

# Training Culturally Diverse Groups



Participant's Workbook



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**Key Area: 3 (Administration)**

**USDA Professional Standards Code:**

3400 (Human Resources and Staff Training)

# Institute of Child Nutrition

The University of Mississippi

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## PURPOSE

Improve the operation of child nutrition programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination.

## VISION

Lead the nation in providing research, education, and resources to promote excellence in child nutrition programs.

## MISSION

Provide relevant research-based information and services that advance the continuous improvement of child nutrition programs.

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## Background Information

Developing this face-to-face course, *Training Culturally Diverse Groups*, is part of an ongoing effort by the Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) to establish and support a national network of trainers. Therefore, the target audience for this course is anyone who wishes to become a more effective trainer. The curriculum was designed to assist you in acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to effectively deliver trainings to culturally diverse groups, as well as encourage further professional development. ICN also designed this course to be interactive so you, the participant, are actively involved in the learning process.

Today, you will learn information that will improve your confidence and competence in navigating cultural diversity. Topics of discussion will include cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, and cultural competence, as well as creating an inclusive learning environment through community building. You will be challenged to think introspectively, as well as consciously considering how you can work to include the many experiences and identities that will be present at your trainings. The content covered will also enable you to ensure all learners feel respected, valued, and included.

## Professional Standards

### **Human Resources and Staff Training – 3400**

Employee will be able to implement human resources management practices through maintenance and familiarity with current personnel policies and procedures and support employees through training and retention strategies.

**Key Area Code:** 3 Administration



## Training Objectives

By the end of this training, participants will be able to accomplish the following objectives:

- Explain the importance of learning about the target audience.
- Define and identify various forms of diversity.
- Describe the concept of culture.
- Define and demonstrate cultural awareness, sensitivity, and culture.
- Apply guidelines that will aid in community building.

## Ground Rules

ICN has developed the following Ground Rules to help this training run smoothly and allow all participants to benefit from the instruction and information.

- **Show up on time and come prepared.** Be prompt in arriving and in returning from breaks. Come with a positive attitude.
- **Stay mentally and physically present.** Be present and stay on task. Listen attentively to others and avoid disruptive side conversations.
- **Let everyone participate.** Be patient when listening to others speak. Treat all participants with the same respect that you would want from them.
- **Listen with an open mind.** Stay open to new ways of doing things, and listen for understanding. You can respect another person's point of view without agreeing with them.
- **Think before speaking.** Seek first to understand, then to be understood. Avoid using idioms, three letter acronyms, and phrases that can be misunderstood.



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## Icebreaker Activity

**Instructions:** Use the blanks below to complete each of the prompts listed.

### About Me

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I am from: \_\_\_\_\_

I work at: \_\_\_\_\_

### What I Want the Group to Know

What I think about myself:

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What others commonly think about me:

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What might be misunderstood about me:

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## Key Terms

- **Community building** is promoting cohesion (unity) among a group of individuals who have common interests or who have come together for a particular reason (e.g., training).
- **Cultural awareness** is being aware of our own and other cultures, particularly cultural differences—without assigning value to those differences (e.g., good/bad, right/wrong, normal/abnormal, acceptable/unacceptable).
- **Cultural competence** is the ability to interact effectively with people from other cultures. It also means not expecting your own behaviors, beliefs, and actions to be the norm for others.
- **Cultural sensitivity** is accepting and respecting cultural differences. It is also the act of applying what we know about cultures for the purpose of improving our interactions with people who are different from ourselves.
- **Diversity** is being composed of differing qualities.

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## Double Think-Pair-Share

**STEP 1:** Choose a learning partner—preferably someone seated next to you.

**STEP 2:** With your learning partner, discuss your thoughts about the following question,  
“Why is it important for us to learn about our participants?”

**STEP 3:** List the most significant responses in the spaces below.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**STEP 4:** When instructed to do so, you and your learning partner should find another pair of learning partners, from a different table, and share your responses with the pair.

**STEP 5:** As the other pair reads off their responses, you should add any interesting new ideas in the spaces below.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**STEP 6:** If the other pair provides a response similar to a response you listed during STEP 3, you may choose to simply place a check mark or star next to the similar response.

## Benefits of Diversity in a Learning Environment

Research on educational outcomes in diverse learning environments has indicated the following benefits:

- Learners are introduced to a wider range of ideas and perspectives—knowledge, strategies, applications.
- Learners are more willing to examine, and re-examine, their personal perspectives resulting in them learning more about themselves.
- Learners are more often exposed to ideas and points of view that they disagree with or do not understand in a safe, non-hostile environment.
- Learners gain a clearer idea of how cultures process the same information in different ways and how all information is deeply culture-bound.
- Learners learn ways of reshaping issues, new ways of reading classroom material, new learning strategies, and become more creative in their approach to learning in general.
- Learners are introduced to and are given an opportunity to practice new ways of collaborating.
- Learners gain an increased capacity for tolerance, respect, and concern for others.
- Learners acquire an enhanced ability to think creatively and in more complex ways.
- Learners develop the ability to adapt more quickly to a broader range of situations and environments.

## R-E-S-P-E-C-T

**STEP 1:** Find a learning partner—preferably someone you do not know or haven’t partnered with yet.

**STEP 2:** Introduce yourself to your new learning partner.

**STEP 3:** Discuss the following questions:

- What does the term respect mean to you?
- What does it mean for you to show respect?
- What does it mean for you to be shown respect?
- How do you think respect relates to diversity?

**NOTES:**

[illegible]

## Questions to Ask

Topic	Sample Questions
<b>Physical Contact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When or is touching appropriate?</li> <li>• Are there parts of the body that should not be touched? (e.g., shaking hands)</li> <li>• Is it appropriate to be touched by someone of the opposite sex?</li> </ul>
<b>Eye Contact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it appropriate to make eye contact?</li> <li>• Are there certain instances where it is appropriate/ has meaning?</li> </ul>
<b>Emotional Expression</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When should a person smile? (e.g., some cultures smile to cover other emotions)</li> <li>• How are positive and negative feelings typically expressed? (e.g., confusion, embarrassment, frustration)</li> </ul>
<b>Personal Appearance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What type of clothing/color of clothing is considered appropriate?</li> <li>• Should one dress casually, wear business attire, or business casual attire?</li> </ul>
<b>Addressing Others</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What form of greeting is appropriate?</li> <li>• What is the correct pronunciation of names?</li> <li>• Are there differences in addressing those older or younger than you?</li> </ul>
<b>Gender Roles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there specific roles for females and males?</li> <li>• Are there different expectations?</li> </ul>
<b>Attribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why does this group tend to behave in a particular way?</li> <li>• Why does this group prefer interacting with one trainer versus another?</li> </ul>



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## Ways I Will Learn About Other Cultures

**Instructions:** In the spaces below, list approaches you can take to learn about other cultures.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

## Personal Reflection

This checklist is intended to be a reflection tool. Each item should be examined, the feeling(s) that it evokes should be analyzed, and the final rating we give each item should be genuine. The results are yours to keep. Later, reflect on any uncomfortable feelings, think about why you feel that way (cultural and religious values, upbringing, a role model, etc.), and what you can do to know more in order to understand yourself and others.

Mark one of the following for each statement  
A (Agree) SA (Somewhat Agree) D (Disagree)

### About Yourself

- \_\_\_ I am aware of stereotypes and assumptions regarding different cultures/people.
- \_\_\_ I am aware of societal biases towards certain groups of peoples.
- \_\_\_ I am aware that throughout history some groups have been favored while others have been discriminated against.
- \_\_\_ I recognize family members and others have had a role in the way I perceive others.
- \_\_\_ I have examined my biases and worked to eliminate them.
- \_\_\_ I respect and try to be open-minded about people who are different than me.
- \_\_\_ I do not impose my beliefs and value systems onto others.
- \_\_\_ I believe that it is acceptable to speak a language other than English.
- \_\_\_ I have no problems accepting and sharing ideas with people who have differing beliefs and lifestyles.
- \_\_\_ I do not participate in insensitive comments or behaviors.
- \_\_\_ I am driven to respond to others' insensitive comments or behaviors.
- \_\_\_ I suspend judgment when others don't behave in a manner that I am use to.
- \_\_\_ I have no problems accepting and sharing ideas with people with disabilities.
- \_\_\_ I treat all people with respect for their culture, even though it may be different from my own.

I know that most people who speak limited English and/or have accents

- \_\_\_ Have the same intellectual capacity as anyone else.
- \_\_\_ May be very capable of communicating clearly and effectively in their native language.

## Putting It all Together

### Thoughts Before ICN Training

"I had to provide a training at tribal school last week for a group of Navajo school nutrition professionals. They were so quiet, and there were so many times that things were totally silent. Silence just makes me uncomfortable. I like to talk, and if I were in a training, I would give feedback. The trainer wouldn't have to ask me twice. It makes trainings more interesting when there is a lot of dialogue between the trainer and participants. So, I enjoy groups who talk. When I train groups that are more engaged, the trainings are so much livelier. I'm sure those other groups learn more, too."

### Thoughts After ICN Training

"Now that I attended the diversity training at the ICN, I know that I need to find out more information. I have realized it is important for me to learn as much as I can about my target audience. I also remember cultural awareness means I have to be mindful of my own cultural preferences and consider those of others. I can't expect others to think and act like me. Before I go back to facilitate another training, I'll just do what the ICN trainer suggested and see what I learn about my audience online. I'll also call the site host to find out what approaches I should take the next time around to improve interactions and participation. I wish I would've asked more questions before going the first time."

### What Happened Next?

"I spoke with the site host, and I mentioned that during the last training the group did not seem to be engaged. Every time I asked a question, no one answered. When I asked for volunteers, no one offered—I always had to call on someone. The site host told me it might be because many Navajo value listening over speaking. They also tend to be comfortable with long periods of silence and view quick responses as immature. The site host said that, in fact, interest in what an individual says is shown through silence, and for some Navajo, silence can be considered supportive. So, not only did I learn it is important to give adequate time for the group to respond, I learned that I need to tailor my approach when planning activities for the next training."

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## Techniques for Improved Communication

- **Listen for patterns during communication.** Trainers who possess good listening skills can build rapport with diverse learners. Pay attention to communication patterns and aim to mirror them to increase the effectiveness of your interaction.
- **Slow down your rate of speech.** A good practice would be to monitor the conversations. If it seems learners do not fully understand, you may need to slow down your rate of speech and make sure you are speaking clearly. This will aid learners in processing what you are saying—especially if English is not their first language. If needed, you should repeat what you said without sounding inconvenienced or annoyed.
- **Use terminology that is easy to understand.** There will likely be instances where it is necessary to use specific terms; however, you should give added attention to making sure you clearly explain those terms and that learners comprehend their meaning. When possible, keep terminology as simple as possible for improved understanding.
- **Paraphrase what learners say.** By paraphrasing, you can demonstrate that what learners are saying matters and is being heard. This is also a great way to clarify whether you understand what is being said or asked. “What I heard you say is...”
- **Avoid colloquialisms, unnecessary jargon, jokes, and plays on words.** This will aid you in avoiding confusion or unknowingly causing offense.
- **Break information down into smaller chunks.** If it seems as though the learners did not fully understand the information presented, go back to the last point you received confirmation they did, and repeat it in smaller chunks.
- **Use inclusive language, materials, and examples.** Use terms and phrases that do not exclude a particular population (e.g., use of gender neutral phrases—learning partner or spokesperson). It is equally important to select materials and provide examples that are relevant to the learners. If the group is diverse in many ways, you should include a variety of perspectives.
- **Research culture-specific communication information.** Search for relevant information about where your learners are from and their worldviews, values, and beliefs. Most importantly, learn about their verbal and nonverbal communications styles. Mastering a few key phrases in their native language is also great way to form a connection and show that you respect and value their culture.
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## Encouraging Participation

- **Set the stage early on.** It is important to get everyone comfortable with communicating from the very start. Use introductory activities or icebreakers that involve learners getting to know each other. After you “break the ice,” learners will probably feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas throughout the training.
- **Create a welcoming, inclusive environment.** You should aim to create a space where all learners feel safe to participate. Here are just a few approaches to consider:
  - Set ground rules (i.e., no stereotyping, critique ideas—not people, suspend judgement, listen with curiosity, be open-minded and willing to learn, use “I” statements)
  - Address inappropriate language and behavior
  - Use a variety of teaching methods
  - Ensure all activities can be completed by everyone present
  - Utilize materials and language that represent the diversity of our society
  - Arrange tables and chairs so learners can see and speak to each other
- **Use specific names.** Calling a person by name conveys that this person is important. Also remember, it is appropriate to ask how to properly pronounce a name if you are unsure. Moreover, some people may prefer to be called by a name that differs from their given name. Self-made name tags or table tents are useful for obtaining and remembering a person’s preferred name.
- **Move around the room.** When speaking avoid sitting or standing still in one place for prolonged periods, which could cause you to lose the group’s attention. Your energy level sets the tone for the training. During group activities circulate to each table, listening to ideas and infusing positive feedback to encourage participation.
- **Provide alternative methods for students to contribute to the discussion.** Here are just a few approaches to consider:
  - Allow questions, responses, or comments to be submitted on note cards or sticky notes and you read them aloud
  - Think-Pair-Share activities (i.e., two people work together)
  - Pose questions to the entire group and give each person the opportunity to briefly respond or “pass” it to the next person
- **Use small group activities.** Organize students into small groups and let them complete activities and/or share their thoughts with each other versus the entire class. Some may feel more comfortable sharing using this approach.

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## Encouraging Participation (continued)

- **Use open-ended questions.** Ask broad questions that require the learners to formulate an opinion or idea versus asking questions that simply require a “yes” or “no.”
- **Encourage questions from the group.** Remind the group that there are no “dumb” questions. More than likely, if one person has a question someone else does as well. One approach you can use is to ask, “What questions do you have?” versus asking, “Do you have any questions?”
- **Do not be afraid to wait or rephrase your question.** It is important to be aware of the wait time (i.e., period of silence between when a question is posed and a response is given). Many learners benefit from being given a few extra seconds to process what they’ve heard and formulate a response, so do not feel uncomfortable about the silence—wait at least 5–10 seconds. If no one responds to the question you posed, try rephrasing it for clarity.
- **Provide nonverbal encouragement.** When learners are speaking, indicate what they are saying is important by maintaining eye contact with them and even nodding. When a person feels that you are listening and care about what they have to say, they will likely continue to contribute to the discussion.
- **Provide verbal encouragement.** Do not just say, “Good Point!” or “Great Idea!” every time. It is more meaningful to specifically state what is helpful, unique, or interesting about a given response.
- **Limit feedback from those who tend to dominate the discussion.** Avoid always calling on the first hand that goes up, if it is the same person each time. Some learners may want to contribute, but are awaiting an invitation or the right opportunity.

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## Tips for Becoming a Culturally Competent Trainer

**Expand your comfort zone.** It is likely that there will be individuals or cultural groups with whom you do not have experience working. Acknowledge this challenge and make an effort to learn as much as possible about the individual or group.

**Experience culture.** When possible, take part in social, community, and educational activities like viewing films, reading books, and attending festivals, parades, concerts, sporting events, art exhibits, workshops, and lectures.

**Avoid insensitive comments.** In group settings, individuals sometimes make insensitive comments about others (e.g., jokes, slurs, etc.). If that occurs, ask that no more insensitive comments be made. Also, avoid the use of profanity.

**Respect language preferences.** Before training a new group of learners, consider whether your training materials need to be adapted. Sometimes it is necessary to translate materials or invite an interpreter to the presentation.

**Be aware of body language.** Sometimes, body language and other non-verbal cues can provide more details about how someone is reacting to a situation than what they may say.

**Make connections.** Individuals from social clubs, advocacy groups, religious institutions, civic groups, unions, and colleges and universities could be able to provide you with information that will help you connect with your audience.

**Honor flexibility in self-identification.** We often make assumptions about learners' identities, while they may have an entirely different perception of themselves. Listen for information about self-perception/self-identity.

**Listen carefully.** Hearing is not necessarily listening. Our own perceptions, biases, and expectations sometimes make it difficult to really listen to and comprehend both overt and covert messages.

**Ask questions.** Make it clear to that you want to learn more about others and to ensure you are delivering information in an appropriate manner.

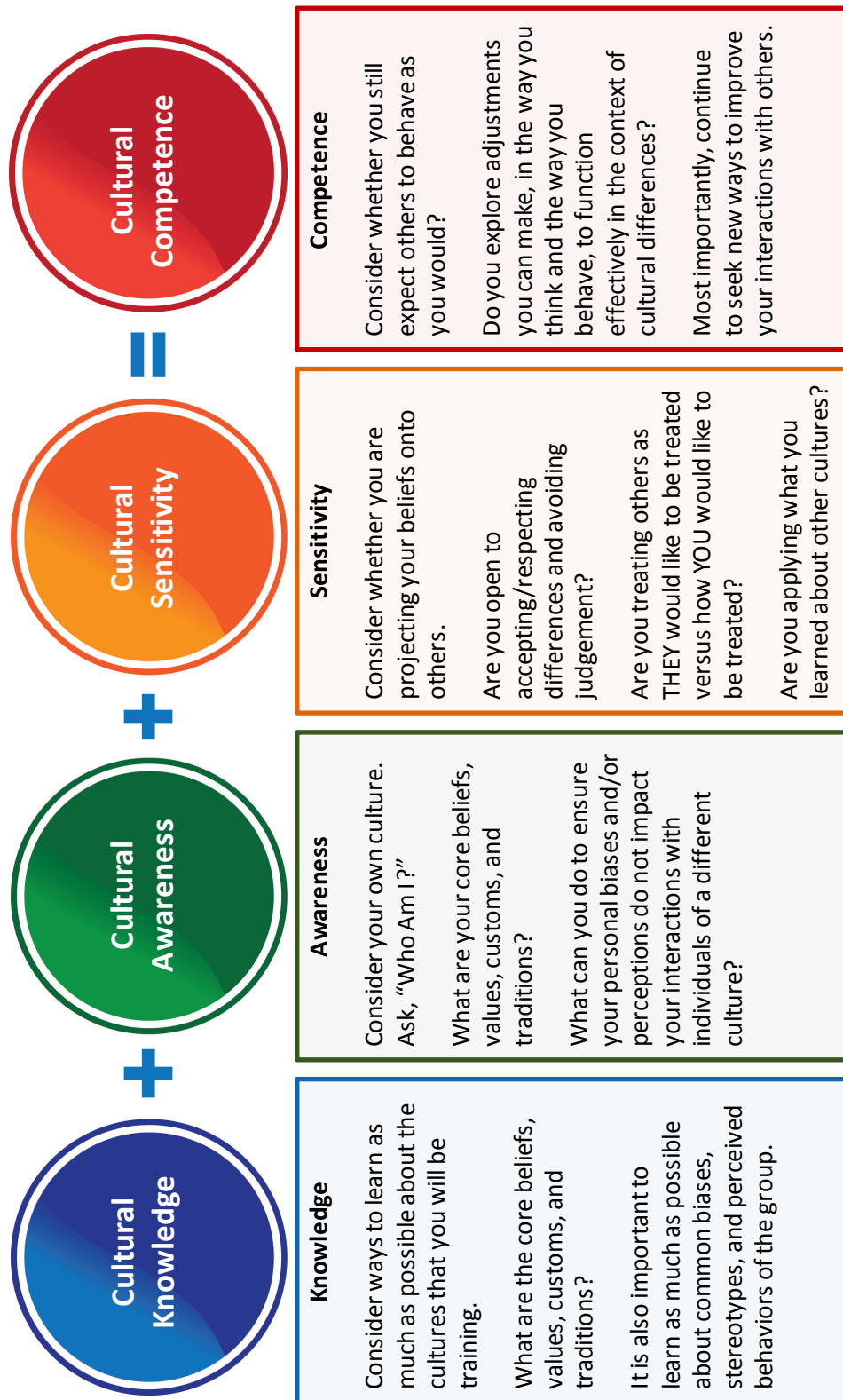
Can you think of any other tips? If so, write them below.

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## Professional Development Process





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## Guideposts for Fostering Community

**Be present and welcoming.** Be 100% present. Set aside the usual distractions of things undone from yesterday and things to do tomorrow. Bring all of yourself to the work and participate fully. Practice hospitality. We all learn most effectively in spaces that welcome us.

**Listen deeply to learn.** Listen intently to what is said; listen to the feelings beneath the words. Listen to yourself also. Strive to achieve a balance between listening and reflecting, as well as speaking and acting.

**Participation is encouraged but not mandatory.** You will be invited to share in pairs, small groups, and in the large group. The invitation is exactly that. You will determine the extent to which you want to participate in our discussions and activities.

**No fixing.** Each of us is here to discover our own truths, to listen to our own inner teacher, to take our own inner journey. We are not here to set someone else straight, or to help right another's wrong, to "fix" or "correct" what we perceive as broken or incorrect in another member of the group. Be a community of learners; set aside perfectionism and fear of "messing up."

**Suspend judgment and assumptions and seek understanding.** Set aside your judgments. By creating a space between judgments and reactions, we can listen to the other, and to ourselves, more fully. As a result, our perspectives, decisions, and actions are more informed. Our assumptions are usually invisible to us, yet they undergird our worldview and thus our decisions and our actions. By identifying our assumptions, we can then set them aside and open our viewpoints to greater possibilities.

**Speak your truth and respect the truth of others.** Say what is in your heart, trusting that your voice will be heard and your contribution respected. Your truth may be different from, even the opposite of, what another in the training has said. Speaking your truth is not debating with, or correcting, or interpreting what another has said. Own your truth by speaking only for yourself, using "I" statements.

**Maintain confidentiality.** Create a safe space by respecting the confidential nature and content of discussions held. What is said in the training, should stay there; what is learned in the training, should leave. Everyone gets to tell their own story for themselves.

**Respect silence.** Silence is a rare gift in our busy world. After you or someone else has spoken, take time to reflect, without immediately filling the space with words. Look inward and listen to yourself in the silence.

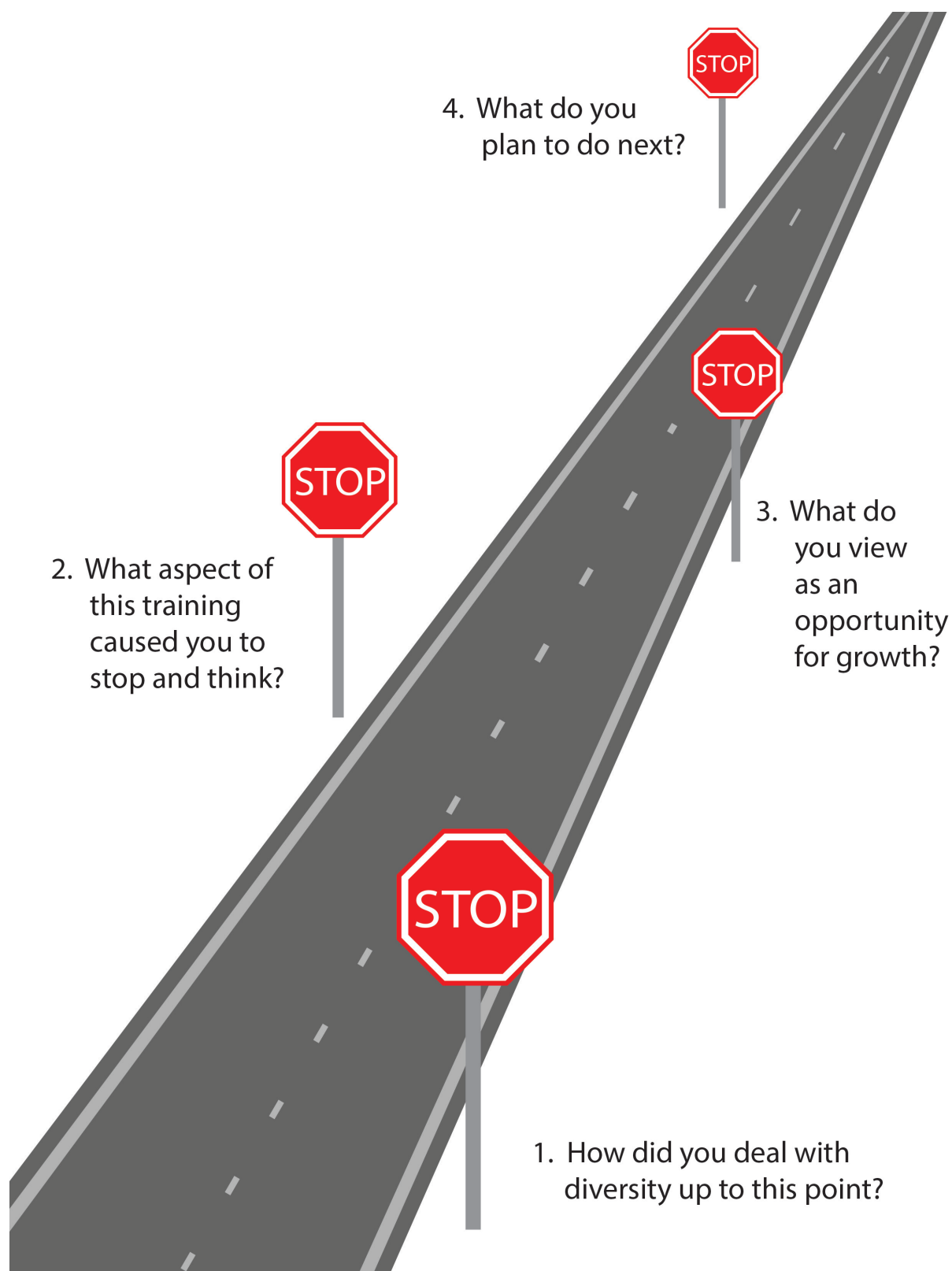
**Trust the community.** In this community, all voices are valued equally. All gifts are welcomed and respected.

**When things get difficult, turn to wonder.** If you find yourself disagreeing with another, becoming judgmental, shutting down in defense, try turning to wonder: “I wonder what brought them to this place?” “I wonder what my reaction teaches me?” “I wonder what they’re feeling right now?” You do not have to agree with another’s story, but you do have to respect their right to tell their own story.

### Additional Guideposts:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## My Journey



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