



Immigrant Women's Peer Support Program (IWSPSP)

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E-Symposium: Settlement Issues for Newcomer Women
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Immigrant Women's Peer Support Program

- The IWPSPP has been providing mental, physical and social support to immigrant and refugee women since 2001. The program is an initiative of ISSofBC and is funded by the VCH – SMART Fund



Program objectives

- ★ Empower women by creating safe and supportive environments
- ★ Provide a place where newcomer women come to break their isolation and forge new friendships

Program objectives

- ★ Facilitate opportunities to exchange coping strategies and celebrate their strength and resilience
- ★ Provide mental, physical and social support to immigrant and refugee women who are facing challenges integrating and adjusting to Canadian society

Challenges in the first 3 years in Canada

- **Not knowing how to get started**
 - ★ Language barriers
 - ★ Understanding directions and addresses in Vancouver
 - ★ Public transit / Traffic / Driving
 - ★ Finding housing and schools
 - ★ Accessing information on services and resources

Challenges in the first 3 years in Canada

■ **Feeling isolated**

- ★ Making new friends / Networking
- ★ Lacking cultural knowledge stops them from attending various events
- ★ Overwhelmed with child care needs and household chores
- ★ Being away from family, traditions and professions

Challenges in the first 3 years in Canada

■ Settlement and adaptation

- ★ Culture shock
- ★ Career Planning and Job Readiness
- ★ Parenting and discipline in Canada
- ★ Sex education in school
- ★ Changing attitudes of men towards sharing childcare responsibilities

Challenges in the first 3 years in Canada

■ **Staying Healthy**

- ★ Finding time and motivation to care for themselves, specially singles mother's
- ★ Learning more about health topics
- ★ Mental health and social stigma
- ★ Where to buy locally grown fruits and vegetables for affordable price