

# BCSIS Provincial Virtual Summit

February 24 & 25, 2021

BC Public Libraries: Supporting Community  
Resilience During the COVID-19 Pandemic

# Indigenous Land Acknowledgement

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As a provincial umbrella association, AMSSA would like to acknowledge that BC is home to 198 First Nations. We would also like to express and recognize the privilege that we have as settlers on this land.

We wish to acknowledge that AMSSA's operations is on the unceded traditional territories of the xwməθkwəy'əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səl'ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

# Funder Acknowledgement

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**BRITISH  
COLUMBIA**

Supported by the Province of British Columbia

# Presenter Information



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Community Librarian, North Vancouver City Library

# BC Public Libraries: Supporting Community Resilience During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Shideh Taleban – North Vancouver City Library

Mark MacKichan – Vancouver Public Library



# Overview

- Who are we?
- Overview of public libraries during the pandemic
- Key challenges that we identified
- Conclusion
- Q&A







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## Public Libraries During the Pandemic



- Temporary closure/no in-person services
- Takeout services
- Expanding digital collections

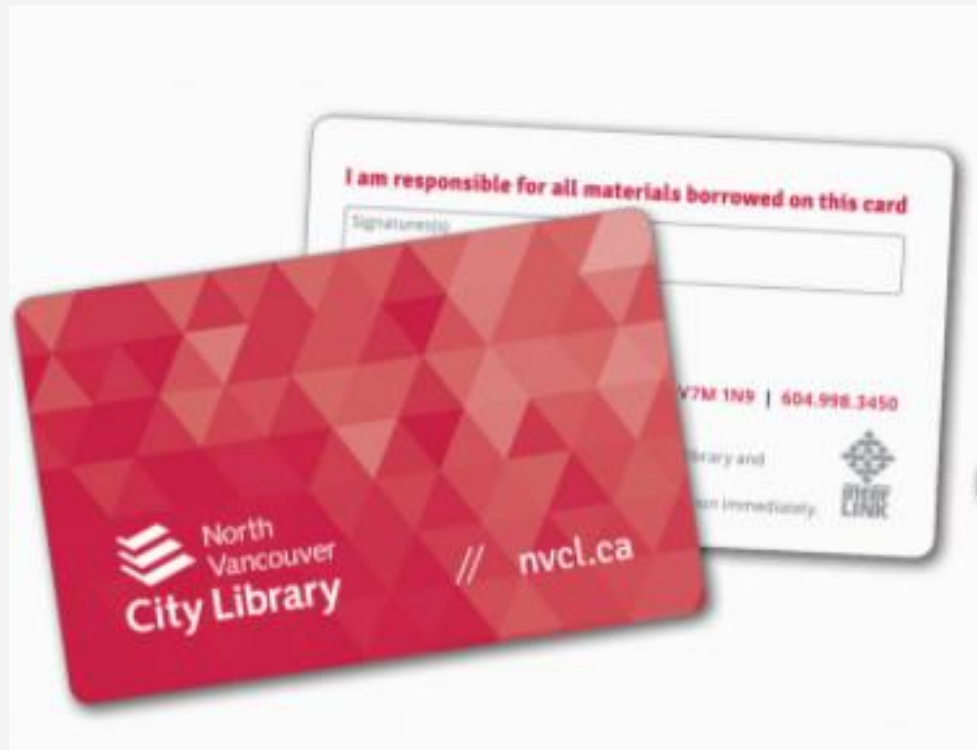


## Public Libraries During the Pandemic



- Shifting to online programming
- Enhancing remote reference services (chat, phone, email)

## Public Libraries During the Pandemic



- Digital library card registration
- Building upon our history of work in the areas of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

# Key Challenges



- Social isolation
- Discrimination/racism
- English language learning
- Finance/employment
- Mental health

# Social Isolation



- Social isolation is a challenge for everyone, but newcomers are uniquely affected
- Many newcomers arrive with little to no social network; COVID-19 has impacted their abilities to expand their network and/or interact with their existing network



## Take-home Technology and TELUS Grant Devices

**North Shore Public Libraries**

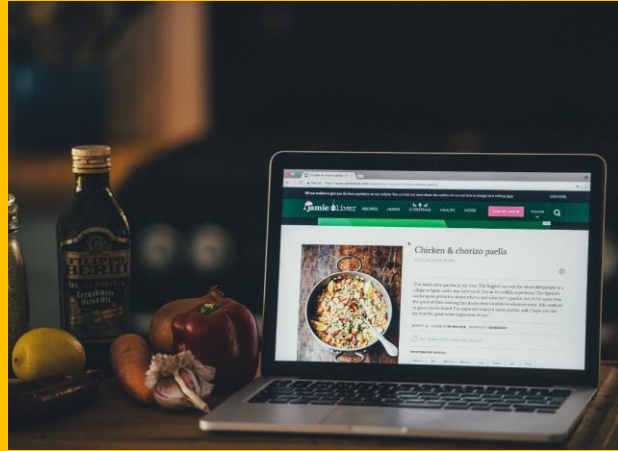
Programs and resources on  
how to use technology such as  
Zoom

Providing computers and Wi-Fi



**Numerous library systems**





Partnering with local organizations on virtual community dialogues and programming

**Numerous library systems**

Offering cultural programs and programs in other languages



**Numerous library systems**

# Library Champions Project



**Public Library InterLINK**

Offering virtual book clubs and other opportunities  
for socialization



**Numerous library systems**

Lending out board games and puzzles to support family bonding



**North Vancouver City Library**

# Racism and Discrimination



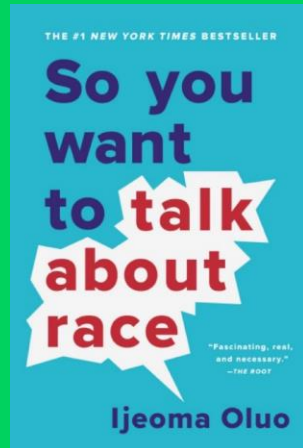
- Although racism was always there, this pandemic brought racism to the surface
- Lots of newcomers and immigrants experienced racism and discrimination more than before



Partnering with local organizations  
(NSMS, CDI, NSIIP) to offer anti-  
racism Town Halls and workshops

Numerous library systems

## Anti-Racism Book Clubs/Chats



Numerous library systems

# Weaving Our Humanity



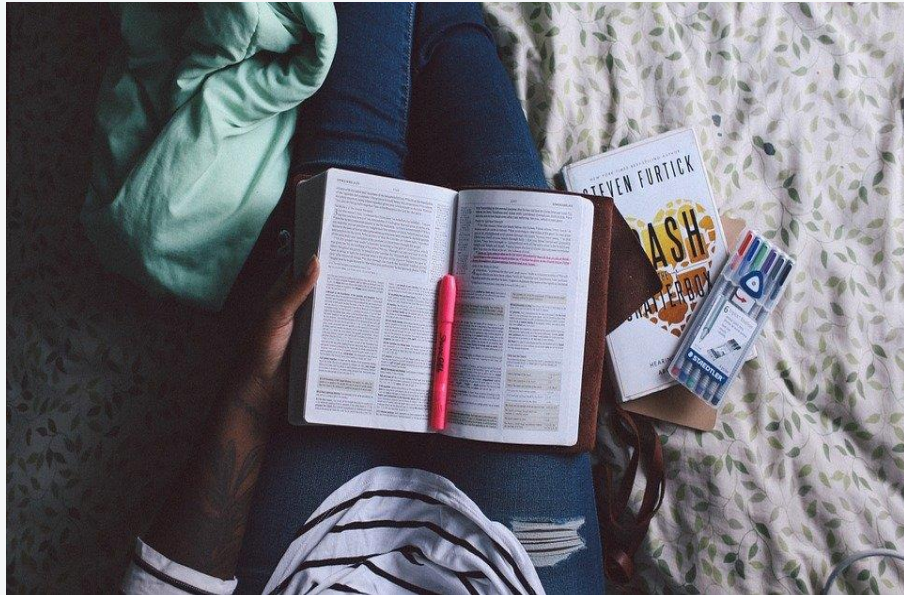
North Shore Public Libraries

## Anti-racism Readers' Advisory:

- Booklists
- Video Book Talks

Numerous library systems

# English Language Learning



- The pandemic disrupted many community ELL programs/services
- This exacerbated the community's need for library supports in this area

Online English conversation circles, and related programming and outreach



Numerous library systems





## Digital Language Resources

(e.g., Mango, Rosetta Stone, ClarityEnglish)

Numerous library systems

Language kits and readers  
for all skills and levels

Numerous library systems

Resources in multiple languages,  
including links to reliable public  
health information in translation

Numerous library systems

# Employment and Finance



- The pandemic catalyzed high levels of unemployment and financial precarity, which disproportionately affected newcomers
- Libraries have responded with added supports in these areas



One-to-one help

Online programs for all

Online employment guides  
([www.vpl.ca/siic](http://www.vpl.ca/siic))

Vancouver Public Library



Lynda.com

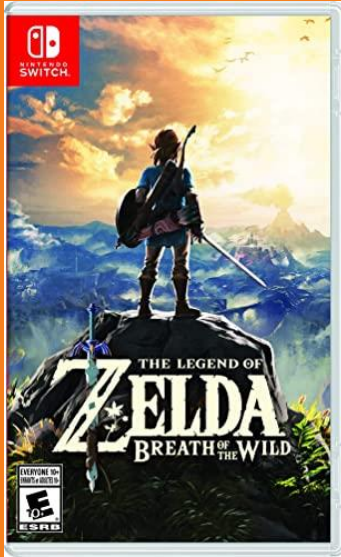
Free video courses made  
by experts; courses  
include employment and  
finance

Numerous library systems

Partnership programming related to employment and  
finance



Numerous library systems



Free access to technology  
and books/entertainment

Numerous library systems



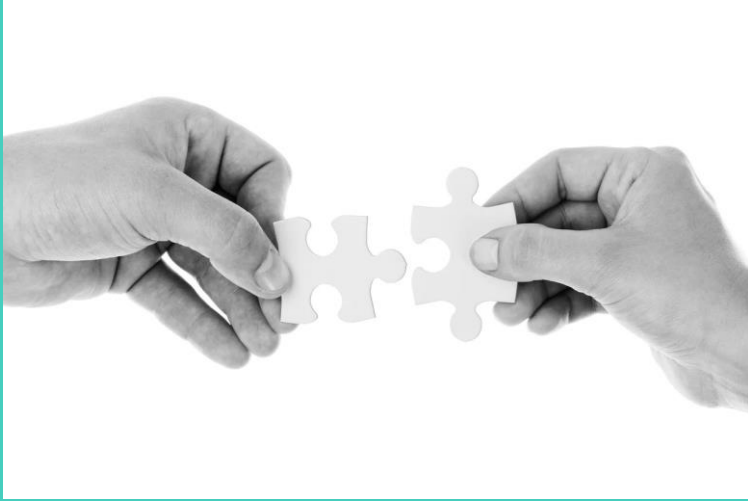
~~Late  
Fees~~

North Vancouver City Library  
Burnaby Public Library  
Others

# Mental Health



- The pandemic has generated tremendous stress and limited access to key services
- Newcomers are particularly vulnerable to mental health challenges
- Libraries have pursued ways to support mental health



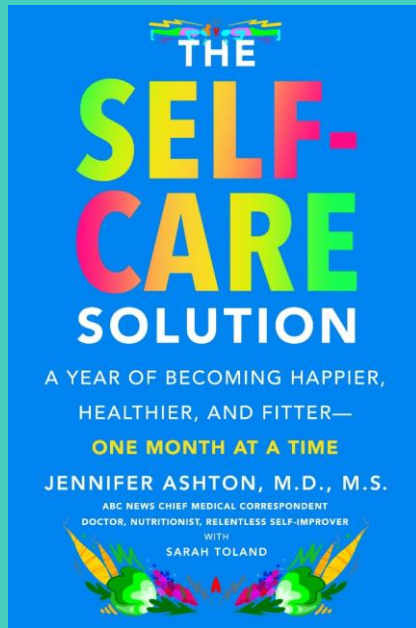
Providing information about  
accessible community  
services

Numerous library systems

Partnership programming on a wide range of mental health topics



Numerous library systems



Collections and reading recommendations on self-care, self-help and other mental health topics

Numerous library systems



Remember:  
Libraries are here for  
you!

# Thank You

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**AMSSA**<sup>®</sup>  
Strengthening Diversity In BC

