



**Women's Enterprise
Skills Training**
of Windsor Inc.

Lessons from Our Success:

A Curriculum for Empowering Conversations about
Gender Equality

Acknowledgements

This little discussion guide is dedicated to the indomitable spirit and creativity of anyone who has ever confronted obstacles and surmounted them, especially the woman and men who stand behind us, our ancestors and immigrants who preserved.

As with any great venture in life, nothing is ever done alone. The sum total of this series and its value comes from the many people who understood the intentions of the series and were willing to give a part of themselves, their stories and their talents. They were willing to stretch themselves for the service of others and for this we are so very grateful to WEST's leadership, staff, participants, community members, and our internet provider Web Planet. Thanks to the open mindedness of Rose Hurst for enabling this evolving series to continue and evolve into new forms in the midst of a pandemic and collaborating on the elements of the project. Thanks also to the integrity and creative excellence of Syx Langeman and Justice Hargrove, who first met with me on a brisk spring morning and co-conceived of a digital video vignette inspired by the work of Ken Lum.

We are grateful to our generous funders who enabled WEST to reflect, record and share these stories. This project was supported by the Pilot Fund for Gender Equality, a collaboration between Community Foundations of Canada and the Equality Fund, with support from the Government of Canada.



COMMUNITY
FOUNDATIONS
OF CANADA

Gender Equality Facts

*“IF YOU THINK WE’VE ACHIEVED GENDER EQUALITY IN CANADA, **THINK AGAIN**. IN FACT, OUR PROGRESS IS AT RISK. CANADA FELL FROM 30TH PLACE TO 35TH PLACE IN THE 2016 GLOBAL GENDER GAP RANKINGS BY THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM.”*

What is gender equality?

*UN Women explains it as “equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities” for all genders. It doesn’t mean that everyone should be the same. **It means peoples’ rights, responsibilities, and opportunities shouldn’t depend on their gender.** It implies that the interests and needs of everybody, in all their diversities, are important. It’s not a “women’s issue.” It’s everyone’s issue, and it makes life better for all of us.:*

*- The Canadian Woman’s Foundation,
October 2020*

<https://canadianwomen.org/the-facts/>

How will we know when we don’t have a gender equality problem anymore?

Rights or opportunities will be unaffected by gender.

Our Journey: A Note to Teachers, Program leaders and Community Partners

We have an opportunity to take part in important and historic conversations about the equality of women and strategies to help work through obstacles by simply learning from the women in our midst. Can we count on your help? We hope you will make the time to watch, listen, read and reflect on a few of these pivotal stories with your students, participants and co-workers.

Executive Director, Rose Anguiano Hurst of Women’s Enterprise Skills Training of Windsor, Inc. (WEST) witnessed the success stories of countless woman and their allies who had changed their lives with the help of our training programs, community partners, staff and other resources. She applied for a grant with the Windsor –Essex Community Foundation for a Gender Equality Grant to use digital imagery to tell these stories about powerful economic shifts on social media and our website.

*As we set out to create something new, one of the starting points on our journey was the idea of the question “**Why not me?**” A question that asks us about our own limiting experiences of what a woman or any person has the potential to do, and a statement, too. A statement that declares, “I, too can have greater economic stability.” “I, too can have a better job.” Or “I, too can face inequalities and emerge stronger.”*

We began as an entire staff team with a session on the value of all our successes as staff, participants and students. Following our first session some staff members submitted profiles of the people whose lives they had witnessed change toward more positive economic shifts and the realization of goals and dreams. We were also able to explore the idea of gender equality for people in the LGBTQ community and created a website where anyone could submit their story to our Gender Equality campaign. The submitted stories were reviewed and developed into web profiles, short videos, interviews and podcasts through meaningful interactions with participants. A team of staff volunteers who embraced learning how to interview participants with former CBC Host Barbara Peacock.

As a writer and a teacher, the opportunity to really listen and learn from each participant in the series was very moving and meaningful. A pattern began to emerge. It appeared that a combination of forces was at work for each person. There were both internal and external elements that came together to change the direction where their lives were headed. To sit and work together with women from different cultures, backgrounds, and obstacles was a privilege. Being able to share their stories and create a guide to help others dive more deeply into the wisdom and the journeys of these remarkable individuals is a true gift. A gift that should be opened and shared. The hope is that this discussion guide will help you and others dive more deeply into the lessons these stories hold. May you and your students, participants and fellow team members come away with more strength and better strategies for your own future. The individuals you are about to hear from have changed their own lives and become stronger economically.

This guide is designed to assist ESL students and teachers, as well as, other groups and individuals to explore their personal relationships to gender equality and their own aspirations. Perhaps, not every woman will relate to all participants, but the hope is that every story will inspire learning and sharing. Students can work independently or in pairs on the assignments and jot down their ideas in a journal or even record their answers on their phones and play them back to their partners or group or if the activities might be chosen and guided by a teacher or leader. Pick the method that works best for you. There are a total of 15 lessons on a variety of themes with discussions and activities leading to specific outcomes. Start where you please.

Thank you in advance for working with us to share this series with students, participants, team members *and other people in your network*. *All the resources that accompany this guide can be found at The Gender Equality Campaign website:*

<https://www.westofwindsor.com/gender-equality-campaign/Main Lessons:>

Sincerely,

Mary-Jo Rusu
Capacity Building Lead,
Gender Equality Campaign Producer
October 2020

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Lesson 1 – Starting with YOU and Your Life Experiences



In Canada, women in the ages of 25 to 54 earned an average of **\$26.92** per hour in 2018.

Their male counterparts earned **\$31.05** per hour

October 2010,
Statistics Canada



Formats: Social Media Vignette and Web Story

Outcomes: To develop students' personal understanding of gender inequality and ability to talk about life experiences

Discussion questions:

1. Have you ever experienced a situation that felt unfair or just not right when it came to a role or task in your life?
2. What happened?
3. When did you feel the sense of unfairness?
4. Why was it unfair or not equal?

Activities

- A. Describe the images above. What objects is each person balancing? Explain whether or not you think it is fair? Why have the objects been assigned a male or female role?
- B. Tell one story to the group or your partner about a time when you felt you were given a task or was in a situation where you were treated unequally because of your gender.



Lesson 2 – Dunia Hafez- Bridging Life Between Two Worlds

Formats: Social Media Vignette and Web Story

Outcomes: To develop students' reading and discussion skills

Discussion questions:

5. Have you ever felt like Dunia did? When?
6. What kinds of support were missing for Dunia when she came to Canada?
7. How did Dunia's beliefs help her overcome her situation?
8. What message gave Dunia more confidence in her abilities?
9. What part of Dunia's story do you feel a connection to?
10. What did Dunia do to help improve her family's economic situation?

Activities:

- A. Decide whether or not Dunia's story is something you wish to share on your social media? Discuss your choice with a fellow student. Tell them whether you will share it, like it or comment on it.
- B. Create an inspiration card to keep with you in the wallet. Select a quote from the story that inspires you and write it down. Keep this card for those times when you need some positivity.



Lesson 3– Kay (Kyung Eun) Park – Dream Job

Formats: Social Media Vignette, Zoom Interview (Episode 3) and Web Story

Outcomes: To develop student’s question formation and opinion making skills

Discussion questions:

1. What questions do you have about Kay’s life before she came to Canada?
2. In your opinion, should Kay have changed her career? Why? Why not?
3. What kinds of training did Kay need to do to be ready for her dream job?
4. Besides her training, what other factors did Kay feel helped her succeed?

Activities:

- A. Make a list of 5 other jobs you might like to try for a day and share them with the group
- B. Ask members of the group if they know of any resources or training programs that could open up new opportunities for you



Lesson 4 – Parvinder Kaur – Moving Forward

Formats: Social Media Vignette and Web Story

Outcomes: To develop student’s ability to interact with others and show empathy

Discussion questions:

1. You are going to lead a discussion about Parvinder’s story. What question will you ask the group to discuss? Why is this a good question for discussion?
2. You are going to tell a friend about Parvinder’s challenges. What 3 problems will you tell your friend that Parvinder dealt with?
3. Imagine you are Parvinder’s friend and she is telling you about the consequence of her move to Windsor. What might you say to let her know you understand her difficulties?
4. What action and WEST program led Parvinder to her current job?

Activities:

- A. What kind of work placement or volunteer experience might you enjoy? Brainstorm three possible ideas with a partner and share your ideas with the whole group
- B. Practice Active Listening. Ask your partner to tell you three things that are troubling her. Listen carefully. When she is finished, check in with your partner to be sure you understood her. Repeat back the difficulties she has told you.
- C. You might use the phrases:
“You are trying to deal with _____ Is that right?”
“It must be difficult to be handling _____.”



Lesson 5 – Rebecca Chenier – The Right Job for Me

Formats: Zoom Interview (Episode 4) and First Person Web Story

Outcomes: To develop student’s listening, persuasion and writing skills

Discussion questions:

1. Why did Rebecca need to persuade the employment counsellor to help her with her goal?
2. What was one of the biggest obstacles that Rebecca dealt with so she could go to work?
3. What surprises WEST interviewer Maha Majdalawi about Rebecca’s work?

Activities:

- A. Choose a partner, one of you will play the role of a participant looking for a job. The other person will play the role of the employment counselor. The participant must use persuasive sentences to communicate what she needs, even when the counsellor is uncooperative.

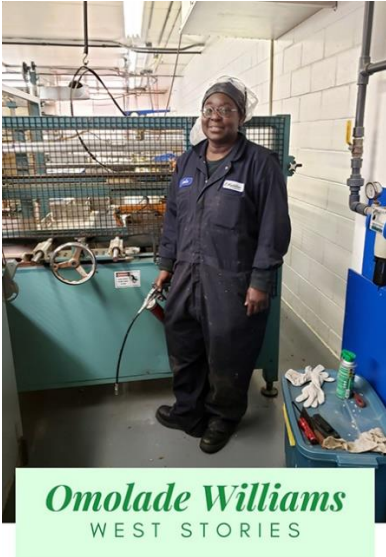
You might say:

“I would really appreciate it if you would help me_____.”

“It is very important that I _____.”

“Would you please be sure to _____.”

- B. Write down three jobs you might wish to try, but feel other people might not think you would do. Here are a few examples of nontraditional jobs that women do: Welder, Machinist, Firefighter, Carpenter, and Plumber.



Lesson 6 – Omolade Williams - Gaining A Skilled Trade

Outcomes: To develop student’s listening, research and presentation skills

Formats: *Zoom Interview (Episode 1) and First Person Web Story*

Discussion questions:

1. What did Omalade do before she came to Canada?
2. Where was she born and raised?
3. Why did she come to Canada?
4. What were your reasons for coming to Canada?

Activities:

- A. Imagine you are going to introduce Omalade to your class. Prepare a one-minute speech about her and share it with your group.
- B. Read Omalade’s first person web story. Find out how much money she makes per hour at her current job.



Lesson 7 – Rob Paglia – Masterful Ally

Outcomes: To develop student’s listening, communication and writing skills

Formats: *Zoom Interview (Episode 2)*

Discussion questions:

1. What advice did Rob give to women about working in a male-dominated workplace?
2. Read the zoom story and share 3 skilled trades job titles.
3. Express your opinion. Would you like to work in the skilled trades? Why or Why not?
4. Share your experience: have you ever worked in a male-dominated workplace? Describe your experience.

Activities:

- A. Research Rob Paglia on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/elctrx>) or visit his website: <http://www.powertraxxelectric.com/> Share three surprising things you learned about him with your group.
- B. With a partner write a short email letter thanking Rob for his work helping women in the skilled trades. Be sure to:
 - Introduce yourself and explain your connection to WEST.
 - Thank Rob.Tell him why his work as an ally of women matters to you.
 - Send the email information to traxx@info.ca and see if Rob responds.

Definition:

Ally -Being an ally means being **willing to act with and for others in pursuit of ending oppression and creating equality.**



Lesson 8 – Jane Emilio Tomasso – A Trans Woman and Her New Life

Outcomes: To develop student’s vocabulary and discussion skills. To introduce newcomers to proper forms of address to support transgender and inequality issues faced by people.

Formats: Web Story

Discussion questions:

1. Has anyone ever called you by something that was not your name? For example, a nickname or maybe even mispronouncing your name?
2. How did it feel to be referred to or called by something that you did not like?
3. Jane refers to herself as a Trans Woman. What sex was she given at birth? What sex does she identify with?
4. Why did Jane feel she had to move to Toronto?
5. What kinds of harassment did Jane experience in Hogtown?
6. What positive changes happened in Jane’s life in Toronto?
7. What part of Jane’s story can you relate or connect to? Choose one quote from Jane and explain your connection. For example, **“I hope that in the future I will find myself in a more creation-oriented line of work.”**

Activities

- A. Write a short paragraph about a time you felt you did not belong and read it to your partner.
- B. Circle and look up some of the new vocabulary words in Jane’s web story and definitions below. Share the meanings with your group.

Definitions:

Who you are and how you feel—can be **different** than the what the doctors/midwives said when you were born—girl, boy, or intersex—you might identify as **transgender** or **non-binary** (both or neither).



Bruce Jenner was identified as a man and formally changed her name and gender to Caitlyn Jenner. She is now a **Trans Woman**.

A **trans** person is a person whose actual gender does not correspond with the gender they were assigned at birth.

Non-Binary – is a person who identifies as **neither** a man nor a woman

Outlier: a person or thing differing from all other members of a particular group or set.

Adaptable lessons for more learning:

<https://www.welcomingschools.org/resources/lesson-plans/transgender-youth/transgender-with-books/>



Lesson 9– Manal – On Never Giving Up

Outcomes: To develop the ability to understand simple and moderately complex reading materials

Formats: *Web Story*

Discussion questions:

1. What is one of the themes or lessons that Manal is trying to share with those who read her story?
2. What kinds of losses did Manal experience?
3. What do you think helped Manal handle these difficult experiences?
4. Have you ever cried at work? What happened to Manal when she cried at the pharmacy?
5. Although Manal made a powerful economic shift to working in a pharmacy, she also became an essential, front line worker during the pandemic. Why was that a problem for her? Explain.

Activities

- A. Write a text and message a person who has helped you during a very difficult time period in your life. Use phrases like, “I will always remember when you helped me...” and “I can never forget the day when you....” Send your text!
- B. Manal speaks about the support she received. Write down a list of 5 people who support you in some way.
For example,
 1. My sister makes me feel supported by listening to my problems.



Lesson 10– Choose A First Person Story – Lisa Eybergen, Maggie Henry, Bobbi Day

Outcomes: To develop the ability to determine reading materials that are understandable and interesting to read. To develop confidence commenting on and sharing stories on social media or by email.

Formats: First Person Web Stories (Lisa Eybergen, Maggie Henry, Bobbi Day)

Discussion questions:

1. Scan the stories and select your favorite story to read. Share what it was about the story that made you decide this would be the story for you.
2. What connections do you have to this person and their story?
3. What is one of the key differences between you and the person you selected to read about?

Activities:

- A. Share our favorite story on social media or email it to a friend using the buttons below the story. Write a sentence or two about why this story is important or use a phrase, such as: Read this! or “She inspires me.”
- B. Talk to a partner about the story you like the least. Explain why you don’t like the story using examples. You may discuss images, vocabulary, or the length of the story.
- C. Submit your own success story to our Gender Equality Website. Be sure to include:
 1. What was life like before you shifted your economic situation
 2. What happened or what did you do to make a change (internally or externally)?
 3. What was the result of your change on you and your life?



Lesson 11 – Lyn Caine and Tammy Morris- Handle Conflict at Work

Outcomes: To develop the ability to listen for key terms and make notes.

Formats: Inside WEST Podcast: How to Handle Micro- aggression in the Workplace Positively

Discussion questions:

1. What does Lyn say micro- aggression is?
2. What does micro-aggression destroy according to Lyn?
3. What example of racism and micro-aggression does Lyn talk about?
4. Have you ever experienced micro-aggression? What happened?

Activities:

- A. Practice the conversation with a co-worker as Lyn suggested. Be sure to ask the question: Can you explain why you did this? Switch roles.
- B. Share a time in your life when you felt excluded or had an experience with racism or witnessing racism. Ask the group members for suggestions on how this problem could have been dealt with



Lesson 12 – Danait Asgedom– Two Paths

Outcomes: To develop the ability to listen for key elements in a conversation

Formats: Inside WEST Podcast: Two Paths

Discussion:

1. *Danait says this is a story about many things. What themes does she mention?*
2. *How does Danait describe the first participant?*
3. *What problems was Danait concerned about?*
4. *How does Danait describe the first client?*
5. *How does Danait describe the second client?*
6. *Which client made it to graduation from the LEAD Program*

Activities:

- A. What do you know about the LEAD program? What questions do you have? Ask the group.
- B. What helps you to succeed? Have you ever failed at something? Talk to your partner about your experiences.



Lesson 13 – Gemma Grey-Hall – Intending and Reaching Goals

Outcomes: To develop the ability to write about personal history, intentions and goals. To be able to speak about financial literacy.

Formats: Social Media Vignette and Web Story

Discussion:

1. *What messages did your grandparents or parents give you about yourself?*
2. *What is the highest career or job position you aspire to? How much money would you like to make an hour?*
3. *Have you ever met someone who did not show or speak well of your abilities? If so, how did this meeting affect you? Did it change your self-confidence?*
4. *What did Gemma decide to do after meeting with her manager?*
5. *How did volunteering with WEST change Gemma's future?*
6. *What does Gemma do every morning?*
7. *How does Gemma manage her finances?*

Activities:

A. Write down 3 statements about how you would like to live your life this week and share them with a partner.

B. Write down a goal that result if you live out your intention using an If + then statement. Like this: If I remain relaxed and eat healthy this week, I will feel better about myself. Share your intentions for this week with your group.

C. What are you afraid of? Sometimes we hold back success with our fears. Write down 5 things you are afraid of doing. Just writing the fears down takes away some of the draining and fearful energy.

Definitions

Intentions: are a statement about **how** you want to be in this moment, independent of whether you are “winning or losing. Intentions are about your *journey*. To have an intent, is to be about moving in the direction of something new, so an intention can be vague or unfocused: “I intend to explore new ideas for a career in Canada.” or “I want to (intend to) enjoy the scenery on our trip to Montreal.” Whether you reach Montreal or not, you can still determine **how** you wish to feel or be.

Goals: are focused statements about **the results you want to achieve** which may take many tasks, a lot of time and involve success and failure. Goals are about the *destination*. For example, “I want to get to Montreal.”



Lesson 14– Sheila Barker – Becoming Your Own Advocate

Outcomes: To develop the ability to understand and share important ideas in a phone conversation. To develop the idea to use the internet to search and learn more about a person’s activities and career.

Formats: Zoom Interview with Rose Hurst, social media vignette and web story

Discussion:

1. *What was the exact problem Sheila was facing in her career?*
2. *How did Sheila approach the conversation with her supervisor? What questions did she use?*
3. *Where is the humor or comedy in Sheila’s story about the conversation she had to have about not receiving adequate pay for her position compared to the men she worked with?*
4. *Who were Sheila’s teachers or mentors in life?*
5. *What did Sheila learn from her teachers or mentors?*
6. *How would you describe the relationship between Executive Director Rose Hurst and Board Member Sheila Barker?*

Activities

- A. What was one of the most difficult conversations you every had? If you are comfortable, share a story about the most difficult conversation you ever had. Create a beginning, middle point and ending to keep everyone interested.
- B. Make a list of 3 women you admire and see in your daily life. These people might work nearby, be a neighbor, or run a local business. Write down why you admire them and share your reasons with your partner or group.
- C. Brainstorm a future connection. Jot down how could you create your own mentor relationship? Would you consider asking one of the people you admire to chat with you by phone or zoom once in a while for advice and learning?

Definitions:

Advocate is to add a voice of support to a cause or person.

Mentor- an experienced and trusted **adviser**.

Women earned **\$4.13 (or 13.3%) less per hour**, on average, than men, or **\$0.87** for every dollar earned by men

-October 2010, Statistics Canada

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/>

How to relate to a mentor:

<https://onbeing.org/blog/the-art-of-being-mentored-7-things-to-make-the-most-of-your-relationship/>



Lesson 15– Ann Diab – Creating Pathways to Opportunities

Outcomes: To develop the ability to understand and share aspirations with others. To develop the ability to use the internet to search and learn more about a person’s activities and career.

Formats: Zoom Interview with Rose Hurst, social media vignette and web story

Discussion:

1. When did Ann become aware that she wanted a career, as well as, being a mother?
2. Who supported and encouraged Ann to try things she might fail at?
3. What did Ann do to help her build her confidence?
4. How did Ann help her newcomer grandmother?
5. How does Ann advocate for newcomers today?
6. What does she think WEST should be doing to help newcomers?

Activities

1. Find Ann Diab’s LinkedIn Profile. Write down 3 things that you learned about her career and activities on this website.
2. If your career was a ladder with a series of rungs, what job would you be starting at and what job would you want to end up with. Why? Share with a partner or your group.
3. Can you think of anyone who might know someone who is doing what you would like to do one day? Write them an email or call them for advice?
4. Explore the National Occupational Code website. Find one or two career paths you had not thought of. Find out about the education and wages required for each job. Share this with the group or a partner.

Definitions:

Newcomer - a person that has recently arrived in a place or joined a group.

Evaluation Exit Slips:

Please help us evaluate what your students learned by participating in the Gender Equality Series.

Would you mind asking them to share an answer to questions like these ones?

If you could ask one of the people in the series a question, what would you ask them?

Was there a part of a story today that you could connect or relate to? Why or Why not?

What is one thing that surprised you about the series?

What will you do differently because of this lesson?

What would you tell others about what you learned today?

Teacher Notes: