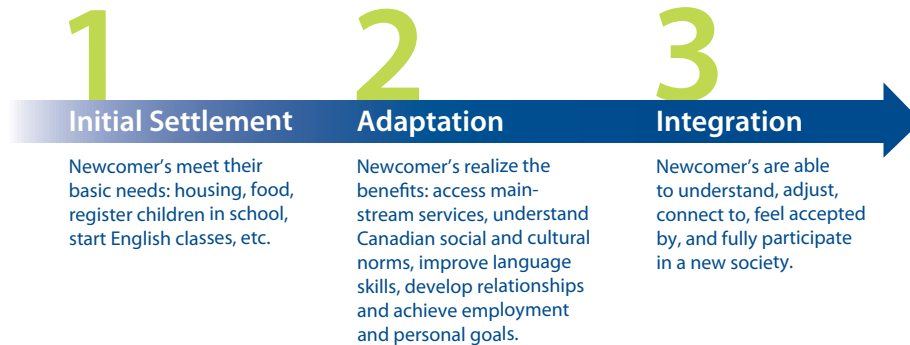


Handout 2: Immigrant Settlement Basics

Stages of the Settlement Process

The following terms are used to describe the stages of the settlement process recognized in many settlement theories.



Initial Settlement

Initial Settlement is the first phase after a newcomer's arrival to British Columbia. Initial Settlement means meeting the newcomers basic needs of life including: housing, food, registering children in school, signing up for language training—generally accessing mainstream services. Often, family, friends, the established ethnic community, and/or settlement workers provide assistance to orient newcomers to services, to a new culture, and systems, and help them to develop an understanding of their basic rights and responsibilities.

Adaptation

Adaptation is the stage, after Initial Settlement, characterized by an immigrant's ability to realize some benefits of coming to Canada. These benefits include the ability to access mainstream services independently, understand Canadian social and cultural norms, improve language skills, develop contacts and build friendships in the community, and establish personal or employment goals.

Integration

Integration is characterized by a newcomer's ability to understand, adjust, connect to, feel accepted by, and fully participate in a new society. The process involves many factors including integration into socio-cultural and economic areas of society, and newcomers demonstrating civic engagement. Integration is affected by the ability of the community and society to adapt to, welcome, and include newcomers.

Examples of Common Barriers Newcomers Face

Need	Barrier
Finding housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor knowledge of the city • lack of transportation • have not yet developed a credit history • no local references • affordability/suitability/availability • racism and discrimination
Improving English language ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time constraints • financial constraints • the lack of courses/courses are full/waiting list too long • communication problems • not knowing where to find courses or programs • transportation constraints • childcare constraints • not understanding the eligibility requirements to access free English language training
Employment readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • challenges related to recognition of foreign credentials/licences and work experience • training and upgrading required prior to qualification recognition • different standards for performance in Canada • racism and discrimination • challenges related to limited experience working in Canada • challenges related to limited knowledge of local labour market information (for example, employers, companies, hidden job market) • challenges related to limited knowledge of workplace rights • misinformation on career opportunities in Canada (for example, from friends, family, community, service providers) • inability to present self effectively to employers • challenges finding suitable child care
Access to healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not understanding the Canadian healthcare system • cultural differences in approaches to health and healing
Family support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • family not in Canada • different cultural or gender expectations • not understanding the BC school system
Community connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • challenges related to limited knowledge of support services in the community • little or no experience living in a modern urban community
Children and youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESL designation in the school may be viewed as a learning deficit • changing power dynamics in the family as children acquire English faster than parents • immigrant youth may have little experience or exposure to technology or structured education, and not be at the same skill and knowledge level as their Canadian peers • long separations from parents prior to reunification can lead to complex adjustment issues • differences in parental cultural expectations vs. Canadian culture and peer pressure • educational interruptions due to immigration process • vulnerable immigrant youth may be more susceptible to substance abuse and gangs • racism and discrimination
Seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sponsored seniors often do not have access to subsidized housing for ten years • few retirement homes or health care institutions are able to accommodate the needs of immigrant seniors • the ability to learn a new language generally decreases with age • access to ESL classes for seniors is limited