

The Charter is for Everybody: A Guide to Understanding your Rights

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Before embarking on any discussion

- As newcomers arrive from many different realities it is important to be mindful of cultural differences and sensitivities that may affect their understanding or interpretation of rights and freedoms.
- It is important to foster an open and respectful environment where participants feel comfortable asking questions or sharing perspectives.

Why is this resource important?

It is important for all people in Canada, including newcomers, to understand their rights under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. It is essential they have the proper tools and information to help them navigate Canadian society with confidence and with awareness of their rights and freedoms. When people know about their rights, they are more likely to stand up for them and defend them, and this in turn makes our democracy stronger.

Overall goal while leading the workshop

This workshop looks to help newcomers to Canada draw personal connections from the videos to their own lives, and to understand the relevance of the content in their own lives. Also, participants can compare their personal experiences in their home countries (for e.g. regarding freedom of expression, freedom of religion, equality, etc.) to the Canadian experience.

Format of the resource package

1. There are 5 videos, each presenting a different aspect of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. There is a document entitled **5 Videos at a Glance** that presents an overview of the whole resource package, to help workshop facilitators determine how they wish to explore the videos and the accompanying guides.
2. Each video has its own accompanying facilitation guide with a brief overview, discussion questions, and activities for further exploration. These guides include suggested talking points to help lead discussions. Each video folder also includes a document featuring a statue from the McMurtry Gardens of Justice in Toronto that is relevant to the content in the video. The folders for videos #2-5 include supplemental activities (for e.g. role play scenario brainstorm, two sides of a case, word cloud, etc.)
3. It is not necessary to use all videos and resources offered, nor does the resource package require one to follow a specific order. The facilitator may pick and choose what to prioritize based on the clientele, available time and specific fields of interest. However, it is recommended to begin with video #1 as it presents a general overview of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

How to decide what video(s) and resources to use

Here are a few questions to consider when determining the best way to proceed in presenting this video series.

1. Who is your clientele?

Not all newcomers come from the same background or have the same experiences. It is important to understand whether they come from a country that has a well-developed democratic system similar to Canada, or whether they come from a country where rights and freedoms are limited. This can help you choose which videos to present, the types of cases to explore, and can inform your choice of discussion questions.

2. What preexisting knowledge do they have of the Canadian legal system, and in particular the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*?

This resource package offers different ways to explore the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, but not all information presented may be necessary depending on your clientele. Having knowledge of their preexisting comfort level with the *Charter* may be helpful in determining which videos or discussion questions you choose to explore.

3. What are the concerns of your clientele?

Does your clientele have specific concerns or interests? Are they looking for a general overview or are they interested in learning about specific rights and freedoms? This can help you determine how much time to spend on each video, whether they might benefit from the extended exploration paths, etc.

Important considerations

Please note that there are many important elements to consider when working with newcomers. These can help guide you in your lessons and help ensure that everyone feels safe and comfortable.

- Country of origin: the different realities of Canadian newcomers could influence how open and comfortable they are speaking about laws, rights, and freedoms.
- Comfort with the language: Newcomers can have a wide range of comfort with the English language. Some may be fluent while others may have limited understanding of the language. At present, the videos are also available with subtitles in French, Spanish, Ukrainian, Tagalog and Arabic, to help with comprehension of the content.

| What other resources are included in the supplemental materials | How to use these resources |
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| A. Infographic on the <i>Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i> | This document is intended as a quick and straight-forward introduction to the <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i> . |
| B. Various organizations (reference document) | This document lists various organizations across the country working with Canadians and newcomers to protect their rights. Web links are included. |
| C. Case studies | This document offers a variety of case studies (past and present) that help explain the <i>Charter</i> and the protections it offers. Suggestions are made in the video facilitation guides about which case studies are relevant to explore. |
| D. 5 Videos at a Glance | This document presents an overview of the whole resource package, to help workshop facilitators determine how they wish to explore the videos and the accompanying guides. |
| E. Statues Folder | The statues folder offers a look at each statue presented in the videos. These documents are also included in each video sub-folder. For each statue there is a link to the virtual tour of the McMurtry Gardens of Justice in Toronto, which allows for further exploration and discussion of the meaning behind the sculptures. Additional discussion questions are also included, to allow participants to interpret the statues themselves, and to discuss the relevance of the concepts (for e.g. the rule of law, freedom of religion, etc.) in their own lives. |