

**"I hope to see my daughters soon, but I don't know what will happen. I hope everything is OK, but I don't know,"** says **Ibtisam**, an ESOL student from Syria in one of English for New Bostonians' funded programs.

Most of Ibtisam's family, including five of her adult children, live outside the U.S. As Syrians by birth, they can't visit their parents (who are permanent U.S. residents) in the wake of the President's travel ban. Ibtisam and her husband don't dare to leave the country without a guarantee that they'll be admitted back in.

"If I go back to my country, it's a problem. I don't have anything to go back to.

In listening to the news, **it's a very big problem for people [from] my country, and my family. But I miss my family,"** says Ibtisam.

Many students in ESOL programs feel the fear and anxiety that's permeating immigrant communities **today**. They rely on the stability of their classes, including the teachers and volunteers who work with them to help them navigate uncertain times.

"I came here to learn," says Ibtisam as she looks up from her books. "In the future, I want to do better than I'm doing now. But at my age, it's harder for me to learn, so I have to practice, practice, practice." She takes classes four days a week at Educational Development Group, and attends conversation groups at the public library.

"English is very important. The language is very important around the world. For everything- if you are walking in the street, shopping, going to the hospital- everything!" says Ibtisam.