



# Tutor Connection

Summer 2016 Edition

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Tri-County Literacy Council is a community-based, non-profit organization that enriches both community and individuals by addressing literacy needs

*"If ever you find yourself doubting you can make it through a challenge, simply think back to everything you've overcome in the past."*

*Karen Salmansohn*

## "Hard-to-Serve" Students

Community Literacy of Ontario recently published a report on the challenges of working with "hard-to-serve" students and offered ways we can support them through the learning process. What is meant by hard-to-serve? These are adults that face multiple barriers which hinder their ability to reach training goals. In 2015, Essential Skills Ontario conducted an online survey of people representing various agencies across the Employment Ontario Network. Survey results show the following characteristics for this group as being:

- Individuals having less than a high school education.
- Individuals who belong to two or more vulnerable groups (i.e. the poor and those with a criminal record).
- The most cited source of income for vulnerable clients is Ontario Works, with Ontario Disability Support Plan (ODSP) being second.
- Having a history of long-term unemployment.
- Low motivation

## *How can we help the hard-to-serve?*

- Kingston Literacy suggests combining both academic upgrading with self-esteem building, by ensuring early and continual success throughout the program, and expecting that the student will move on to further education or employment. If we believe in them, they will believe in themselves.
- Encourage students to set goals and timelines that are clear, reachable and measureable. Having a deadline is a critical part of goal setting. The more specific the goal, the better. Vague goals are hard to quantify. Remember SMART goals = Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely.
- Support students by thinking positively.
- When students don't know where to go to receive help, refer them to the award-winning helpline 211Ontario. This service refers individuals to social, non-

*“You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream ...”*

*C.S. Lewis*

## Tri-County Literacy Council

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### We're on the Web!

See us at:

[www.tricountyliteracycouncil.ca](http://www.tricountyliteracycouncil.ca)

Visit our website regularly; to learn about the latest FREE courses being offered.

clinical health and related government services in our community.

- Help students find a quiet place to study at home.
- Give students plenty of opportunity for feedback. What they think is important!
- Help students realize that failure and frustration are sometimes part of learning. Help them not to become discouraged or give up, but to try again.

For additional help, see the Toolkit of Resources to Support Service Delivery for Hard-to-Serve Clients in Literacy and Basic Skills Agencies at <http://www.communityliteracyofontario.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/Toolkit-Hard-to-Serve-Clients-LBS.pdf>

### *What if my student doesn't want to work?*

One challenge voiced in the report was that many Ontario Works and ODSP clients may feel it is not worth their while to work, especially for minimum wage. It may help your student to know that he/she can earn money while on Ontario Works. The counsellor can also help him/her become job-ready by paying for various certifications and workshops, such as CPR, Smart Serve, etc. ODSP also helps

clients to prepare and keep a job. Did you know that recipients can earn \$200 per month without it affecting their income support?

### Positive Thinking

Being a successful learner starts with having a positive attitude towards learning. This helps you to relax, focus and absorb information as you learn. To help your student become positive, provide the following tips:

- Practice saying positive things about yourself, to yourself.
- Identify what you can do, instead of focusing on what's not possible.
- When concerned about an upcoming event, visualize yourself being confident and successful. Replay this mental movie often.
- Surround yourself with positive people.
- Stay active. Physical activity will help you feel good about yourself.
- Write down negative thoughts and rephrase them for a positive point of view.

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