

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

Video #2

Fundamental 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.
- Use the document *Before Watching the Videos: important information on using the videos*. This document will guide you on how to use the following videos and documents. It will also offer suggestions on introductory questions and discussions to determine what your audience already knows about the *Charter*.

Objective

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.

By the end of this workshop, newcomers should be able to

- understand the purpose of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*
- be able to identify key rights and freedoms the *Charter* guarantees
- discuss its role in Canadian society and its significance in their lives

Materials Needed

- Document: **Before Watching the Videos: important information on using the videos.**
- Computer for showing video #2
- Document: **Possible Cases to Discuss**
- Document: **Statue #2: Freedom of Religion**
- Document: **Two Sides of a Case**

Leading the Workshop

1. Begin by giving a brief description of the following video:
Video #2: Fundamental Freedoms breaks down the key points of Section 2 of the Charter and how Section 2 plays an integral part in protecting individual freedoms.
2. Play **Video #2: Fundamental Freedoms**
3. Once the video is over, take the time to go over the key points of the video (the overview provided below can help with this). Ask if there are any questions, elements that need to be reexplained or clarified. If needed, you can re-read what the *Charter* states in **Section 2**.
4. Continue by exploring the provided discussion questions and activities. It is not necessary to explore each question or activity; you can make choices based on the needs and interests of your participants. For each there are provided discussion points, important considerations and information to help lead the conversation.
5. *Important: Remember that participants are invited to share personal experiences. Remind them that this participation is on a voluntary basis, and that the workshop is a safe place to share, free from judgement.*

Overview

Video #2: Fundamental Freedoms breaks down the key points of Section 2 of the *Charter* and how Section 2 plays an integral part in protecting individual freedoms.

Key points:

- ❖ What are the fundamental freedoms? Freedom of conscience and religion; freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression; freedom of peaceful assembly; freedom of association.
- ❖ For those who have less power and less ability, Section 2 allows the freedom to stand up for their rights (for e.g. workers, minority groups, etc.)
- ❖ Freedom of the press and media is also protected; removes fear of government censorship
- ❖ Allows for citizens to demand change when something is wrong and to criticize the government without fear of repercussions

What the *Charter* says

Section 2 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* states:

Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:

(a) freedom of conscience and religion; (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication; (c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and (d) freedom of association.

Possible discussion questions	Information and ideas to guide the discussion
<p>In Canada, the right to freely associate with others is a fundamental freedom protected under the <i>Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i>. As a newcomer who is adjusting to life in Canada, how can understanding and exercising this right impact your integration into Canadian society?</p>	<p>As newcomers, employment may be one of the biggest concerns they have. For many, workers' rights and the right to unionisation may not be something they are accustomed to.</p> <p>It is important to explain that one does not need an employer's permission to contact employment or labour standards offices nor can they be punished or deported for doing so.</p> <p>Have them reflect on potential challenges they might face in forming or joining associations, and how these challenges can be addressed.</p>

<p>In Video #2, they introduced the case of <i>Ishaq v. Canada</i> (Citizenship and immigration, 2015). How does the case address the application of the <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i>, particularly in the context of religious freedoms and equality rights?</p>	<p>See document Possible Cases to Discuss (refer to case notes for more information.)</p>
<p>In Video #2, they introduced the statue Freedom of Religion found in the McMurtry Gardens. Discuss how this statue represents the Canadian population. Do you feel this is a good representation of Canada? How and why is freedom of religion important to you?</p>	<p>See document Statue #2: Freedom of Religion</p> <p>The <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i> guarantees freedom of religion as one of its fundamental rights. Canada is known for its commitment to multiculturalism and freedom of religion, however there are still many challenges that people of different religions face.</p>
<p>Possible activities</p>	
<p>This section offers ideas that allow for further exploration related to Section 2 of the <i>Charter</i>. The goal of these activities is to allow for the workshop to be more interactive.</p>	
<p>1. Give the participants access to the document Two Sides of a Case. Give them a case or scenario that allows them to explore two sides of an issue. For example: Ishaq v. Canada or R. v. Keegstra. Have the participants reflect and fill out the sheet with arguments in support or against the judicial outcome. Participants can then share their answers. The goal is to reflect on how complex these cases can be, and that there is rarely a simple answer.</p> <p><i>This activity can also be done in a mini debate format where workshop participants are split into two groups, one for and one against. They must then work together to prepare their arguments. You can have the participants continue with an informal debate using their work.</i></p>	
<p>2. Statue #2: Freedom of Religion: Explore the Statue and the McMurtry Gardens of Justice through a virtual tour https://artandthecourts.ca/en/garden/freedom-of-religion/</p>	