



## EARLY LEARNINGS FROM THE TCLIP ANTI-OPPRESSION CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

**Pathways to Prosperity National Conference – Ottawa, Ontario,  
November 15, 2022**

# IMMIGRANT PERSPECTIVE: EXPERIENCE OF SERVICE USERS

# Immigrant perspective – service experience

---

- SRDC held a focus group with 7 immigrants living in the Tri-Cities to learn about their experience accessing services
  - Participants were from Nigeria, Iran, Brazil and Argentina
  - In Canada for between 2 and 15 years
- A number of participants indicated that they had experienced racism and oppression when accessing services in school, health, settlement, justice, employment, and other systems

## Immigrant perspective – service experience

---

- In schools: participants described their children’s experiences with racism with other students and teachers
- In settlement services: one participant felt they were not being provided with the information they needed to find employment, lack of empathy
- In health services: a doctor refused to speak with an interpreter and insisted on hearing directly from a patient who only spoke limited English

*“We suffer racism everywhere – so much that we cannot describe it.”*

# Immigrant perspective – imagining anti-oppressive services

---

Develop empathy

Let us make decisions

Culturally sensitive

Learn the way we communicate

Aware of diversity and inclusion

Understanding root causes of issues

Put more effort into educating themselves

Client-centric

Trauma-informed practice

Culturally adaptive

Collaborative relationship

Patience

Don't be patronizing

## SERVICE PROVIDER PERSPECTIVE: EXPERIENCE OF TRAINING PARTICIPANTS

# Training participants

---

- One cohort of participants has completed the training series
- Learnings from:
  - Training exit survey
  - 3-month follow-up survey
  - Focus group 5 months after the training

# Training participants

---

- 15 participants from cohort 1
  - 9 were from settlement service provider orgs
    - Others were from other non-profit, public sector, and private sector orgs
  - 10 were frontline staff
  - 10 worked in the Mainland/Southwest region of BC
  - 13 participants identified as women
  - 6 identified as immigrants
  - 12 had bachelor's degrees or higher



# Survey Overview – Training Exit Survey

---

- 14 responses
- Almost all participants (13) felt the training was appropriate for their level of understanding
- Almost all participants (12) indicated they gained new knowledge, skills, and tools
- 13 participants indicated they gained confidence to apply anti-oppression approaches
- The biggest increase in knowledge was related to the statement that “anti-oppression work starts with ourselves and holding ourselves to this principle”

# Survey Overview – Training Exit Survey

---

- 11 participants had already applied their learning to their practice and 9 had shared them with their organizations
  - Being more cognizant of my positions of power and biases, taking a more communicative and collaborative approach in assisting others
  - Correcting myself and others, kindly, when they make generalizations
  - Sharing ideas in team meetings and discussions with colleagues

# Survey Overview – Training Exit Survey

---

- Most important learnings

*“I have privileges, and if I am not constantly creating a self-reflection of my role while helping people, I can potentially reinforce oppressive practices. I can become an agent of change from the small things that I do. Enhancing anti-oppressive practices in an organization takes time as it is a constant dialogue for awareness led by baby steps.”*

# Survey Overview – 3-month follow-up survey

---

- 8 out of 9 participants had already applied their learnings
  - Taken into consideration anti-oppressive practices during meetings or while training new staff
  - Recommended adopting anti-oppressive practices to supervisor
  - Pursued more learning in this area
  - Made connections with others who are working in anti-oppression locally

# Survey Overview – 3-month follow-up survey

---

- Challenges in applying learnings
  - Organization barriers: time, competing processes
  - Resistance from others who are unwilling to listen or expand their knowledge
  - Challenges with resolving conflict, explaining to others about relevance to their work

*“The privilege of the awareness of the oppressive system is a blessing and a challenge. It is hard to stay with the uncomfortable sensations from this awareness daily. Especially after realizing how this oppressive system is also in our organizations, and the experience of being oppressed as a staff as well.”*

# Focus Group

---

- 7 participants
- Challenges in applying learnings
  - Lack of interest from colleagues, pushback from people holding power
  - Quick solutions rather than long-term plan
  - Fear of backlash or negative consequences for advocating for change
  - Lack of willingness to change
- Facilitators in applying learnings
  - Building awareness and shared language
  - Having leaders on board
  - Making/modelling changes ourselves

*“People don’t want to change a system that works for them.”*

# Focus Group

---

- Actions taken & future plans
  - Coaching for frontline staff
  - Bringing in speakers/books
  - Assisting others on their journey, being a guiding person, creating common ground
  - Finding champions and working together
  - Participating in community of practice

# Closing Thoughts

---

- Can this type of training lead to systemic change in the sector?
  - Training needs to be incorporated into work to avoid burnout
  - Training needs to be ongoing
  - A lot of variation across organizations
  - Leaders need to buy-in – different levels need to work together to actualize change

*“...instead of changing the flow of the river, we can move rocks, and with time, the flow will change by itself. I see this anti-oppression training as a way to learn how to move rocks, so with time, if more people are willing to relocate small rocks, the flow of the river will be transformed.”*



# Contact Information

---

Xiaoyang Luo, Research Associate  
Social Research and Demonstration Corporation  
[xlue@srdc.org](mailto:xlue@srdc.org)