while reading to her from my English studies.  
I am from a real community of family, neighbours, friends, where they would give you their shirt, if need be.  
I am from where I pretended to speak French in front of an array of my brother's books.  
I am from here - where for many years I fought to make a home, create a family, but never completely belonged.  
I am from my present home - a lovely cozy apartment where I relentlessly build what I've lost.

### Sarah's Poem

I am from a place where people are happy and poor.  
I am from coconut trees and river boats.  
I am from rickshaw rides in the monsoon.  
I am from anti-trust.  
I am from heartbreaks.  
I am from a place where I can't walk alone in the streets after dark.  
I am from sunrises that look beautiful no matter how many times I see them.  
I am from my grandmother's cooking <3

### Gregory's Poem

I am from a place that never accepted me.  
I am from a quiet place that was often loud.

### Sanah's Poem

I am from planet earth.  
I am from a prideful culture that I don't always agree with.  
I am from a faith that gets me through each day.  
I am from loudness.  
I am from two very complicated and interesting people.  
I am from a home I hesitate to leave.  
I am from a place where I've grown comfortable.  
I am from a home where family comes first.

### **Jackleen's Poem**

I am from where the dreams are still green.  
I am from the universe where I can love you.  
I am from the planet of peace with no borders.  
I am from the jained words and struggle to be free.  
I am from where mothers are left alone waiting for phone calls from their children who are far away.  
I am from my childhood garden.  
I am from the future of words and action.  
I am from my untold story.  
I am from the stories of us.

### **Mariana's Poem**

I am from a wonderful city full of charms.  
I am from a city blessed by God.  
I am from a city whose natural beauty is exceptional.  
I am from a city that has Christ, the Redeemer, with his open arms blessing everyone from all places.  
I am from a city I used to like.  
I am from a city destroyed by the greed of politicians.  
I am from a city destroyed by the violence of drug dealers.  
I am from a besieged city.  
I am from a city which could be the best in the world.  
I am from Rio de Janeiro, a city destroyed by human beings.

### **Carina's Poem**

I am from an ancient world filled with many meticulously designed gardens, stone bridges, and pagodas.  
I am from an elegant arched entrance to my home of birth.  
I am from Ping Tan, which is a type of storytelling and ballad singing in the Suzhou dialect.  
I am from lots of unforgettable surprises my mom gave me.  
I am from my childhood paradise, the Suzhou university, where I painted from nature.  
I am from the sweet-scented osmanthus in autumn and lotus in the summer.  
I am from the smell of noodles with hot red or white soup and fresh meat mooncakes.  
I am from "someday this pain will be useful to you." From a big heart as my parents have.  
I am from "Sailor Moon", "Doraemon", and Disneyland where I am deeply attracted to these roguish charming characters.  
I am from silent screams and re-written dreams which give me resilience to move forward.

### **Sanaa's Poem**

I am from a big place in my eyes.

I am from a sweet family.

I am from a country which is the cradle of civilization.

I am from mornings that are full of life.

I am from green land, but bad people have broken it.

I am from a family that has now been spread around the world.

I am from a country that became a story around the world.

I am from strong children who are not afraid of the helicopters that flew over Syria..

I am from the luck that has brought me here.

I am from hopes of going back home.

### **Shivi's Poem**

I am from a country called "Golden Bird", before the British came and took our gold and Kohinoor diamond. The diamond is now part of the British Crown Jewels.

I am from my forefathers who taught us to resolve our conflicts with words, not weapons.

I am from 18 official languages, 114 languages, 216 mother tongues, and 900 dialects.

I am from a diverse country, a fact that is visibly prominent in its climate, people, culture, cinema, cuisine, music, dance, and art.

I am from a place where guests are gods.

I am from Indian weddings, which are a celebration of union, not only of the bride and groom, but also of two families, maybe two cultures or religions too.

I am from herbs and spices which are famous around the world.

I am from a tradition of touching elders' feet and receiving their blessings.

I am from the young and old living in harmony in a joint family system, which teaches the value of sharing, caring, and tolerance.

I am from where people believe in karma, previous births, and that charity should be anonymous.

### **Tuba's Poem**

I am from a city which has seven hills.

I am from a city that spans two continents.

I am from a city that has been home to many civilizations.

I am from an admirable city which has magnificent Bosphorus bridges.

I am from a city which has inspired many writers and poets.

I am from a city in which the first shopping city in the world was founded.

I am from a city which had the first church in history.

I am from a city where you can find fascinating restaurants at every corner.

I am from a city where museums, churches, palaces, mosques, bazaars, and synagogues stand side-by-side.

I am from a place that is a symbol of tolerance and the fraternity of religions.

I am from the hometown of cats.

I am from a big and loving family of more than 45 people.

### **Jinny's Poem**

I am from an open and energetic city called Shanghai. People call her the “Magic Capital.”

I am from a busy city. People are almost never walking on the road, but running on their way.

I am from a city which has its special local language. However, as the city has become more multicultural, more and more kids have lost their ability to speak the local Shanghai language.

I am from a crowded city. Sometimes I miss its noise. Sometimes I feel happy to have escaped from it.

I am from a city with a lot of opportunities, but sometimes you need to give up a big part of your personal time and space in order to have a good career.

I am from an intellectual old lady, my grandma. She told me that great spouses are excellent partners - one is a broom, and the other is a dustpan.

I am from a lovely family. My parents showed me that you can overcome any difficulty with someone who really loves you.

I am from an honest family. My parents told me to be a virtuous and independent woman. Thanks to them, I know my way

## I AM FROM...WRITING PROMPTS

What kind of **climate** do you come from?

Do you come from the **city** or a **rural area**?

Do you come from a **small place** or a **large place**?

Do you come from a **noisy place** or a **quiet place**?

Do you come from a **poor place** or a **rich place**?

Do you come from a **crowded place** or a **spacious place**?

Do you come from a place with **lakes, rivers, oceans, mountains, and/or forests**?

What **language(s)** is/are spoken where you are from?

How do people **dress** where you are from?

What do people **look like** where you are from?

**Who** are the people you come from?

How would you describe **the people you are from**?

How would you describe **the culture you are from**?

What kind of **music** are you from?

What are the **foods** you are from?

What are the **cultural traditions** you are from?

What is **special** about the place you come from?

What do you **love** about where you come from?

What do you **dislike** about where you come from?

What **rules** did you have to follow?

What did the **elders** in your family teach you?

What were the **family values** you were raised with?

What are the **holidays and celebrations** that you come from?

What are the **losses and tragedies** that you come from?

What are the **sports** that you come from?

What are the **books and movies** that you come from?

How are the **politics** where you come from?

What are the **smells** that you come from?

What are the **sounds** that you come from?

What are the **sights** you come from?

What are the **tastes** that you come from?

What are the **jokes** that you come from?

What are the **acts of love** that you come from?

What are the **most important memories** you have of the place you come from?

The Home Mindmap Template can be downloaded from [here](#).



# \_\_\_\_\_ 's POEM

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## WEEK 3

### Objectives:

- To remember and understand the circumstances under which participants embarked on their journey to Canada.
- To create space to articulate the details of leaving, which tend to be glossed over in the settlement journey.

### Session Flow:

- Oral Storytelling Circle (full class, in small groups, or in partners)
  - Example Prompt: What is a simple pleasure you enjoy?
- *A m>ci fbYmrc 7UbUXU* Writing Prompts (Individual)
- *A m>ci fbYmrc 7UbUXU* Shareback (full class, in small groups, or in partners)

### Activity Templates:

- See *A m>ci fbYmrc 7UbUXU* Writing Prompts below

### Facilitator Notes

- Teachers should review all of the prompts with students before allowing time for individual writing. Students may find it helpful to partner up and discuss their answers to the prompts verbally before writing their responses. This form of sharing can be helpful in eliciting deeper responses as students build on each other's ideas.
- Remembering their last days in their country can be an emotion-filled exercise for students. This time period might include red-light stories that they are not yet ready to share. It is important to let students know that they should only share what they feel equipped to share, and that they can skip any of the prompts they don't want to answer. Regardless of what they choose, any emotions that surface during these writing exercises should be normalized and validated. Teachers are encouraged to connect one-on-one with these students, as well as create space for the class to talk about emotions together if this is a shared experience among students.
- These questions are equal part reflection exercises for individual students as they are story-writing prompts. They are ordered in a way that is designed to make up a coherent story when answered in sequence. Some students may choose to write their responses as a continuous narrative, with each response building on the other. Meanwhile, others may prefer to answer each question as its own. Ultimately, a coherent synthesis (either by the teacher after-the-fact, or by the student) is required if the story is to be shared with an audience outside the workshop.
- If there is time and interest among students, teachers can create an opportunity for students to provide each other with feedback during the group share. The teacher should begin by asking the student who has shared, "Would you be open to some feedback?" and proceed only if the student says yes. Feedback from the teacher or other students can include highlighting parts of the story that they found particularly compelling, clarifying parts of the story that were unclear, or asking with curiosity about pieces you want to learn more about. It is up to the student who shared to decide which feedback they want to take or leave and which questions they want to answer and to what extent.

## **THE JOURNEY TO CANADA**

### **Deciding on Canada**

- When did you find out / decide you were going to Canada?
- Why did you decide to leave your country or the country you were in at the time?
- Why did you choose Canada over any other country?
- Was there anybody that encouraged you to make a different decision? Did anybody tell you to stay in your home country or to go to a different country other than Canada?
- Did you know anyone in Canada before you came?
- What were your expectations of Canada before you came to Canada? (E.g. expectations about the weather, food, lifestyle, education, and culture etc.) Where did you learn these things?

### **The Days Before Leaving**

- What did you do in the last days before you left your country?
- Were you working in a job in your country? If so, what was your job? How did you feel about leaving your job?
- If you had one more day in your hometown, what would you have done?
- What is one thing that is important to you that you packed in your suitcase?
- What is one thing that is important to you that you left / had to leave behind?
- What did you hope for in starting a new life in Canada?
- What did you fear about starting a new life in Canada?

### **The Journey to Canada**

- Did you come to Canada by yourself or with other people? Who else came with you?
- What were you thinking during your journey to Canada?
- What were you feeling during your journey to Canada?
- Was there anything unexpected that happened in your journey?

## WEEK 4

### Objectives:

- To paint a detailed and holistic picture of participants' first few weeks of settling in Canada.
- To allow students an opportunity to reflect on a time in their lives that may have felt chaotic and process the progress that they've made since.

### Session Flow:

- Oral Storytelling Circle (full class, in small groups, or in partners)
  - Example Prompt: Describe one of the best gifts you've ever received. Why was it one of the best?
- *A m̄ Jfgh: Yk K YY\_g]b 7UbUXU* Writing Prompts (Individual)
- *A m̄ Jfgh: Yk K YY\_g]b 7UbUXU* Shareback (full class, in small groups, or in partners)

### Activity Templates:

- See *A m̄ Jfgh: Yk K YY\_g]b 7UbUXU* Writing Prompts below

### Facilitator Notes

- Teachers might encounter some resistance from students, along the lines of, ' *H Uhk Ug U' \ UFX#UXs h̄a Y]b'a m̄]Zžk \ Uhg'h Y'dc]bhcZH ]b\_]b[ ' Uci h̄h cgY' h̄a Yg'U[ U]b3* In these moments, it can be useful to share that sometimes remembering the past can help us appreciate how far we have come and the challenges we have overcome. Additionally, if the students are interested in publishing their stories as a part of The Stories of Us library, sharing their experiences about when they first came to Canada can help normalize the experience for other newcomers and make them feel less alone. Ultimately, it is up to the student to decide whether they want to participate in the writing exercise and to what extent.
- Students may find that they have more to say about their first few weeks in Canada, beyond what the question prompts ask of them. The prompts are meant to serve as a guide so as to not overwhelm students, but they are welcome to include details that aren't explicitly asked for in the prompts.
- Students have a tendency to gloss over key details of their experience because they don't feel that they are important (e.g. one student didn't include that she was a police officer in her country!) or because they may not fully grasp that the readers of their story know nothing about them to begin with. The question prompts are designed to elicit multiple dimensions of a newcomer's experience (e.g. What were they seeing? What were they hearing? What did they do/think/feel? What were they hoping for? What did they fear?) so as to build empathy for the author from the readers of their stories. To explain the importance of including details to students, teachers can use the analogy of the most compelling actors in movies. The reason they are so effective is because they make us feel what they feel. We understand them and their situations so deeply that we are invested in what happens to them. The same rings true for the stories that we write about ourselves. What are the details we need to include to help the reader understand why we did/thought/felt what we did?

# MY FIRST WEEKS IN CANADA

## ARRIVING

- When did you arrive in Canada?
  - Which month was it? What was the season? How was the weather / temperature?
- Which city did you arrive in?
- Who was with you?
- Where did you stay?
- How was the place that you stayed in different from the home that you came from?

## GETTING AROUND

- Where did you go or visit?
- Describe one of the first photos you took when you came to Canada. Where were you? Who were you with?
- How did you get around? (e.g. car, subway, bus, walking)
- What was your experience of learning the transit system in Canada?

## DAY-TO-DAY LIFE

- What did you do? How did you spend your days?
- What did you eat? Did you try any new foods? How is the food in Canada different than the food in your home country?
- What did you wear? Did you change the way you dressed after coming to Canada? If so, why?
- How did you communicate with people?
- Who was the first friend that you made in Canada? How did you meet them?
- How did you feel during your first few weeks in Canada?
- What were you thinking during your first few weeks in Canada?
- What did you miss?

## KEY MOMENTS AND LESSONS

- What is something that surprised you?
- What did you learn during those first few weeks?
- What programs or services were most helpful to you? How did they help you?
- What was the hardest moment?
- What was the best moment?
- What was a funny moment?

## WEEK 5

### Objectives:

- To map our strengths and envision a future through a strengths-based approach.

### Session Flow:

- Oral Storytelling Circle (full class, in small groups, or in partners)
  - Example Prompt: What is a story about a time your mind and your heart told you different things?
  - *≡* *UJ* Writing Prompts (Individual)
- *≡* *UJ* Shareback (full class, in small groups, or in partners)

### Activity Templates

- See *≡* *UJ*: *fUa Yk cf\_ VYck ftbY'g'g* *U* *\hima cfY XYHJYX hUb hY'c h Yfz'ZY' ZYY'hc i gY'h Y'cbYs hUhinc i ZY'k ci X'VY VYghi bXYfgcX Vmnci f dUffMjdUbrgts*
- See *≡* *UJ* *K fjb* *Dfca dly* template below

### Facilitator Notes

- Research shows that trauma can affect one's beliefs about the future via loss of hope, limited expectations about life, fear that life will end abruptly or early, or anticipation that normal life events won't occur (e.g., access to education, ability to have a significant and committed relationship, good opportunities for work)<sup>1</sup>. As such, the *≡* *UJ* activity is intentionally designed to avoid the kind of future planning that might overwhelm students and rather focus on indirectly exploring future possibilities through mapping one's strengths and vision for the world. Despite the positive, strengths-based focus of this session, teachers should anticipate reactions like, "I'm not good at anything" or "I don't love doing anything anymore". These beliefs are often rooted in trauma and are normal given the experiences that many newcomers have had. When statements like these come up, encourage students to think about and write down the things that they loved and/or where good at doing during a happier time in their life.
- Validating students' strengths as they share them - even if it's through nods or mmm's - is an important part of their process of internalizing that they are indeed strengths that hold value.

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<sup>1</sup> Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (US). Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services. Rockville (MD): Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (US); 2014. (Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) Series, No. 57.) Chapter 3, Understanding the Impact of Trauma. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK207191/>



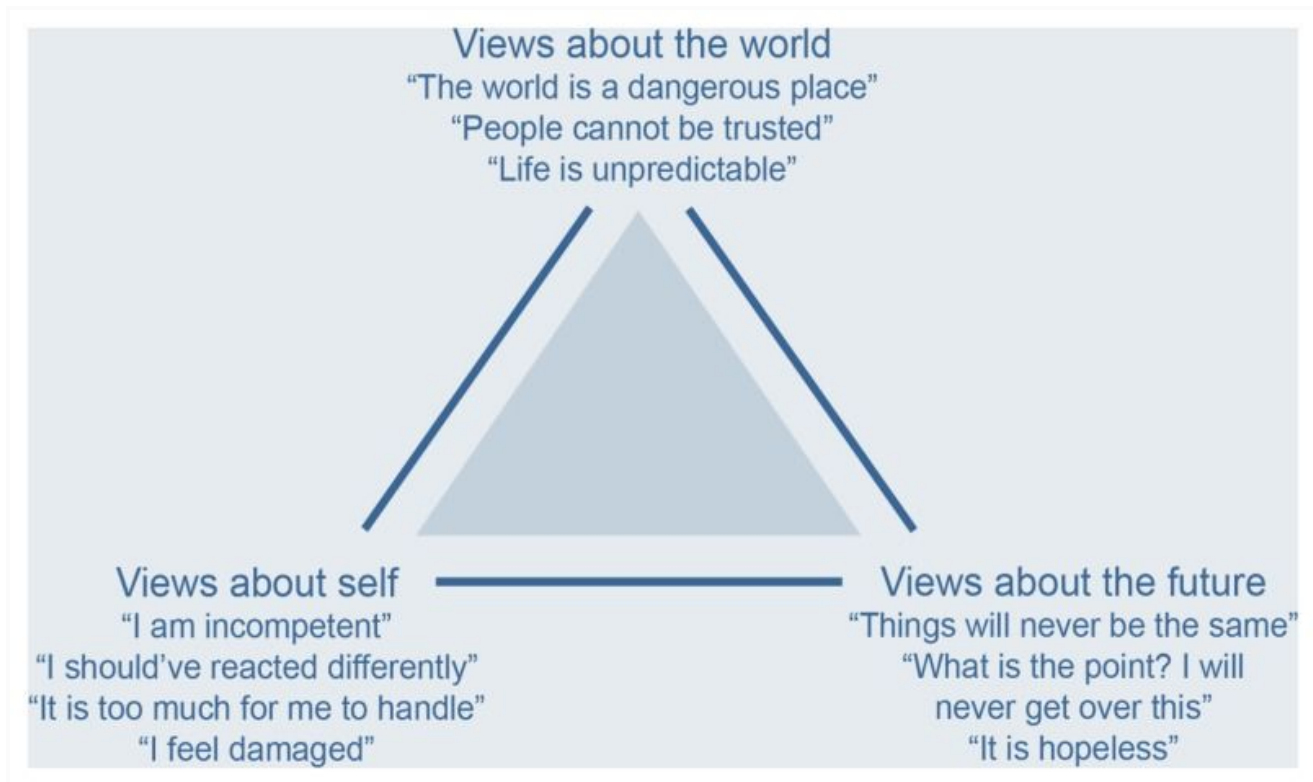


Image: Cognitive Triad of Traumatic Stress (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (US); 2014)

## PRE-WORK

As a warm-up to this exercise, teachers can expose students to the success stories of other immigrants who were once in their shoes. The [Canadian Immigrant Magazine](#) and RBC host [The Top 25 Canadian Immigrant Awards](#) every year, and their website includes an archive of past winners' stories. Reviewing these stories with the students in the classes preceding the workshop can help expand their thinking around what is possible for their own futures. A selection of these stories which were used in this pilot are linked below for easy access. Choosing stories of winners who reflect the diversity in your class (genders, nationalities, languages, professions, etc.) may help the students feel more connected to the people they are reading about.

- [Mohammed Alsaleh](#)
- [Kin Wah Leu](#)
- [Queenie Choo](#)
- [Deepa Mehta](#)
- [Martha Lucia Ninos](#)
- [Yasuko Tanakas](#)
- [The Al-Soufi Family](#)





## MY IKIGAI

What do you **LOVE** doing?

- What can you do for hours and hours without getting bored?
- What makes you lose track of time? What makes you forget to eat and pee?
- What can you talk about for hours that when you talk about it, you light up?
- What aspects of your life bring you into your heart and make you come alive?

What are you **GOOD AT**?

- What do you do better than others, with less effort?
- What feels easy to you?
- What unique skills do you have that come most naturally to you?
- What are you good at even when you're not trying?

What can you be **PAID FOR?**

- Instead of thinking in terms of money, think in terms of service. What do people ask you for help with?
- What do people refer to you for (or send their connection to you for?)
- What service, value or offering do you bring, or could you bring that brings real value to others? Something people need and are happy to pay for?

What does the world **NEED?**

- The world would be a better place if...
- I want to live in a society that...
- What cause(s) do you believe in?
- What breaks your heart or pulls at your gut?
- What change would you most love to create in the world?

## WEEK 6

### Objectives:

- To reflect on the process of storytelling, what was learned, what was changed, and what was gained.
- To celebrate the achievement of having written one's story.

### Session Flow:

- Oral Storytelling Circle (full class, in small groups, or in partners)
  - Example Prompt: What is a story about a time your mind and your heart told you different things?
- *HYGhcZl gK cf\_g\cd'GYfYg: YXVUM* form (Individual)
- Large Group Feedback Discussion (Group)
- Celebration (the exact format of this is up to the group - usually involves some treats and delicious food!)
- Oscars-esque Certificate Ceremony

### Activity Templates

- See *HYGhcZl gK cf\_g\cd'GYfYg: YXVUM* form below

### Facilitator Notes

- In the large group feedback discussion, it is helpful to have the teacher share their experience of the series and what they've learned from the students first. This helps start the discussion and also affirms to the students that their stories were worth sharing.
- Where possible, and with students' permission, it is useful to record the feedback discussion as students tend to verbalize their reflections in greater detail than in their feedback forms.
- Certificates that indicate the completion of the Stories of Us workshop are of high value for the students and are appreciated greatly. Creating an Oscars-like environment with awards ceremony music, paparazzi, and encouraging students to react as though they've just won an Oscar often results in a high energy, hilarious, and jovial celebration.
- Given that this is the last workshop, teachers can also block off some time before the celebration for students to review and integrate the various parts of their story into a cohesive narrative. If students want their story to be published as a part of The Stories of Us project (more info below), teachers should also ensure that they've signed off on a permission form.



## STORIES OF US WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

Please circle the response to each question that best reflects your experience with The Stories of Us workshop series.

- 1. I feel more confident in myself as a result of participating in The Stories of Us workshop series.**

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

- 2. My English speaking skills have improved as a result of participating in The Stories of Us workshop series.**

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

- 3. My English writing skills have improved as a result of participating in The Stories of Us workshop series.**

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

- 4. My English reading skills have improved as a result of participating in The Stories of Us workshop series.**

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

- 5. The instructions for each workshop were explained clearly by the facilitator.**

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

- 6. I learned more about my fellow classmates as a result of participating in The Stories of Us workshop series.**

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

- 7. I feel closer to my classmates as a result of participating in The Stories of Us workshop series.**

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

What did you enjoy about The Stories of Us workshop series?

What was challenging for you?

What did you learn by participating in The Stories of Us workshop series?

What changes would you suggest for the next time we do The Stories of Us workshops?

Has your view of your story changed throughout the process of participating in these workshops? If so, how has it changed?

