

Tool Box of Ideas for Smaller Centres:
Attracting, Welcoming & Retaining Immigrants to Your Community



Resource Handout #9

Suggestions for Improving Cross-Cultural Communication

- ▶ Use appropriate level of plain English language.
- ▶ Rephrase, say the same idea in different ways so as to ensure understanding.
- ▶ Use body language, it's a profound facilitator in cross-cultural communication.
- ▶ Feel comfortable to repeat what you have said if you sense the other person does not understand you. Also, encourage them to repeat their statements if you haven't understood them.
- ▶ Don't raise your voice when talking with people who speak limited English. This does not make the meaning any clearer.
- ▶ Adopt an attitude of mutual language sharing and mutual learning. Ask people to teach you certain words in their language. This often helps to break barriers as participants hear you struggle with their language and they feel less self-conscious attempting to speak English.
- ▶ If jokes and riddles are part of a conversation, explain concepts being used.
- ▶ Be aware of aspects of culture that you might take for granted, eg. Names of political or local sports figures, brand names for foods or names of places.
- ▶ Don't make assumptions about the comprehension ability of the other person. Check out understanding.
- ▶ Be attentive to people's non-verbal communication as it could clarify meaning.
- ▶ When appropriate, correct people's language in a gentle way and encourage them to repeat the correct version.