



BRIDGING CULTURES, BUILDING CONFIDENCE

**Accessible, Culturally Responsive Learning for Newcomer Seniors
Insights from ISSofBC's CREA Project**

Presented By: Shae Viswanathan, Director – Settlement Services





About ISSofBC

- Created in 1968 by volunteers and incorporated in 1972 as an NGO & Charity
- First immigrant serving agency in BC and currently one of the largest multicultural, immigrant serving agencies in Canada
- Serve over 25,000 clients per year
- 10 primary locations
- 500 staff and 350+volunteers



The CREA Project in Brief

- Partnership with BC Community Response Networks (BC CRN)
- Adapted the evidence-based 'It's Not Right' workshop
- Languages: Arabic, Farsi, Pashto, Russian
- Delivered by multilingual settlement workers



Why Cultural Competency & Accessibility Matter

Language and literacy barriers are real

Systems are complex and intimidating

Inaccessible information increases risk

What Works Better



- Visual-first design
- Plain-language
- Multilingual formats
- Culturally respectful framing and relevance
- Slower pacing and real-life scenarios

Accessibility Is a Safety Issue



Seniors must understand:

- Their rights
- What abuse looks like
- Where to go for help

Cultural norms may limit disclosure

We Serve Older Adults 55yrs+ & Seniors

Limited English and/or literacy

Diverse cultural norms

Isolation or dependency

Limited digital access

Accessible Design in Practice



Images paired with words

Step-by-step scenarios

Repetition and pacing

Interactive check-ins



Extending Learning Beyond the Room

- Visual, multilingual informational videos
- Plain-language scripts and culturally grounded visuals
- Example: videos created using AI tools



What Other Organizations Can Apply



REVIEW
LITERACY
ASSUMPTIONS



REDUCE TEXT,
INCREASE
VISUALS



TEST MATERIALS
WITH USERS



EMBED
CULTURAL
CONTEXT



THANK YOU!

Check out our Calendar of Events at: issbc.org/events

www.issbc.org

