Ofelia Flores

(1958 -)

Ofelia M. Flores was born May 31st, 1958, in Guadalajara, Mexico. The second youngest of five siblings, her mother, Elizabeth, ran a convenience store, and her father, Juan José, was a chemical engineer. Ofelia excelled in school, even being one of a group of high-achieving students selected to visit the President in Mexico City when she was 13. She also enjoyed swimming and other sports, though she had little time for them as she spent most of her time on housework and assisting in her mother's store.

Ofelia earned a bachelor's in psychology and soon after married, having two children: Sergio and Allegra. She worked for a Social Housing Development Company, helping workers acquire their first homes. In 2008, she immigrated to Canada as a single parent, joining her son, who was attending university arriving with "5 suitcases, $4,400 and my daughter in tow."

She applied and was accepted into a degree program on autism at Capilano University, a decision she made based on her "first love" of working with children with disabilities. On continuing her education, she says "deepening my work in this field is essential because behind every research question is a child and a family seeking to be understood." She then earned her master's in special education at UBC, and a PhD as an Educational Psychology from SFU.

While attending school, she worked in a group home for adults with disabilities, which led her to realize the importance of early intervention. Working her way up from support worker to a Behaviour Consultant, she opened her own practice after being laid off during the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, she continues working with young children with autism and their families throughout the Fraser Valley, helping them overcome their challenges.

Ofelia came to Hatzic Island to live with David in 2016. He has been a friend, counsellor, and loving partner since she arrived in Canada.

Ofelia's journey as a Behaviour Consultant is an ongoing learning experience that requires a shift in the historical perspective from blaming children and mothers for their challenges in learning to asking, "How do I reach this child?" Her lifelong love of learning now inspires her clients and colleagues. From her earliest years of hard work, she has shown a deep commitment to helping families with children with disabilities and a profound love for her own children and partner.

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