



"Being Least Intrusive" (BLI) 2011

Being Least Intrusive (BLI) is a tool, developed in 2011, to assist frontline clinicians respond to situations of abuse, neglect and self-neglect of vulnerable First Nation adults in a way that is culturally safe, collaborative and respectful. It is grounded in critical, anti-oppressive theory, is trauma-informed and rooted in the values and ethics of relational practice. It seeks to orientate primarily non-indigenous clinicians to culturally safe engagement, respecting self-determination, understanding context, and using community strengths to build trust and safety.

The guiding principle of the Adult Guardianship Legislation in British Columbia is to consider responses and interventions that are '*most effective and least intrusive*'. Questions emerged in the context of this practice about what it meant to be 'least intrusive' in general; and more specifically, what 'least intrusive' might look like when predominantly non-indigenous clinicians are responding to concerns of abuse, neglect and self-neglect of vulnerable Indigenous adults. This question is particularly significant given the historical and ongoing impacts of colonialism on Indigenous communities, which have shaped patterns of distrust towards service providers and perceptions of intervention. Understanding these dynamics is crucial to ensuring that responses are culturally safe and respectful, and that interventions foster trust rather than reinforce harm.

Core Principles of Being Least Intrusive:

- **Respect for autonomy:** Supports individuals while honouring their right to choice, agency, and self-determination.
- **Cultural safety:** seeks to engage with respect and humility, acknowledging the historical and ongoing impacts of colonization, addressing power imbalances, and fostering environments where people feel safe.
- **Holistic understanding:** Views health and wellness as encompassing the whole person—physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual—situated within relationships to self, family, and community, and shaped by culture, language, and traditions.
- **Strengths-based:** Recognizes and builds upon the resilience and strengths already present in individuals, families, and communities.
- **Critical self-awareness:** Prioritizes reflective practice to recognize personal and systemic biases, approach one's work as a learner, and deepen respect for others' lived experiences

How it Works in Practice:

- **Critical Preparation:** Before engaging, workers are guided to cultivate a critical awareness of self; including identifying personal attitudes, values and biases, social location and power. They are also guided to learn about the individual, family and community with whom they will engage, including protocols of engagement, cultural practices and community resources.
- **Thoughtful Engagement:** Workers engage intentionally with respect and humility, seeking to build safety and trust, and fostering collaborative partnerships centring indigenous knowledge, honouring the wisdom of lived experience, and valuing the contributions of individual, family and community.
- **Balancing safety and agency:** Workers offer the least intrusive, most effective support that address safety concerns, while also centering the agency and autonomy of the individual.

Why it's Important:

- It addresses the complexities of cross-cultural care, where mainstream approaches can feel disempowering.
- It ensures interventions are meaningful and effective within the specific cultural context of First Nations communities.
- It helps navigate legal requirements (like BC's Adult Guardianship Act) while upholding cultural values and individual rights.

Who Can Use It

The original intent of the BLI tool was focussed on supporting front line clinicians designated to respond to situations of abuse, neglect and self-neglect of vulnerable adults.

However, consistent feedback supports the use of this tool by other professionals and service providers working to support individuals, families and communities across cultures, difference, and service settings.

Original tool available at:

<https://www.nicenet.ca/tools/bli-being-least-intrusive>

Updated tool under production by April Struthers, Lindsay Risk, FNHA health workers; with funding from CREA (2025 – 2026).

April.struthers@bccrns.ca

Lindsay.Risk@islandhealth.ca