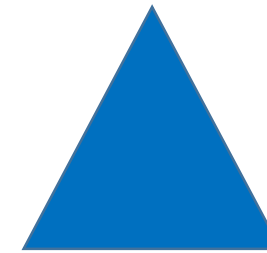
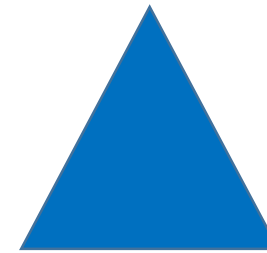
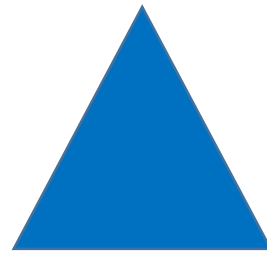
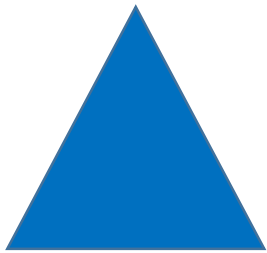


# Community Engagement Staff Training

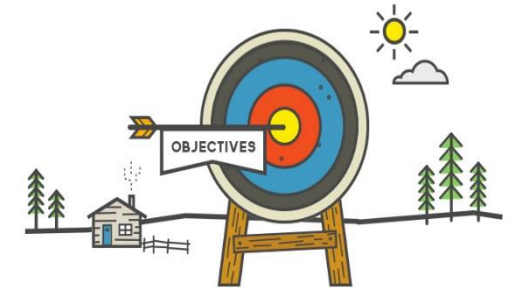


# Session Overview

1. Community Engagement Basics
2. Learning About Your Community
3. Making Connections
4. Strengthening Skills

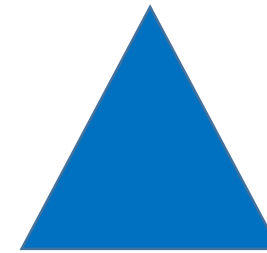
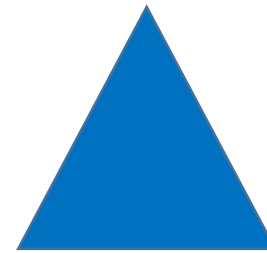
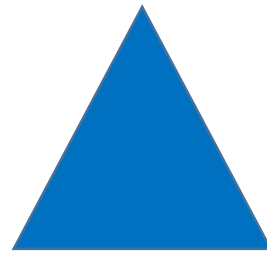
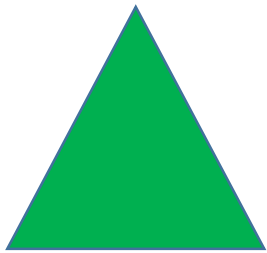


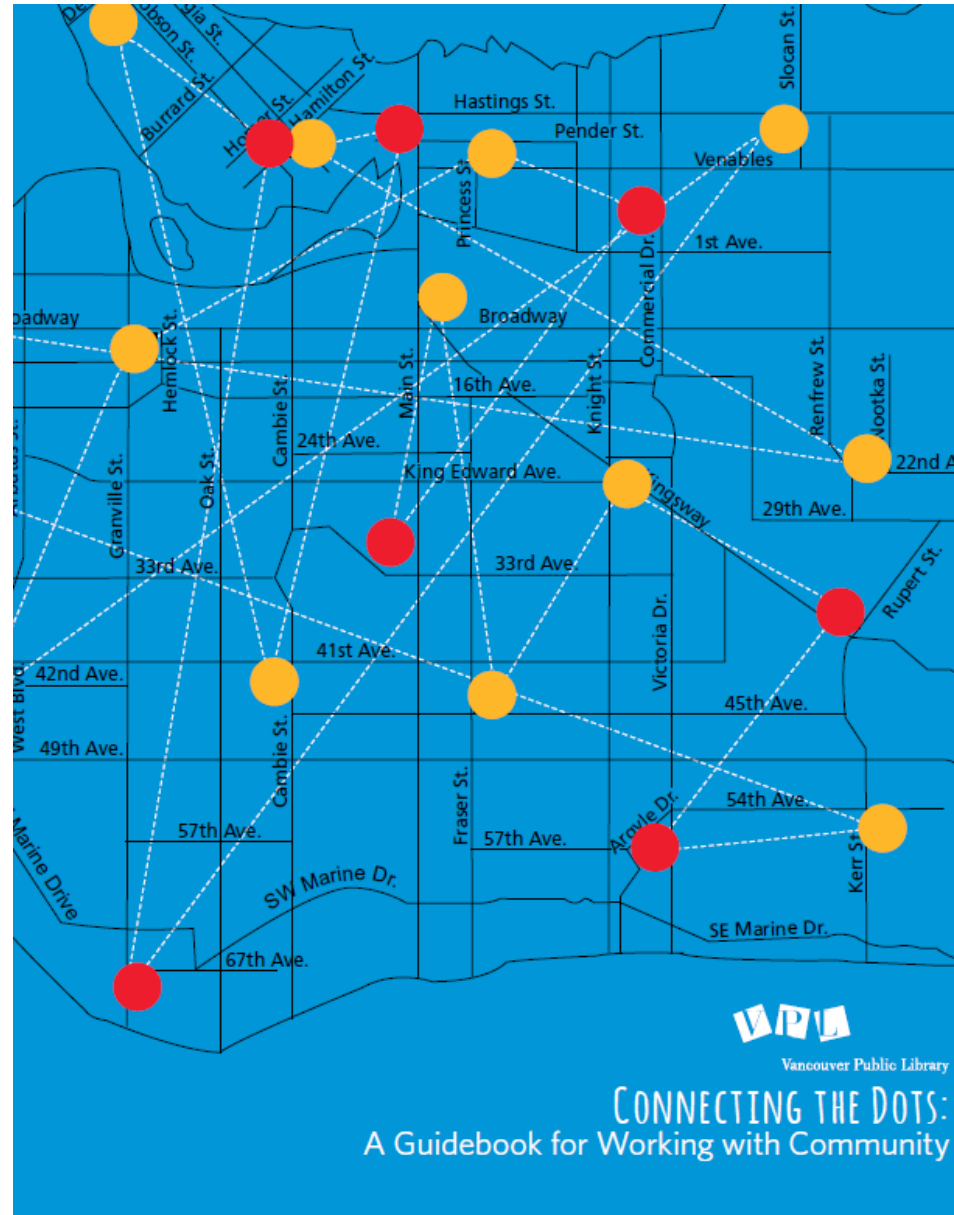
# Why We're Here



- Understand community engagement and community led library service in the context of our work at Vancouver Public Library
- Recognize and engage with different tools and strategies for getting to know Vancouver communities and community members
- Apply relationship building techniques both inside and outside of the library

# Section 1: Community Engagement Basics





# Policies and Values

- Community Engagement Values Statement
- Diversity and Inclusion Statement
- Values



# Social Exclusion

“It is clear, from library literature and our experiences, that libraries serve some segments of the community better than others, and some segments not at all.”

– Working Together Project





# If We Do Not Engage...

- Community members will avoid accessing services
- Programs/services won't be truly reflective/responsive
- Library will not live up to its values
- We risk privileging some needs over others and contributing to social exclusion

# Libraries: A Call to Action!

**If we want to create effective change, we have to be with the people we want to effect change for. And when we are with them, we need to be open to learning *from* them.**

# Definitions

## **Community Engagement:**

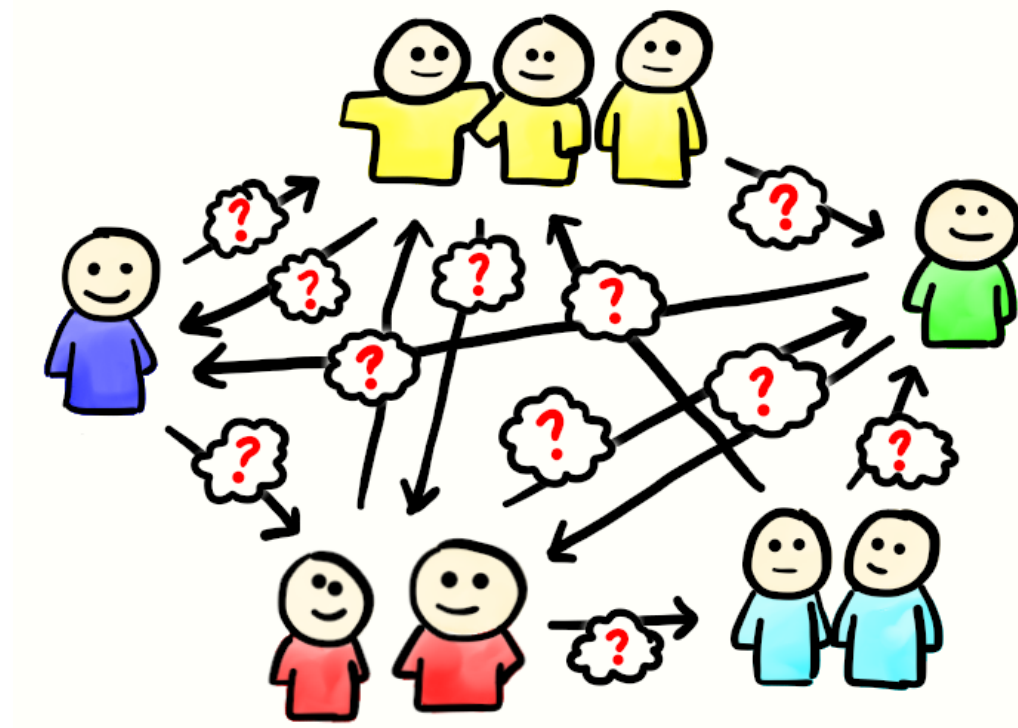
Community engagement in a library context is the practice of building relationships with community members through connecting, listening, understanding, and involving. Community engagement encompasses a continuum of informal and formal tools and methods.

# Definitions

## **Community Led:**

Community led work stems from the relationships built and information gathered during community engagement. From these relationships, the library can work collaboratively with the community to discuss, plan, deliver, and assess programs and services.

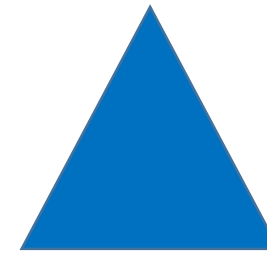
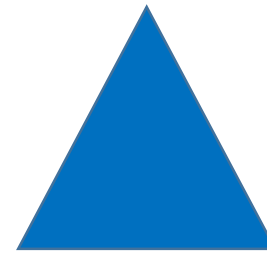
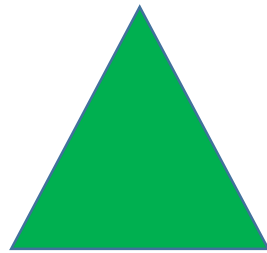
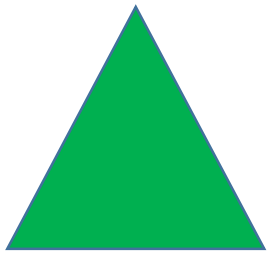
# Roles and Expectations



Q: What is one important factor to consider in your role or in your branch/department that can **either support or challenge** you in your ability to do community engagement?

# Section 2:

## Learning About Your Community







# Leverage Existing VPL Knowledge

- It's rare to encounter entirely uncharted territory
- Draw upon knowledge of your peers
- This knowledge may or may not be documented



# Leverage Existing VPL Knowledge

- Types of documented information:
  - Community contact lists
  - Community maps
  - Reports



# Leverage Existing VPL Knowledge

- Things that don't get documented: decorum, strategies, observations, failures, etc.
- Reach out to others in your area
- Return to them throughout your efforts



# Learn More

## **Areas of the City:**

*[vancouver.ca/news-calendar/areas-of-the-city.aspx](http://vancouver.ca/news-calendar/areas-of-the-city.aspx)*

- Profiles with demographic info about Vancouver's diverse neighbourhoods
- This info can broadly inform you about how lives in a community

# Activity

Examine the Marpole neighbourhood statistics handout.

- What jumps out at you?
- What are some initial observations and/or questions that come to mind?
- If you were about to begin doing community engagement in this neighbourhood, what would be useful or at least interesting to note based on these statistics?

Take a moment to examine the statistics and then discuss some of your observations and/or questions at your table.

# Learn More

**bc211:** *bc211.ca*

- Search tools for identifying community organizations
- You can customize your search

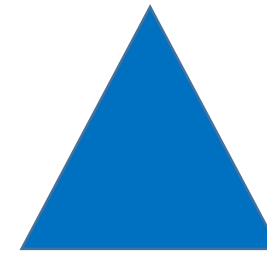
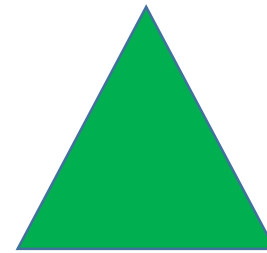
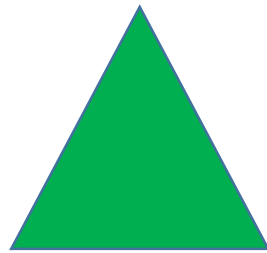
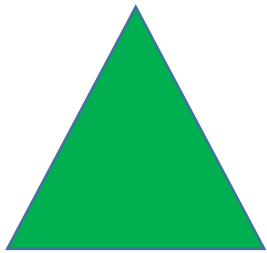
# Learn More

## Community Walks

- Walking around the community
- Pay attention to what you see
- e.g., community service providers, public gathering spaces, who hangs out there, etc.



# Section 3: Making Connections





# Working with Team and Supervisor

- Identify priorities with your supervisor
- Stay open and curious
- Avoid making commitments if you're not sure



# Make a Plan to Act

- Ask yourself questions like:
  - Who have you chosen to contact and why?
  - How do you plan on approaching these community members?
  - Are there specific areas of sensitivity or empathy required to engage with them?



# Systemic Inequality & Privilege

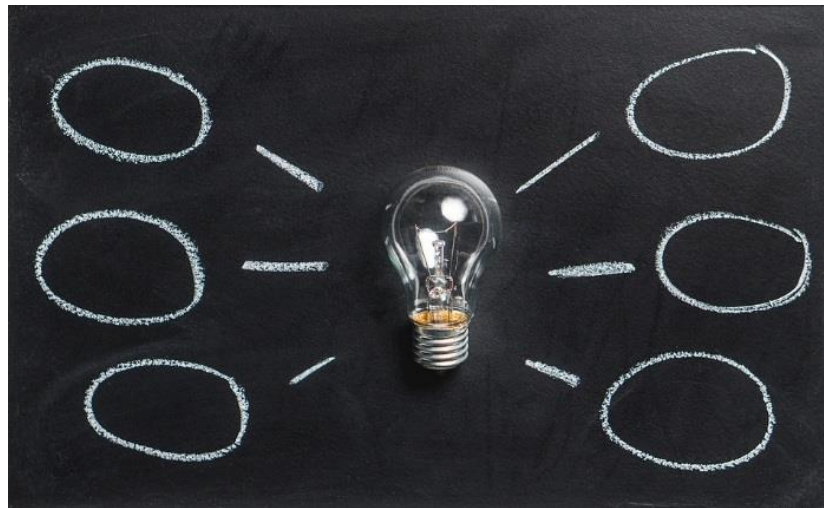
- Structural barriers affect some people, but not others, causing disproportionate access & opportunity
- Privilege can be hard to recognize and easy to take for granted
- Recognizing privilege is the first step to working together across differences

# Understanding Systemic Inequality



# Strategies

1. Conversations in branch
2. Hanging out
3. Attending regular meetings and events



# Building Relationships

“Building relationships is the foundation of the community led model. It involves putting in the time to build trust with community members, by engaging them in conversations about themselves, their needs, their community, and the library.”

– Adapted from the *Community-Led Libraries Toolkit*, p. 62



# Conversations in the Branch

- Every interaction can initiate relationship-building conversations
- Be visible in the public area
- Opportunities to go outside the library may be limited; connect with patrons during service point work



# Building Relationships

“At Kerrisdale there is a large population of seniors. Over time, you get to know them and build a relationship. You learn about their lives and what their individual needs are. I can share their comments with staff at the branch so that we can discuss how to enhance their experience and access.”

– Elizabeth Taron (SLPSA)



# Building Relationships

“Storytime is a really good way to build relationships. By staying after storytime is over and hanging out with families, asking them what their children are reading, asking them about their children’s development or just chatting with them about whatever they want to chat about, you make yourself available on their terms.”

– Elizabeth Taron (SLPSA)

# Hanging Out

- Regular visits to a community space to meet and talk with people
- Allow time to build meaningful and trusting relationships
- You may meet community members who don't come to the library



# Attending Events

- Community events such as street festivals and cultural celebrations are a great way to meet people in their space
- Opportunity for both sharing and learning

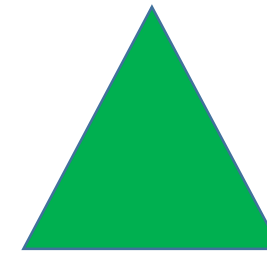
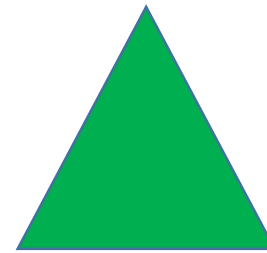
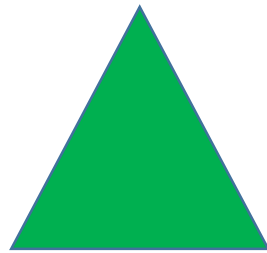
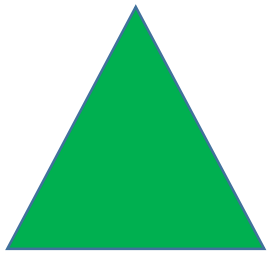


# Share Your Findings

- Opportunities to share your findings include:
  - Staff meetings
  - Community contact lists
  - Reports
  - Community maps
  - Something even more amazing?



# Section 4: Strengthening Skills



# Skills and Tools

1. Active listening
2. Comfort with ambiguity and awkwardness
3. Ways to disengage



# Active Listening

“Community members generate service ideas when sustained relations are in place. In order for this to occur, library staff need to reposition their role in the community from an expert to a facilitator. By becoming active listeners instead of disseminators of information, library staff take information from the community and place what they are hearing within the context of library services. Each community is unique and will identify need(s) for services based on its unique circumstances.”

– Williment, K. W. (2009). It takes a community to create a library. *Partnership: The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research*, 4(1).

# Active Listening

- Be the learner
- Summarize
- Clarify
- Stay in the moment



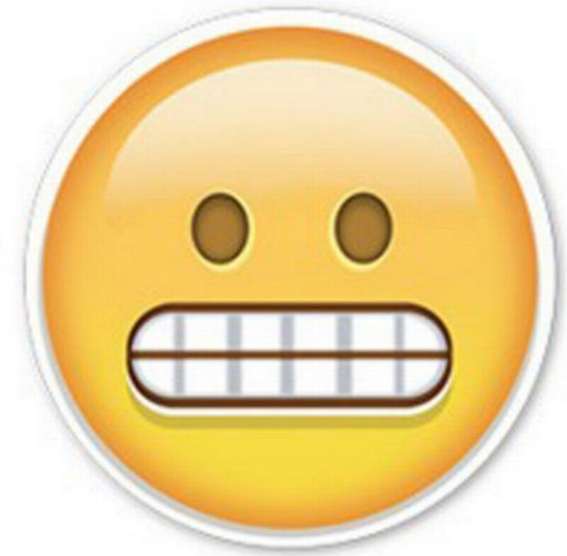


# Comfort with Ambiguity/Awkwardness



# Comfort with Ambiguity/Awkwardness

- Feeling anxious and uncomfortable is normal
- Ambiguity can be challenging to navigate
- Use discomfort to learn and grow



# Comfort with Ambiguity/Awkwardness

What are some strategies for managing discomfort or awkwardness?



# Disengaging

- Disengaging from conversations can be awkward
- “It’s been great talking with you. I appreciate you for sharing your experience. I’ll be sure to discuss this with staff at the branch.”
- Set professional boundaries before the interaction

# Synthesizing Strategies and Skills Activity

Flipcharts are arranged around the room, each with a different scenario. Move around to each flipchart and write ideas on how you would handle the scenario, keeping in mind the strategies and skills we discussed today.

This activity will last 10 minutes.

# Original Question Check In





*That's all Folks!*