

**Growing Culturally Welcoming and Validating Programs**  
**Session Two -- Assessing the Climate and the Soil (September 23, 2008)**  
Session Transcript



**LEARNs**

Growing Culturally Welcoming  
and Validating Programs  
Session 2: Assessing the Climate and the Soil

LEARNs Webinar  
Tuesday, September 23, 2008  
11:00 a.m. Pacific (2:00 p.m. Eastern)

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Corporation for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

LEARNs is funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service to provide training and technical assistance to projects focused on mentoring, literacy, education, and out-of-school time.

Erich Stiefvater, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory: Welcome to our webinar on Growing Culturally Welcoming and Validating Programs. This is the second of a three-part series on this topic. The subtopic for today’s session is “Assessing the Climate and the Soil”. We’re glad that you can all join us today and we look forward to our conversation with you.



**LEARNs**

Hello from Seattle, WA and Portland, OR!



Ginlin Woo



Erich Stiefvater

Corporation for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

LEARNs is funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service to provide training and technical assistance to projects focused on mentoring, literacy, education, and out-of-school time.

I’m the host of this session, Erich Stiefvater. I think I corresponded with all of you over e-mail and maybe talked with you on the phone as well. Our LEARNs project is the Corporation for National and Community Service’s training and technical assistance provider for youth-serving programs.

I started my career as a VISTA volunteer and then worked as a recruiter for the Corporation for a little bit before going off and doing some training and education consulting. I returned to the Pacific Northwest in 2006 to join the LEARNS team, where I help design and deliver online and face-to-face training.

As the host, I'll be coaching us through some of the interactive activities we've got lined up. And for our main presenter we're pleased to have with us Ginlin Woo. So Gin, would you like to give a brief introduction?

Ginlin Woo, consultant: Yes, thank you. Welcome, everyone. Good morning to the West Coast and good afternoon to the East Coast. I'm talking to you from Seattle from my bedroom, which probably has the best sound quality in my house. Just as a little bit of an introduction, I'm celebrating my 40th year in affiliation with the VISTA program. I served as a VISTA 40 years ago in Brooklyn, New York. My training and background is in education. Beginning in the 1970s I developed a deep interest in multicultural education that's carried me through to today.

I've worked in a number of youth-serving and community-serving projects with lots of different cultural diversity. Migrant families, immigrant families, Native American tribal communities, lots of limited-English-proficient young people and families, and even urban street-gang-involved youth. So I'm really excited to be with you today. I scanned the list of participants for this webinar and recognized a whole lot of old friends and also a lot of colleagues from my work in national service.

Erich: Great, thank you Gin. We'd like to briefly cover some tools and housekeeping items, and then we'll set Gin loose.

**Housekeeping**

- Phones will be muted
- Ask questions by:
  - "Raising hand"
  - Sending chat to host
- Annotation tools

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As you just noticed, or experienced, we'll be keeping the phones on mute for sections of the presentation just so that Gin doesn't have any background noise competing with her. But we do hope that you'll share ideas and comments with us, and we'll be sure to un-mute the phones at various points and invite you to share that feedback.

We'd also like to share with you a couple of other ways you can offer feedback or ask questions using a couple of the tools in WebEx, one of which is the Raise Hand icon. I'm pointing to it on our presentation slide right now, but you'll actually see it somewhere over here underneath the Participants list [points to Raise Hand icon on WebEx screen]. It's a little button that looks like a hand. So why don't we practice with that real quick.

How about those of you that participated in our first webinar on September 10th, if you could raise your hand. So if you were with us on September 10th for the first webinar in our series, please raise your hand.

[Pause as participants click Raise Hand icon.]

Good, thank you. So I see Heather is back for a repeat performance with us. Also, Tasha and Carissa. Great. And for those of you that didn't make it, that's fine. We're not calling you out. We've recorded the previous session so you can always go back and watch that. We just wanted to get a sense for how many in our audience are returning. Okay, so if you just raised your hand, if you could click that button again to lower your hand.

And how about for the folks that this is your first webinar of the series with us?

[Pause as participants click Raise Hand icon.]

Great, so I'm seeing more hands go up. Okay, so for all of you that just raised your hand, if you could click that button again to lower them. And that's one way in which we will invite you to let us know that you have a question or comment you'd like to share during the webinar.

The other way is you can always send a Chat. So on the presentation slide, it looks like this and it's going to be somewhere over here to the right on your screen [points to Chat panel on WebEx screen]. So you can send a Chat to me as a host. You can also choose to send the Chat to both the host and presenter if you'd like something to go to both Gin and myself. Or you can send it to everyone if you think it's something that should be seen by your colleagues and other people on the line.

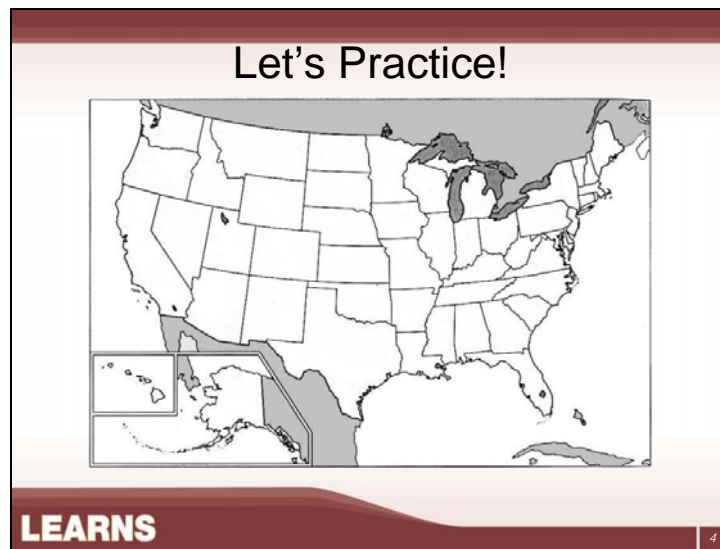
Some of your WebEx panels may collapse throughout the presentation, but you'll see little down arrows. I'm pointing to one right now on the slide [points to Show/Hide button on a WebEx panel], and that will allow you to open and close your Chat and Participants panels.

There's also a set of Annotation tools on your screen, and I'm going to draw a little line across the top of the screen [draws a line to point out the Annotation tools]. They're going to appear at the top of your WebEx window as well. These annotation tools are a series of buttons that look like a pointer, a Text tool, and some of the drawing tools that you might find in Microsoft Word or Excel. In just a second we'll have you practice with one of these annotation tools, and we'll be using a couple of the other ones later on in the presentation.

But let me just quickly note that after this session we will be sending you to an online, anonymous evaluation of the session. We invite you and encourage you to take just a couple of

minutes to complete that for us. We have one more webinar in this particular series, but we at the LEARNS project are planning on doing a whole host of webinars next year and beyond. We always want to make sure that we are meeting your needs and the needs of your colleagues. So please do complete that survey when it appears on your screen afterwards. We'll also send it out as a link in an e-mail following the session.

But let us play a little bit. I'm going to pull up a slide which has a map of the United States. It's on slide four.

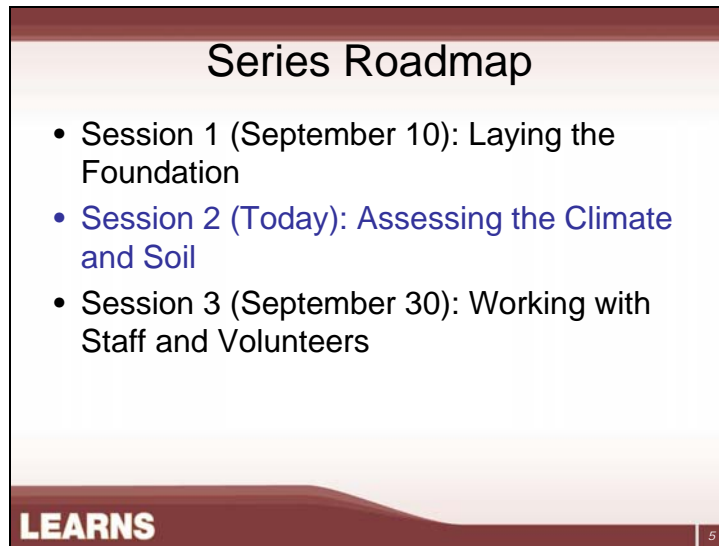


And what I'd like you to do is click the first Annotation tool – the pointer tool – which looks like an arrow pointing to the right. It's the very first button on your Annotation toolbar. I'd like you to click that and just click on the slide where you are calling in from.

[Pause as participants point on the map where they are connecting in from.]

Good. Great. Good. It looks like we have a good representation from the East Coast as well as the Pacific Northwest. Anyone in the Midwest? All right, there are some in Wisconsin and Illinois, looks like. Great. Okay thanks, everyone, for doing that.

If you're having a little bit of difficulty figuring out how to use the tools, we'll have opportunities where we'll un-mute the phones and you can just ask your question or offer feedback orally. But I think without any further ado, I'll go ahead and hand it over to Gin.

A presentation slide titled "Series Roadmap" with a dark red header and footer. The main content area is white with a light red gradient at the bottom. It lists three sessions: Session 1 (September 10): Laying the Foundation; Session 2 (Today): Assessing the Climate and Soil; and Session 3 (September 30): Working with Staff and Volunteers. The word "LEARNS" is written in white on the dark red footer bar, and a small number "5" is in the bottom right corner.

## Series Roadmap

- Session 1 (September 10): Laying the Foundation
- Session 2 (Today): Assessing the Climate and Soil
- Session 3 (September 30): Working with Staff and Volunteers

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Gin: Thanks, Erich.

The slide that's up now really will help us sort of provide an overview to the series. When I was asked to step up and help facilitate this series, I couldn't think of any other words to describe what we're doing other than "growing" culturally welcoming and validating programs. I think you know probably everyone on the call has cared about this subject for a long time. And what we all know is that it's not something that goes on a list, a checklist and we just go through it one time and we're done. I mean our communities are constantly evolving; our identities, our cultural memberships, things are always in flux and changing. And if we care about that, we know that it has to be a committed process. That it's something we do on an ongoing basis. And it goes in fits and starts. Sometimes we make great headway and other times, you know, we move forward and then we have some setbacks.

So we wanted to stretch the conversation over at least three opportunities. So two weeks ago we took up the conversation of "laying the foundation". And that was really about answering the question, "Why?" Why is it important to do? Today's conversation is about assessing the climate and soil. And for me, that's much more about asking the question, "With what?" Where are we beginning, and do I have a good pulse on where we're starting from and what's going on?

Next week we have the opportunity to look at what might that work look like if we were to engage staff and volunteers and build a team that this all about providing our families and youth and adults culturally welcoming and validating programs. So I'm really happy to have you here today and we're glad for the opportunity to discuss the idea of assessing the climate and soil.

**Today's Goals**

- Understand the importance of gathering accurate information and feedback
- Learn how to facilitate an organizational cultural audit
- Review self-assessment instruments for facilitating cultural awareness in programs
- Others?

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For today, we have specific goals. We crafted three and we believe that you probably have other expectations as well. And in a moment we'll invite you to add to the list.

But at the top of it we want to just strengthen our awareness about the importance of gathering accurate feedback. Another is to share with you some strategies around how you facilitate organizational awareness. So we're going to look at a cultural audit tool and we're going to practice that a little bit and just open it up so that other people who have had experiences with audits can share with us that strategy and how they benefited from using it. Third, there's also a whole other battery of assessments that are more what we call self-awareness assessments that are really useful for teams of people to use to facilitate dialog and awareness and to build plans off of. So basically we want to be really concrete this session and showcase a couple of strategies and resources to help you get a good picture of where you're starting from.

Any other expectations or goals? Erich, we're asking folks to enter it on the Chat, raise their hands, or just un-mute, right.

Erich: Yeah, they can. I'm going to un-mute everyone in just a second. But you can also type it in as a Chat message. Or you can raise your hand, as we practiced earlier.

[Pause.]

Are there other goals or other needs people would like to see us discuss in our time together?

[Pause.]

Okay, well we also have built in time at the end for questions and answers. So there will be other opportunities along the way to add your input or to raise a question.

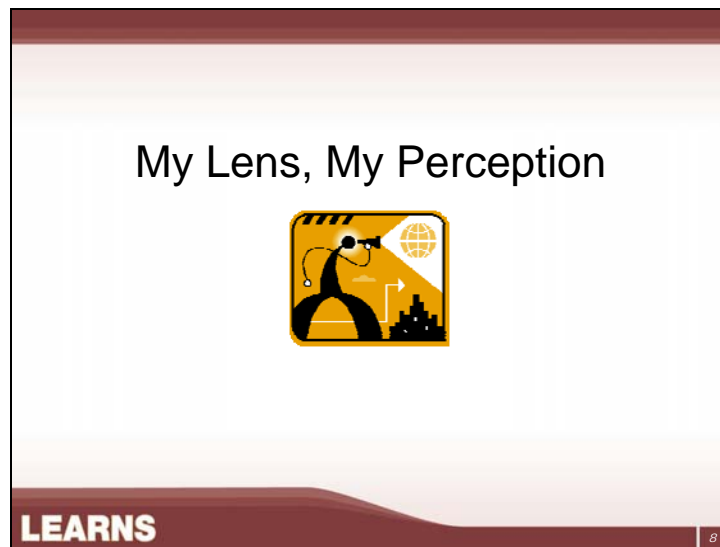
[Pause.]

Okay, hearing and seeing none, I think we'll go back to the presentation mode and please go ahead, Gin.

Gin: Here we go. So those of you who have been in my workshops know I always talk about chunks, as in chunking up a process. So this conversation breaks down into three major chunks.



The first is around my “lens”, my perceptions. We'll have a conversation about that and why that’s important to get our hands and heads around. And then we'll spend some time talking about the importance of creating a cultural profile of the community. And the third chunk for this webinar is the whole idea of assessing the culture and the climate, or getting a good read on what’s going on and using some tools and community feedback to help us do that. So those are the three major conversations of their webinar.



The first one is around the whole idea of “my lens, my perception”. I wanted to begin with a gentle reminder that as broad and inclusive as your view on the world is – and you can have

incredible intentions to make your programs culturally validating and welcoming – but what we know is that it’s still not broad enough. It’s *our* lens; it filters through *our* world, *our* experience. We do have a take on what’s going on, but if we’re only using our senses, that’s basically more narrow than it needs to be. So we wanted to punctuate the fact. And I’m going to share with you two examples from my life that gets to this point about “my lens, my perception”.

I went to, I think, a pretty fantastic elementary school. And my first home was Seattle’s Chinatown. I am Chinese, and a female. From what I could guess at the time, I was from a Christian home, was a heterosexual, and noticed other aspects about my identity.

In first grade I had a wonderful, welcoming schoolteacher, and our class was very multi-ethnic and really diverse. And you couldn’t have found a warmer person in Miss Nichols in terms of the welcoming she offered, and even in terms of cultural welcoming she tried to extend to each of us. But I can tell you that, as lovely and loving as she was, there was a whole lot about my identity that I never felt was validated, even in simple ways.

When we talk about cultural membership and awareness and inclusion, we’re not talking just ethnic diversity, although it does include that. I remember every so often Miss Nichols loved to have us write and talk about what we did on summer break or over the weekend. And there was a definite economic difference in our classroom. I remember dreading the conversations around what we did for vacation. A lot of folks went on these vacations, but I had to work on projects for my mom and dad and do chores and all these other things and couldn’t go anywhere. I don’t think she ever intended to make me feel less than or not normal, but many of the activities that she planned in a very loving, welcoming way just missed the mark in terms of validating who I was.

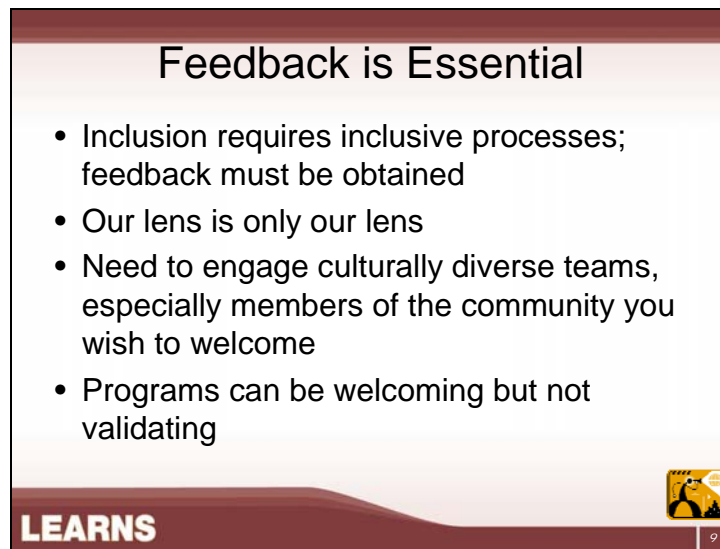
And so we have lots of different experiences and I’m sure that it’s triggering experiences for you as well of where you could be in the presence of the most loving, welcoming people but the truth is that you get the warmth but you don’t really get the validation. And what we’re trying to do with this series is to have us look at that and think through our programming to look at the question, Who really is welcome and validated and included in the programs that we are offering our communities and to our youth and children?. So I wanted to start with the whole conversation about how you can have great intentions but the impact still can be that we’re leaving out and not including people and contributing to the invalidation of some of our communities and young people.

Any comments about that, just the whole idea of “my lens, my perception”?

Erich: So if Gin’s experience maybe made you think of something from your own experience that you might like to share, feel free to type something in the Chat panel or just offer it up on the phone.

[Pause.]

Okay, well, we'll go ahead and keep moving on, and if at a later time you'd like to mention something that you've gained through experience or that you remember for another time of your life, please do share that with us.



## Feedback is Essential

- Inclusion requires inclusive processes; feedback must be obtained
- Our lens is only our lens
- Need to engage culturally diverse teams, especially members of the community you wish to welcome
- Programs can be welcoming but not validating

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Gin: So the reason why we're focusing on assessing and gathering feedback is that if we're committed to building inclusion, feedback is essential. You know, we need to own the fact that our lens is limited and oftentimes with the best intentions, our impact with communities we're trying to reach can be less than respectful, not as inclusive, not as culturally appropriate as we would hope. So what we're encouraging you to do is to continue gathering feedback in different ways so that the community can give you a sense of how it's going for them.

Just another quick example, when I was in law school I was taught by a really progressive, radical criminal attorney who helped defend the Chicago Seven. A really dynamic person and very progressive in politics. The school also actively recruited students of color. I remember sitting in his class and he had really no awareness that he barely ever called on the female students in the class. I mean here's a guy who really deeply cared about communities and about change and about access, and just didn't know that because of the way he was trained and how he lived in the world he overlooked the female students in the class. And it wasn't until we decided to point out his behavior and give him feedback by recording the number of times he called on male and female students and showed it to him that he even believed us because he just said, "That's not who I am. I care that all my students get educated." But his awareness, his filter, his experience just didn't have him looking at that, and he really appreciated the fact that we had done this little study.

So all of us need to be open to people giving us information that may be hard to hear but would allow us to actually meet our goals of more inclusion, more cultural respect, more thoughtful engagement from different communities. So what we want to just make sure is that you leave with tools that allow you to gather feedback. To ask yourselves, How am I gathering [feedback], how am I continually building a process where communities I care about and want to serve are letting us know how it's working for them? I think the tools that we've picked then are tools that will allow us to look at the whole issue of, how are things going?

Erich: Hey Gin?

Gin: Yes.

Erich: I don't know if you saw it in your panel, but I see that Kathleen Rice offered something to share.

Gin: Oh great.

Kathleen Rice: Hi, Gin, and everybody. I was going to share an example of where my own lenses were really limited. And I really appreciate in the way you've opened up the session. It was a time when I had students involved in a service learning class and I was also involved in the same family resource center. And I was working one-on-one with a woman who had become a dear friend who had an advanced stage of multiple sclerosis. And she used a wheelchair and she wasn't able to write at that point and had a lot of challenges she was dealing with. And she had asked me to help her fill out some forms and she said, "Well I think you should make a copy of that form because it's the only one I have, and if you make a mistake, it's going to take me a while to get another form." And I said, thinking I knew better, "Oh no, no, no, it will be fine. It's just this really simple form. There's only a few things there." And as we filled out the form I did make a mistake and I started to white it out and it just made it worse. And then she said to me, "You know, people don't think I have good ideas but sometimes I have good ideas." And it was just a heartbreaking experience for me to see how, again like you said, my best of intentions thinking I was being helpful but then seeing my arrogance or something that just made me think I knew better than she knew for herself. But luckily, I did hear her feedback and it was life-changing, and I've never forgotten that. And I've tried to really pay more attention to not replicating that same kind of situation.

Gin: Thank you, Kathleen. It's also great to hear your voice. I've noticed a number of old friends that are on this call.

Kathleen: It's a Ginlin fan club, probably.

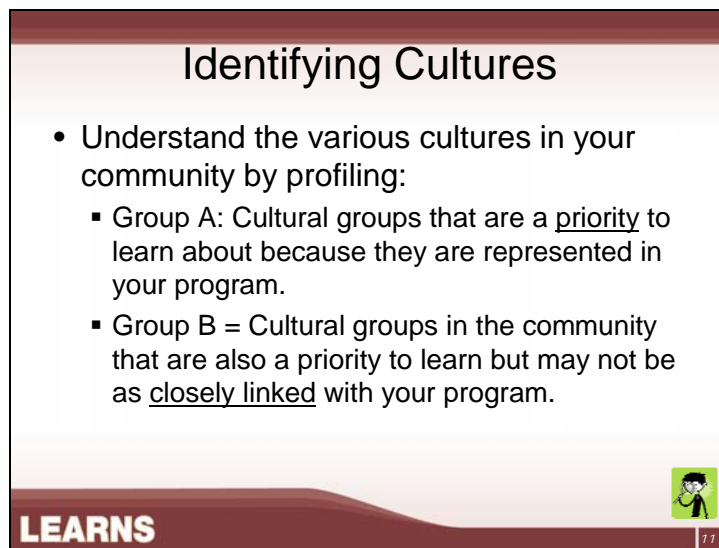
Gin: Anyone else? I just think that it takes courage to be open to feedback and to listen, especially because the work is difficult and sometimes we get discouraged and we close up. You know, we're determined and we fight, but if we're to do it well we really need to pull back and trust the community and trust that we can work together to make it better. I think it takes time to gather feedback, it takes courage to gather feedback, and sometimes we don't know what to do with it. We're on our treadmills going in one direction and [feedback] makes us stop and have to rethink some things. But it's really important to do.



So what we know as learners is that you always like some concrete strategies and we are committed to sharing at least two practical strategies with you. One is about creating a cultural profile of the community. And some of you that are also involved with the AmeriCorps\*VISTA work, you'll recognize the idea of a community profile because I included it in the VISTA training curriculum.

But just thinking about where we start with community profiling, I think that one way to do it is to work as a team to create a profile that's really a cultural profile. And usually it's a pretty daunting task. As you begin to break down all the different cultural groups in a community, the list becomes quite long and then the staff or the team of peers are overwhelmed.

So my recommendation is that you sit with your team of parents, staff, volunteers and start talking about creating a cultural profile of our community and listing the groups out. And maybe it would be useful in our planning to list them out in two columns.



Group A consists of the cultural groups we should reach out to right away. It would become a priority list of groups to engage because we're serving those people directly. For the second group, B, I'm suggesting you put on it other cultural groups in the community you need to build your awareness about.

We'll give you a better indication of what it looks like. So Erich, will you help me bring up the list? [Handout "Community Cultures Profile Tool" displayed.]

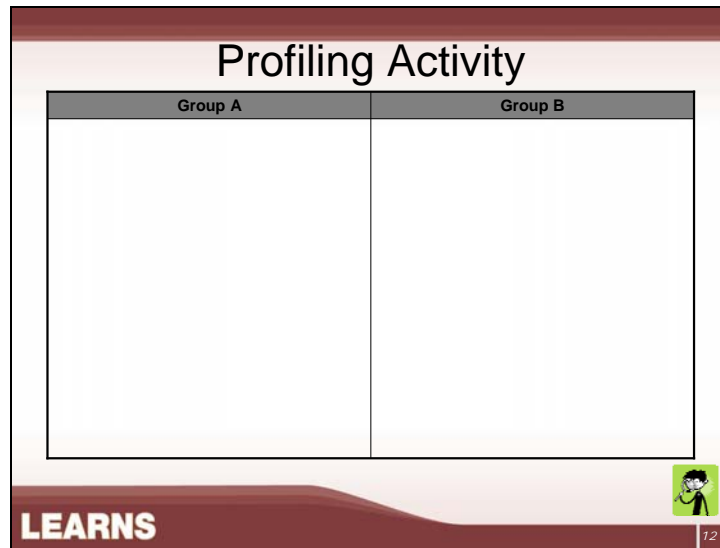
So here's just a simple table. It is an effort to put together a cultural profile. We created just a fictitious sample for you to give you a sense of what might show up in profiles of a particular community for a particular program. So in group A, we have the cultural groups that are represented by the families that we're serving. And in group B, these are significant communities within our community. They're not directly represented currently in our student population or youth population or target population, but they're still members of our community. And as we build awareness, we're creating a plan that is then more approachable rather than a huge, long laundry list that overwhelms you. And I'm suggesting that you measure it out and you have dialog with your team about which groups are in which columns and use it then as a basis for good dialog and planning.

We're going to do a little dry run with you on this, and I'll then talk a little bit more about how it could be used. What's hard for me to do is talk while I'm trying to also read. Erich, maybe you can watch the questions come in and remind me as we're going.

Erich: Yeah. I see that we have one from Julie. And it's a good question about examples of how mentoring programs can get feedback from the community, their mentees, and mentors using tools other than surveys, interviews, and focus groups. As Julie indicated, that might be a question we might be able to answer a little bit later in the presentation.

Gin: And the audit might work too.

Okay, so looking at creating a cultural profile of the community, here's the sample sheet and then Erich's going to bring up a white board for us, I think.



Okay, here's a whiteboard. So what I thought might be interesting is if we play with this a little bit and have you reflect on our own programs and the cultural communities that are represented in your target population. So if a couple of you wouldn't mind putting on the whiteboard some of the communities that fall into group A for you and also some of the communities that aren't necessarily in your program population but definitely are in your community, it will better illustrate like how it works. So do we have some takers out there who would be willing to write?

Erich: Yeah, if you could use the Text tool, which is one of the Annotation tool buttons. It's the second one that looks like the letter "T". Just click on that and then you can type something in to either group A or group B. And then just click somewhere else on the screen and it will display your contribution.

[Pause.]

Great, so we have some coming in now. In group A, we've got "special-needs youth", "English language learners", also "youth and adults with disabilities". So again, those Annotation tools are at the top of your screen. "Foster care involvement" was another group-A contribution. Okay, someone just typed into group B, "children of incarcerated parents". "Single-parent families" was added to column A, as was "at-risk students". Someone contributed "Somali Bantu refugee families" in group A.

Gin: You know, right now we're doing it as a collective exercise and process. When I do it with teams, I usually have everybody do a first cut by themselves individually. And then as a group we share it because what I find is that on a team we have different perceptions of who is represented in our target population. And usually we have different connections and awareness of what's going on. And it makes for rich conversation about who's actually in our group.

The reason why I recommend you engage in this kind of an activity is that, in general in our programming, because we're stretched thin lots of times what we pay attention to is the majority. And we pay attention to the most visible cultural groups. And then there are a lot of people in our midst who are not getting much validation at all. And they exit our programs not

any stronger culturally than when they came into the program. And so we're suggesting some intentional processes where your team sits down and talks it out and discusses it and builds their awareness about it.

So for some people, they're still thinking that a lot of people don't have a culture. And I think that this simple process can allow for a lot of awareness-building by the teams. So it's not just tagging who lives in our community, but it's also building people's awareness about what culture is and the different cultural experiences that are significant to our identifies and to our membership. So we just really suggest that if you don't do this particular exercise that you do something so that there's a collective understanding of who are your cultural communities in the population.

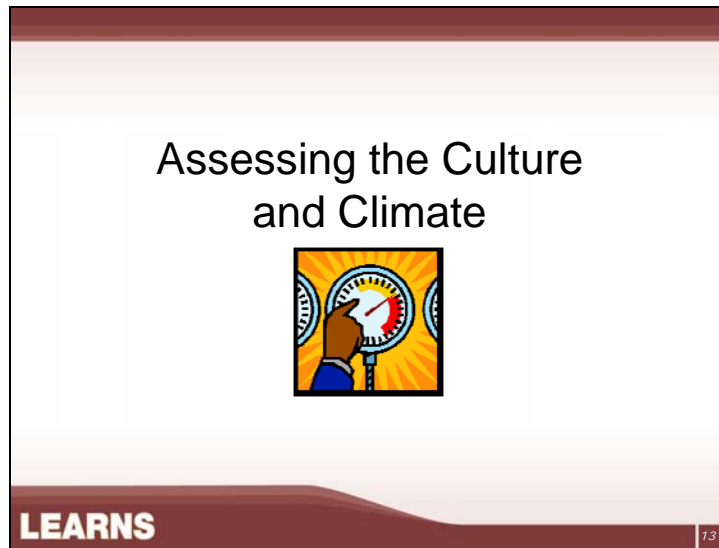
Any comments about that, or any suggestions? Or does anyone approach the same conversation in a slightly different way?

[Pause.]

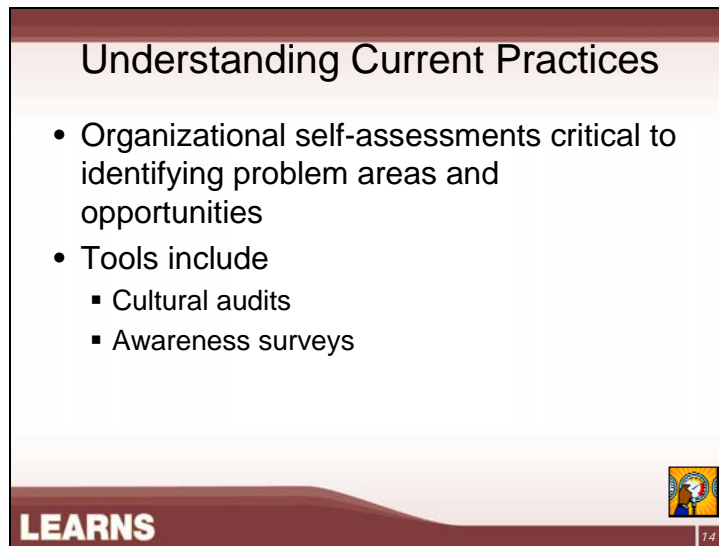
Any questions about the profile? I think I'd like to add that once you've reached some consensus about who sits in group A and group B, you can use this then to prioritize awareness-building activities and the bringing in of leaders from the different communities to help inform you. But the profile would form the basis of some good planning for capacity-building and awareness-building. You can survey your team and ask, "Given that these are our major communities, on a three-point scale, what are people's experience and awareness about these communities?" And you can start to grow some data that allows you to do some good training planning or event planning or community-engagement planning.

Erich: Great, and I just would mention, Gin, that – and national service folks might be aware of this already – but the Resource Center, whose URL we'll provide later in the presentation, also has a good collection of materials on community mapping and this type of profiling.

Gin: So that's the first kind of tool we wanted to share with you. And maybe looking at it is a re-learning or reminding for some of you.



We're going to move on to our third conversation around assessing the culture and the climate: getting a good pulse on what's going on in terms of cultural validation and a sense of welcome and respect we extend to the different cultural communities we serve.



I know that many of us have been involved in different kinds of organizational assessments. Two that we mentioned that we were going to showcase is one around cultural audits and then a closer look at many of the surveys that all of us have participated in to facilitate reflection about where we stood with awareness about different groups. We'll have a chance to look at the cultural audit in more depth and then showcase a couple of the surveys and a couple of Websites that relate to awareness.

So as some of you know, I worked for a time with the CHP Project to oversee some of the training for the Corporation for National Community Service. And in that time we coached a number of organizations that were really committed to working on their cultural appropriateness

and cultural competency. And our colleague, Jim Hickman, put together the work for our team on the cultural audit observation worksheet along with Dave Nakashima.

And we wanted to share samples. If you Googled “cultural audit” you would get a number of organizations across the country and across the world doing work in this area. We wanted to simply share this sample. [Handout “Sample of a Cultural Audit Observation Worksheet” displayed.]

And what I can tell you that is in practice, what you need to do is sit with your team, look at a number of the samples out there and craft something that seems really appropriate for the culture of your organization and the way you language things and then shape your own worksheet. I wouldn't suggest you just take someone's worksheet and use it. I would suggest that you adapt it. But this is what a typical cultural audit observation worksheet is, just to offer up a sample. And I think a number of you have already experienced what a cultural audit is, so you can help me.

So a definition I have here is that a cultural audit is a systemic assessment of an organization to understand the experience members of different cultural groups are having within it. The audit is usually a part or process intended to provide the organization feedback and to help you build culturally inclusive systems and activities and programming. So like in a financial audit where you would want to know how healthy you are financially, a cultural audit would allow you to understand better how you're doing in terms of meeting and respecting the cultures in your community.

So usually a team is trained and you decide on an instrument. You usually adapt from different instruments and you create a tool that will guide you through a walk-through that will allow you to pick up information. So if we have a new immigrant Bosnian community, for example, we might wonder how we welcome them and how well we integrate them into what we do. The team, using the audit tool, would help us decide.

And then Erich, can you show us the next page [of the handout]? [Page 2 of the handout displayed.] Here we go.

So there are usually about a dozen or so questions that the team has decided they want to look at. But it really is all designed to have a team come through and review a program on multiple levels. And you'll notice that on this one we have asked about the messages being sent. You listen and ask, What do I pick up on in terms of who's welcome here, who's comfortable, who do we honor, who do we respect, who do we recognize? And if I were from a different community, what might I think about that and would I feel a sense of welcome if that was the intent?

And so usually there's about a dozen questions and you'll receive a packet with all of the handouts. For some of you, you've actually experienced a cultural or some type of audit. Maybe you've been on an audit team. They are undertaken for various reasons. We thought that we'd like to hear from you and see how many of you have actually participated in a cultural walk-through of an organization. And if you would share with us if you've done that, as well as sharing for what purpose the audit was done.

There are multiple purposes for organizational audits. We're discussing here those audits that relate to culture, but you might have some other types of audits you've participated in.

[Pause.]

Erich, are we asking folks to do the chat?

Erich: Yeah. If you have participated in some sort of organizational audit, and it doesn't have to be a cultural audit, if you could type it into the Chat panel and send it to "all participants" so that we can see what's out there, that would be great.

And I should also point out while people are typing or thinking about it that these handouts – which you will receive by email after the session, as Gin mentioned – you can also use a scroll bar that should appear in your WebEx window to see what else is in the handout on the screen right now.

Okay let's see what people have written.

[Pause.]

My colleague, typing from another computer I have logged in, listed "a program-wide curriculum review for an ESL project". They also typed in a "communication audit". And that's the idea of assessing how people communicate with each other in the organization – or not – and opportunities and challenges that those communication channels or blockages create.

It looks like Patti wrote in "written cultural competency audit required by a county funder". Good. Kathleen said, "I have participated in an audit on volunteer programs". Okay, good.

Gin: What I can tell you is, once you've been on an audit team, the logic of it and the process of it is pretty intuitive. I mean, it's not that hard to do, and you can gather an incredible amount of good information to help with program improvement.

I know that in the 1970s there were lots of schools that opened themselves to climate assessment. It's teams of community members and staff who joined together, learned a process, decided on some process, and then visited school sites or program sites to take in everything. They imagined that they were limited-English-proficient students, or from a recent-immigrant community. They would just take on different cultural experiences and trying to imagine how they would feel.



Do we have time, Erich, to move on to trying our library example?

Erich: Yeah I think we can do that. I did want to mention that actually I think I've been mispronouncing his or her name as Julie, so I apologize. It looks like it might be Juie. Anyway, Juie provided the comment that they participated in an audit for "behavior of international volunteers in a developing country". So lots of good examples and it sounds like we have some good experience of this type of process among the people that are with us today.

## Cultural Audits

- Example: Sample Observation Worksheet

*Activity: Picture yourself in a public library. Think about the things you might see, hear, and experience, and then answer the questions that will appear momentarily on a whiteboard.*



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As you consider and focus on creating culturally validating and welcoming programs, the cultural audit allows you to get some feedback. Sometimes it's an in-house exercise, or sometimes it involves a diverse team of people from the program and community.

Let's just think about your local community library. If we were to walk through and spend a couple of hours at the local community library, every space is designed to embrace, to reach out to, to welcome a group of people. And then usually it also has its limitations about who it's actually welcoming and validating.

So we thought everybody, or most people, would have had at least an experience with a public library. Let's imagine that and bring that into view. And we've actually pulled a couple of questions from Jim's sample and have you just focus on that. So Erich, can you bring up the whiteboard?

[Whiteboard displayed with three prompts: "What do the sounds (music, loud speaker announcements, buzzers, etc.) that you noticed reflect about which cultural groups might feel comfortable or uncomfortable here?"; "What do the physical design and layout of the building and its rooms reflect about which cultural groups might feel comfortable or uncomfortable here?"; and "Are there patterns in how people of different cultural groups appear to hold different jobs, leadership positions?"].

So pretend we are on an audit team and we are going to look at the local public library. I want you to think about the sounds that you notice, all the different sounds that you're hearing at your public library. And in a typical audit what you would actually do is first just write down all the sounds that you hear and not interpret them.

What are some of the things you hear?

[Pause as participants respond to first whiteboard prompt.]

So we have somebody offering up “people speaking in whispers” and “hard for people with hearing problems”. There’s “non-English speaking”, and “you hear languages other than English spoken at the library”. Anything else that you hear?

[Pause.]

Someone’s already onto the second question around the physical design and layout, offering “the tables are too close together”. Someone else added, “The iPods are much too loud”.

Next we would ask, “Whose needs are well-met by this space and whose needs are not well-met?”

[Pause as participants respond to second whiteboard prompt.]

Okay, we’re starting to get responses. “Books on tall shelves hard for people in wheelchairs”. “The reference librarian only speaks English”.

We’re starting to develop a composite and get a full picture of what’s really going on. And as we look through different eyes at our program through an audit, we get a better understanding of how people might be experiencing what we’ve designed for them. So apart from intention, there’s the impact. We’re asking you to gather data about how people experience your program. Does that make sense?

So in terms of a cultural audit, this one we’ve been looking at will be sent to you in a packet afterwards. It has 12 questions, although there can be many more. As I said, you can use Google to find more samples. We also have a number of Web links for you to look at.

But part of the group process is to put together the audit instrument, then reach some agreements about how you’re going to use it together, and then do some practicing. So what we’ve just done is very similar to what might happen in a cultural audit. And remember, if we had tagged certain experiences, we would assign a couple of people to actually pay attention to that.

Any questions? Any comments? Has anyone used a cultural audit? If so, how did you use it to organize or plan the next level of your programming?

Erich: Well, Gin, I think since we’re kind of heading toward the end of the presentation anyway, I’ll go ahead and open up the phone lines so folks can answer your question or offer up other ideas or experiences. One thing I’m noticing from the whiteboard is that a lot of people are sensitive to the fact that the layout of the library might not make people with disabilities – and people in wheelchairs, specifically – comfortable.

Also looks like it’s a little bit challenging for folks to answer the third prompt on the whiteboard about groups in different jobs or leadership positions in the library. Anyone have thoughts on that?

Gin: Erich, were you able to put that question up?

Erich: Yeah, I think people should be able to see it on their screen. But if not, you can use the scroll bar in your WebEx window to scroll down. That should give you a little bit more space to type in responses.

Gin: Okay, you know on mine, my scroll bar froze. I couldn't move it down.

Erich: Okay.

Gin: Okay, so our third question we took from Jim's sample audit was one about staffing and significant positions in the organization and what that looks like and what messages that might send to our communities.

This process is about taking a set of questions, allowing a team to walk through and look at it through various filters, grab as much information as possible, and then sit with it. I think a lot of times we're involved in the day-to-day work, and we care about examining whether we are creating a welcoming program, but they just don't get on the radar screen. We're on a mission and we do what we do. We're just suggesting that every so often you take the time to engage the community in giving you feedback and do a 360° review of your organization or your program with the help of community members.

Amy Cannata: Gin, this is Amy Cannata in Portland, and I actually have a question about the audit team.

Gin: Yes.

Amy: Are there certain people that you want on the team? I mean, who ideally should be part of the audit team and should there be a makeup that's representative of your community? Or do you use your staff members? How would that be set up?

Gin: I find that the best team is the most diverse team you can get, with representation from across the community. Sometimes that's not possible, and sometimes we have to start out with an internal team.

A lot of things factor into who goes onto the team. But you want to work your way to the place where a cross-section of different community members and staff would step forward to help you with this important work. And what you'll find is that people learn so much when they're on the audit team that they become more sensitive and aware. And as they do the audit, they just pick up so much more and they start being better advocates for issues that weren't on their list to begin with.

So it may be that a person on a team never really thought a lot about the physical layout of a program and how that might be a barrier to participation by persons with different disabilities. But as they learn and join with other people in looking at that, they're just that more in tune after they finish the audit to think about, "Boy we have this meeting space and these tables can't be this close". Or, "We can't use that meeting space even though it's free. There's no way for certain members of our community to even access that space".

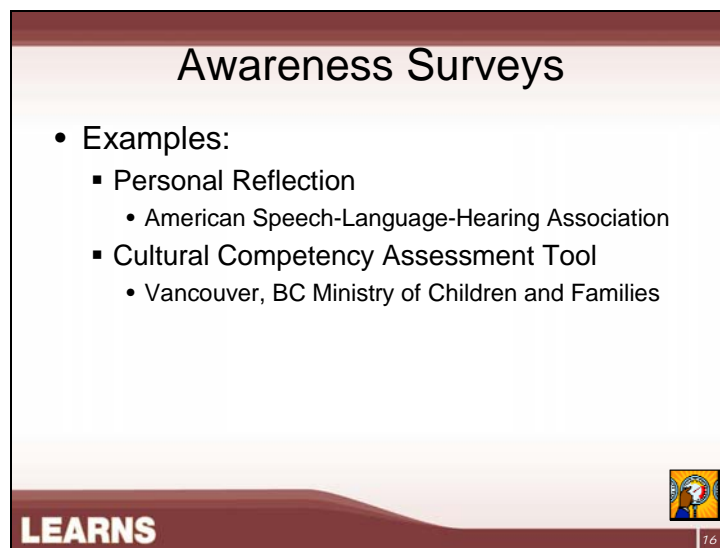
So Amy, it can break out a lot of different ways. But if you could build it to the place where it's a broad cross-section, it's representative, it's a better team. If you have a very homogenous group, you'll still be able to do the audit, it just won't provide as many opportunities for people to help build each other's awareness.

Nicky Martin: This is Nicky. I'm thinking back to the question earlier about creative ways to elicit feedback in, say, a mentoring program. It might also be a good idea to invite mentees and volunteers and young people to be part of that audit team. Is that something that you have any experience with, or is that something you would recommend?

Gin: Yep, I've had lots of experience with cross-age youth programs. What's great in a team process is that, for some community members who don't feel as comfortable doing the writing – they're worried about the spelling and things – you can spread the responsibilities across a group of people. And it also allows for some really strong relationship-building. They're all helpers to your program.


So audits lend themselves – unlike a survey, where usually it's one-on-one – to group activity. It can be a friendly process, and usually builds community engagement because it's also interesting. Any other questions?

I'm noticing the time, and another realm we wanted to talk about is cultural awareness surveys.



## Awareness Surveys

- Examples:
  - Personal Reflection
    - American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
  - Cultural Competency Assessment Tool
    - Vancouver, BC Ministry of Children and Families



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In the packet you will receive are two examples of cultural competency assessments that were in the public domain. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association has created a simple tool that I could imagine being used by a team of people [handout “Cultural Competence Checklist: Personal Reflection” displayed]. In that process, individuals are asked to reflect on where they are with their attitudes or their knowledge or awareness of different things.

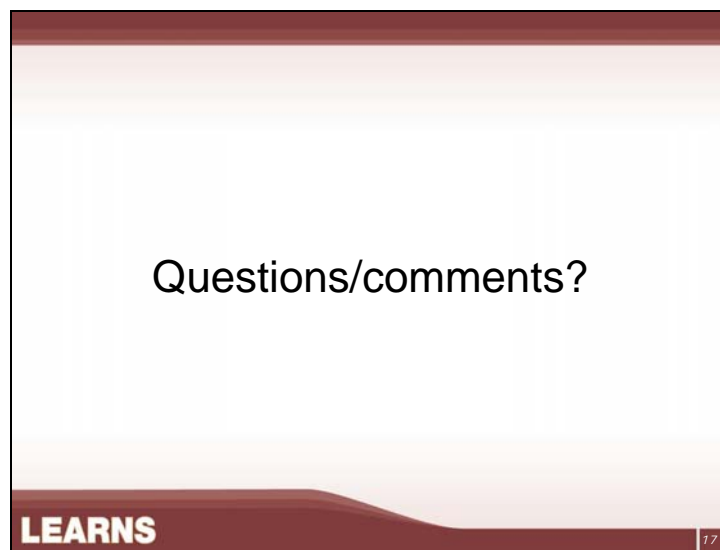
This handout will be sent to you after the session. It has a question asking people to rate, on a five-point scale, their response to different statements, such as “I treat all of my clients with

respect for their culture, even though it may be different from my own” and “I believe that it is acceptable to speak a language other than English”. These assessments get people to think about and articulate their beliefs about different cultures and their own responses to it.

So individuals fill out this reflection, which then creates an opportunity for you to build a composite of where your team is with different aspects, attitudes, knowledge, awareness, beliefs so that you can facilitate great dialog, awareness-building, and cross-training.

These surveys allow us to look at ourselves as teams and identify attitudes we might have about different cultural groups. For example, we might notice that our teams have some attitudes about persons for whom their first language is not English. But you need to use something like this to make good decisions about training and dialog. And so this type of cultural competency survey is another way to gather feedback

Any questions?



Erich: I think, Gin, since it looks like we're bumping up against – or might have gone a little bit over – our planned hour of conversation, I think maybe what I'll do is just quickly show people the remaining slides and then we can remain on the line and continue to chat as long as people want to or as long as folks have questions. We just want to be sensitive to folks who need to leave at this point. So if you do need to get going, feel free to disconnect and we'll say thank you for joining us today and contributing to our conversation. But for those of you that have a few more minutes to spend with us, we invite you to stay on the line and stay logged into WebEx and we'll keep going.

## Selected Resources

<p><b>LEARNS</b>          (800) 361-7890  <a href="http://nationalserviceresources.org/learns/learns">http://nationalserviceresources.org/learns/learns</a></p>	<p><b>American Speech-Language-Hearing Association</b>  <a href="http://www.asha.org">www.asha.org</a></p>
<p><b>National Service Inclusion Project</b>  <a href="http://www.serviceandinclusion.org/">http://www.serviceandinclusion.org/</a></p>	<p><b>Teaching Tolerance</b>  <a href="http://www.tolerance.org">www.tolerance.org</a></p>
<p><b>Resource Center</b>  <a href="http://nationalserviceresources.org">http://nationalserviceresources.org</a></p>	<p><b>National Center for Cultural Competence at Georgetown University</b>  <a href="http://www11.georgetown.edu/research/gucchd/nccc">www11.georgetown.edu/research/gucchd/nccc</a></p>

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Let me just point out quickly that on slide 18 there's a list of some organizations and their Web links that provide materials that may be helpful to your program. LEARNS is specific to national service youth-serving programs, but a lot of our materials are useful to programs working in any capacity or in any field. And then there are other organizations listed that promote the teaching of inclusion and tolerance, and we'd like to recommend them.

## Contact Us

LEARNS  
 (800) 361-7890  
[learns@nwrel.org](mailto:learns@nwrel.org)

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And then, finally, the last slide, slide 19, has our contact information here at LEARNS. Do feel free to give us a call or send us an e-mail if there's anything that we can do to assist you. We're funded to be there to help programs, so do contact us if you have a question regarding this webinar or anything else that you're working on around the topic of inclusion and growing welcoming programs. And we have the pleasure of working with Gin so if there's something that you have specifically for Gin, we're more than happy to pass it along. Or if it's something that we might be able to help you with or a resource we might be able to put you in touch with ourselves, we'll be happy to do that. We anticipated that somebody might have more extended

questions, so if you do and we can help, we're happy to provide some technical assistance. Just let us know.

Okay, so I think first of all, Gin, we should check in with - and please correct me if I'm pronouncing your name wrong - Juie. She actually had a couple of comments. One I think that you touched on was creative examples for how mentoring programs can get feedback other than with surveys and focus groups. Since you're on the line Juie, do you want to go ahead and pose the last question you posted?

Juie: It feels important to do cultural audits, but they're always so many things going on in the program I can never make it a priority, even if I understand it should be done. So I was hoping you could convince me a little bit more. Talk about it a little bit more so I could actually make it a priority?

Gin: Yeah, what I have found is that sometimes you need to put the message out there that you want everyone to care about this and to be more inclusive. I find that creating practice, structuring activities so that people are going through deliberate, intentional motions to help change who owns the issue, that's how we go about it. So you may use other strategies to gather feedback and to get people involved and concerned about it. But it doesn't take a whole lot of energy. Once it's done, it sort of has a life of its own. People grow into their understanding of what we're trying to do. So if you've never done it before, you can do it with a couple of your staff internally the first time just to try it out and see if it's worth doing on a larger scale.

Juie: Okay.

Gin: And if you wanted me to talk you through it, that would be fine later on.

Juie: That's a good suggestion.

Nicky Martin: I wonder, too, if it might be good to make it seem less like an add-on or something burdensome to do. It might be something you want to invite mentors and mentees to do as an activity. I don't know if you're a site-based program or what the logistics of that would look like, but it might give a fresh perspective and then also feel not so much like another thing on your to-do list as a program coordinator. I don't know how that would play out, but just a thought.

Gin: It could also be done by having someone do it as a special project, so that they provide the leadership for it.

Juie: Okay.

Erich: Other questions or comments? Phones are open so you can just ask it verbally or you can raise your hand or type something into the Chat panel. You might need to un-mute your own phone if you muted it earlier, so press "mute" or "mic" or \*6.

[Pause.]

Okay, we're not seeing or hearing any questions or comments. Any closing words of advice you'd like to offer, Gin?

Gin: No, just “thank you”. I know with this topic we are usually preaching to the choir. And just keep on doing what you're doing. And if you want to share some of the strategies that have worked for you, send it along to us or put it into the evaluation and we'll make sure that we also add that and circulate that information to others on this call. We didn't want this to be a one-way conversation, so help us stretch the webinar to be a community conversation.

Erich: Right. And it looks like Kathleen had a question. I don't know if she's on the line. Maybe she can expand on this, if she feels it's needed. But she typed “my board believes they are non-prejudicial but they are. How can I address this?”

Gin: Well you know, Kathleen, what do you think about trying an audit activity with them. Instead of putting people on the hot seat, doing this might be able indirectly to inform their awareness. Having them be the advocates of a process that would give them some accurate feedback might actually help them make some shifts in their thinking.

Kathleen: I'm going to try, but I can't even get them to help me with a strategic plan. So I want to be a little bit more gentle with them on this topic.

Gin: Okay.

Kathleen: Can I add something to that?

Gin: Yeah.

Kathleen: I wonder if this could actually be a small step toward a strategic plan. Thinking about this can feel so ominous and overwhelming to some. But this, I think, could be one step that could then help potentially lead to a larger interest in developing a bigger plan, maybe. Yeah, I think an audit, especially if it was like five questions instead of 12, might be able to give us some feedback on that.

Gin: And you know, Kathleen, you might assign two questions to a pair of people, or a team. So you would break it down so that not everyone has to look at all 12 questions. They are focusing on two of the 12.

Kathleen: Good idea, thank you.

Gin: Anyone else?

[Pause.]

Erich: Okay, any other questions or comments? If you think of one after the webinar is over, do feel free to send us an e-mail or give us a call to ask it and we'll do what we can to answer it for you or put in your hands the materials that would help you.

Okay, well I think in that case we'll officially wind down. Thanks again to you, Gin, for sharing with us your knowledge and experience, and thanks to each and every one of you on the phone and WebEx for making time to be with us. We hope it was helpful. As Gin mentioned, please do give us any feedback you might have on how we can do this better in the evaluation that should appear shortly. And thank you for doing the good work that you do.