



Creating Your Action Plan



The purpose of this tool is to help you draw on what you've learned from other activities in the Tool Kit to create an action plan for strengthening your program's equity and diversity work. The guide is flexible: if you are interested in a focused or short-term change effort, it can be used to help identify and address one or two priority areas or concerns. For programs that wish to undertake a more comprehensive change process, this tool can help in developing a more multifaceted, long-term diversity and equity strategy.

Addressing issues of equity and diversity is complex, and may involve work at multiple levels, including:

- ☑ personal/professional development of staff members;
- ☑ program development and change; and
- ☑ organizational development and change.

We suggest that this tool be used initially by a diversity and equity planning team, with action steps shared with (and, if necessary, modified by) the full program staff. Use the worksheet provided to guide you through the process.

Part A: Identify Priority Issues

In this section, you will draw on what individuals and your collective staff or planning team learned from other tools in this Tool Kit. Additionally, you will draw on what you learned from any other equity and diversity assessments you have done.

Use the worksheet on page 4 of this tool to list some key priorities or goals you would like to work on. (e.g. attract more African American youth to the program; increase staff diversity; improve academic support to English Language Learners; educate staff and open a conversation about LGBTQ issues; make the curriculum more accessible to young people with disabilities)

Consider the following questions:

- ☞ What are your program's current strengths and assets in relation to diversity and equity?
- ☞ What are some current gaps and weaknesses?
- ☞ What are your biggest and most urgent needs?
- ☞ What are you in a position to accomplish right now?

Part B: Identify Action Steps

For each of the issues you've chosen, identify one or more action steps that will help advance your goals or address your concerns, and record these steps in the second column of the worksheet. Action steps can be at the level of personal learning, staff training, program review or change, and/or organizational planning and development. The following questions can help you develop your ideas:

- ☞ Are there topics that individuals or the staff as a whole need information or training on?
- ☞ Are there any conversations that need to happen? Who should be in these conversations?
- ☞ Are there any additional materials, activities, curricula, data, or assessment you need in order to move forward with your action plan?
- ☞ Do any of your materials need to be reviewed or changed?
- ☞ Is there something new you want to add or develop?
- ☞ Are there partnerships you'd like to form?
- ☞ Are there aspects of your organizational culture that need to be discussed or changed?
- ☞ Do you need to find resources for any of the above?

Part C: Create A Timeline

Given how busy programs are on a daily basis, it can be hard to sustain and follow through with even the most basic and enthusiastically developed plans. Therefore, we strongly suggest that you build a timeline on the worksheet for taking the action steps you've identified. Our work with a variety of programs and organizations also suggests the importance of having a specific individual or team responsible for each action step to ensure that the step is completed according to your timeline.

Worksheet: Creating Your Action Plan

| priority issues | action strategies | timeline | who's responsible? |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>Example: Update children's reading library to include wider multicultural selection</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Review current library's identify strengths and gaps -Hold staff discussion to determine priority needs. -Research books that are available -Determine budget -Purchase books | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -June 6th - 10th -July 10th -months of June and July -August -August and September | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Samantha -Miguel -Iran -Miguel -LaTonya |



Taking Note: Can We Talk About This?

Part of assessing your program's efforts on equity and diversity is looking at how the adults involved talk and relate to each other around these issues. This tool will help you get a quick feel for how the adults in your organization discuss (or avoid discussing) various dimensions of equity and diversity. It will also provide some suggestions for enhancing the staff's capacity to engage topics which may be unfamiliar or otherwise challenging.

While it is not always easy to discuss such topics, open dialogue is necessary for creating a shared understanding of your program's values and goals, and for developing meaningful and concrete ways to hold everyone accountable for effectively serving participants and families of all backgrounds and experiences. In addition, until we as adults can talk across differences about matters like power and privilege, stereotypes and disparities, young people will not have the role models they need to fully develop their own skills for understanding, respecting, and learning from others.

This tool is designed to complement the Program Assessment for Equity and Diversity process. Individuals should complete the checklists first and then share answers with the entire staff.

The checklists in Parts A and B below will help you gauge what is – and what isn't happening in staff and organizational dialogue around issues related to equity and diversity. They are centered on two basic questions:

- Do particular issues get raised for discussion among adults in the program?
- If so, what happens when they get raised? Are they acknowledged? Discussed? Ignored? Incorporated into your program's goals?

For each set of issues in the left column, ask yourself first: Do these issues get raised? California Tomorrow's experience suggests that in some programs, issues like race and racism, sexual orientation, bias, inclusion and exclusion, and so on don't get talked about at all. In other cases, the issues may get raised, but only by one or a few people for whom they are a concern, while others stay out of the conversation. Finally, in some programs, issues are brought up by many different people, and generate substantial interest and attention within the program. Check the applicable box or boxes under the "do the issues get raised" heading to indicate where your program falls. You will notice there is also a space to add relevant additional issues from both your work and the larger community that may or may not be discussed in your program.

For issues which do get raised in your program, after completing the first set of responses, check the appropriate box or boxes under the "if they do get raised" heading to indicate what happens when the issues get brought up.

Answering these questions will give you a sense of where the strengths and comfort of your staff lie in discussing various dimensions of equity and diversity. These strengths can provide a basis for further dialogue or implementation of new goals and strategies. Answering the questions may also alert you to issues that people may be less aware of or that they are reluctant to discuss.

Part C offers ways to enhance your organization's ability to address the topics that are less visible or more challenging.

Part A: Talking About Diversity

| ISSUES | DO THE ISSUES GET RAISED AMONG ADULTS IN YOUR PROGRAM? | | IF THEY DO GET RAISED, WHAT HAPPENS? | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| | not talked about in the program | raised by a few staff only not a concern for others | raised by multiple staff and spark significant interest | met with silence, disinterest, or resistance | good discussions but no action follows | good discussion and it leads to action |
| cultural experiences and differences | | | | | | |
| race and racism | | | | | | |
| class / economic diversity | | | | | | |
| language diversity and bilingualism | | | | | | |
| sexual orientation and family structure | | | | | | |
| gender and gender stereotypes | | | | | | |
| physical, mental, and learning disability | | | | | | |
| other (specify) | | | | | | |

Part B: Talking About Equity

| ISSUES | DO THE ISSUES GET RAISED AMONG ADULTS IN YOUR PROGRAM? | | | IF THEY DO GET RAISED, WHAT HAPPENS? | | |
|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|
| | not talked about in the program | raised by a few staff only – not a concern for others | raised by multiple staff and spark significant interest | met with silence, disinterest, or resistance | good discussions but no action follows | good discussion and it leads to action |
| community resources and needs | | | | | | |
| community politics | | | | | | |
| barriers to access and participation (within program and/or in society) | | | | | | |
| tensions between diverse groups | | | | | | |
| disparities and gaps between diverse groups | | | | | | |
| privilege and power | | | | | | |
| stereotypes, bias, and discrimination | | | | | | |
| youth empowerment | | | | | | |
| social action and social justice | | | | | | |
| other (specify) | | | | | | |

What You Can Do

California Tomorrow’s work starts from a few key premises: that issues of equity and diversity are important; that they can be safely and respectfully discussed among adults in your organization; that they can be effectively addressed in programs and organizations; and that after school and youth programs that address them can have a significant impact on youth and communities. That said, there is often groundwork that must be done to set the foundation for successful equity and diversity work at the program level. The following chart suggests some ways you can begin to overcome barriers to talking about challenging issues. You may wish to incorporate some of the more in-depth suggestions into your planning process using the Creating Your Action Plan Tool.

| if the challenge is | it may help to |
|---|---|
| <p>People are afraid or remain silent about issues of diversity or equity.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create safe spaces for conversation through group/team building (useful tools from this Tool Kit: Starting the Process: Pathways to Opening Dialogue; Who Are We in This Work?). • Have facilitated dialogues. • Begin conversations in smaller groups, and/or in “affinity groups” (groups in which individual members relate to each other through some common bond, e.g. gender, ethnicity, job duties, etc.). • Have leadership put issues on table. |
| <p>People don’t think there are challenges or problems.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share information and research about the topic, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - expertise of knowledgeable staff members; - information gathered from youth and families in the program and community; - outside speakers/videos; and - articles and books. • Use tools from this Tool Kit, such as Listen to the Youth, or the Program Assessment Tool. • Seek out relevant professional trainings. |
| <p>There’s no shared sense of importance or urgency in addressing the issues.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share information and research about the topic (as above). • Use tools from this Tool Kit, such as Listen to the Youth, the Program Assessment Tool, or the New Eyes on Your Program. • Participate collectively in relevant trainings and discuss material. • Provide space for those who do feel a sense of urgency to share their perspectives with the rest of staff. • Share personal reflections and experiences of what makes this important. |

| if the challenge is | it may help to |
|--|---|
| <p>People don't agree on what to do.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First come to agreement on values and general goals, as well as on the nature of the problems and challenges you seek to address – grounding all this in what you know about the young people in your program and what you want to do for them. • Research what works. • Assess current situation using tools from this tool kit or other tools of your choice. • Bring in outside facilitator to help brainstorm and choose strategies. |
| <p>People don't think programs can make a difference.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look together at model programs, research on effective practices, etc. |
| <p>People don't believe the program or organization will change.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncover and address potential barriers to change (perhaps using the Organizational Culture section of the Program Assessment Tool). • Assess organizational leadership with an eye toward leading equity and diversity work; build capacity of leaders if necessary and/or open leadership on these issues to those with most significant expertise. • Develop and work toward a few achievable short-term goals to build momentum. |



Community Mapping and Reflection

The community and neighborhood dynamics surrounding your program can have a considerable impact on your youth, shaping their experiences and needs, and providing both opportunities and challenges. This tool is designed to help you get a picture of young people's day-to-day environments, with a focus on trends and issues related to equity and diversity. In addition to supporting your understanding of young people's lives, the community mapping and reflection process will enable you to begin assessing how your program is equipped to respond to things like demographic changes or community tensions, and to identify ways you are positioned to draw on available cultural and social resources. It may also help you surface new goals and strategies to better connect your program with the individuals and neighborhoods you serve.

Part A: Community Mapping

If you have a large staff, we suggest conducting the mapping activity in groups of four or five. Materials for each group should include chart paper and markers or crayons. Within the small group, map/draw the neighborhood or community where your program is located. You may include physical elements such as stores, churches, schools, fast food places, outdoor areas, other youth programs, etc. Also represent on your community map both the opportunities and the challenges you believe children and youth are encountering as a result of local demographic, political, and economic circumstances.

Please be aware that mapping/drawing styles will vary. Some groups may choose to “map” out the issues conceptually, with words, images, or symbols representing the different opportunities and challenges your youth face in their communities. Others may choose to focus on the literal environment by drawing actual streets and landmarks, and examine what is happening in the community in specific areas. Choose what works best for you, as there is no one way to do this activity.

It may help to think of one particular young person you work with and his/her journey from home and/or school to the program. Try to envision what this young person encounters on his/her daily excursions (i.e. walking past a community center, abandoned building, park, etc.; hearing one or many languages; long bus ride; turf concerns; and so on). If your program serves more than one neighborhood or community, assign each small group to focus on a different area. If you have already completed the Listen to the Youth Tool, you might find it helpful to refer to the youths’ community maps or to information you gained from the interviews or neighborhood walks, particularly if there are staff members who aren’t totally familiar with your surrounding environment.

Regroup as a whole staff to share your community maps. Discuss the issues, trends, and dynamics that came up. It is likely that your community maps will surface things that are not necessarily viewed the same way by all your staff, so it is important to be accepting of different perspectives.

Part B: Reflecting On How Your Program Can Respond

After sharing the maps, a facilitator should draw a chart on a large piece of paper divided into four sections: Strengths; Gaps/Weaknesses; Opportunities; and Fears/Challenges (see attached worksheet). This chart will allow you to begin assessing how your program is equipped to respond to the realities that young people in the community experience on a daily basis. Staff should generate lists for each quadrant using the following questions, and one person should chart the answers:

- ☞ What are some of the program's **strengths** that enable you to help young people build on the community resources and respond to the challenges identified in your community maps? (e.g. bilingual staff to communicate with Spanish-speaking youth and parents; community service projects; Appalachian quilting class)
- ☞ What are the program's current **gaps and weaknesses** that make it difficult to help participants build on these resources and respond to these challenges? (e.g. many mentors not familiar with community; majority of programming geared toward African American participants and not enough for growing Southeast Asian population)
- ☞ What practical or learning **opportunities** might be available to help you better support young people in dealing with the community circumstances you have identified? (e.g. partnering with other community organizations more familiar with neighborhood populations and dynamics; open staff position that can be filled with LGBT staff person; new grant possibility)
- ☞ What are some of your **fears and challenges** in helping youth and positioning the program to address these circumstances? (e.g. developing relationships between program and community will take time; pressure to improve test scores interferes with multicultural enrichment; don't have resources to support children with disabilities)

Once your chart is complete, debrief with the following questions. Be sure to take notes of the group's discussion/conclusions as they will later inform your action planning.

- ☞ What are your preliminary conclusions – both about the equity and diversity efforts you hope the program will continue, and about possible changes you would like to make? What are the implications for staff development and/or program development?
- ☞ Is there any consensus in your group about priorities?
- ☞ Are there some issues and concerns that can be addressed fairly quickly? And if so, do you have the leadership and resources to do this?
- ☞ Is there anything that would require further research, strategizing, and consensus-building to address?

WORKSHEET: Preliminary Program Scan

Strengths

Gaps/Weaknesses

Opportunities

Fears/Challenges



Introduction to the Tool Kit

After school and youth programs have a tremendous potential to help young people from all backgrounds and communities thrive, and to support them in developing the skills they need to grow and succeed in the diverse society that is our reality today. Along with providing learning opportunities, meaningful relationships and safe havens, programs have the power to create dynamic environments where diverse participants are encouraged to be themselves and to understand each other across differences. They can provide valuable and much-needed services to children and youth in neighborhoods with limited resources. And they have the ability to work with young people toward creating the conditions for full participation of all communities in our globally interconnected world.

Living up to this potential is an exciting, critical, and challenging task. For most programs, it involves individual learning by staff members, collective dialogue, program assessment, and some measure of change. California Tomorrow has developed the enclosed set of “tools,” or structured activities, to support providers in expanding their diversity and equity efforts and in finding ways to work ever more effectively with the children, youth, families and communities they serve.

3. Intergroup experiences and active development of cross cultural understanding.

Given our society's rich and increasing diversity, young people deeply benefit from developing a range of skills and attitudes related to cross cultural awareness and intergroup interaction. These skills and attitudes include: respect and appreciation for others, self awareness, comfort with differences, working with multiple perspectives, speaking two or more languages, conflict resolution, and knowing how to be an ally.

4. Recognizing and challenging inequities. Despite a history in the United States of movements toward greater inclusion, participation, and open access, educational and social disparities between racial, ethnic, economic, gender, and other groups persist. It can be extremely powerful when programs work toward alleviating such disparities by: targeting their own resources to those most in need; creating an internal climate that equally values all cultures and identities; reducing academic gaps; offering educational support that is culturally and linguistically appropriate and which encourages non-stereotypical skill development and career paths; and supporting young people in addressing community and social problems.

5. Healing the wounds of social distress, exclusion and discrimination. Many young people come to youth programs battered by living in a political, economic and social climate that undermines and devalues them. In addition to building strong identities and supporting challenge to inequities, programs can support participants in this context by recognizing and helping to heal the emotional wounds they carry. Some of the ways this can be done include: creating safe spaces to talk about difficult social realities; providing culturally appropriate counseling services and building supportive relationships; offering creative outlets to express what young people are feeling; incorporating cultural and/or spiritual healing elements; and building collective skills for community change.

Defining Equity and Diversity

Diversity—Diversity refers to the wide range of dimensions around which people in our society differ. These dimensions include race, culture, language, class, age, gender, sexual orientation, and physical ability/disability.

Honoring diversity in our programs means seeing differences as opportunities, not as problems. It involves understanding, respecting and incorporating the wide range of experiences young people bring to their after school activities. And it means creating inclusive environments where people of all backgrounds feel welcome and valued.

Equity—Equity means each person or group is treated fairly and has equal access to economic, social, and educational opportunity. For members of groups that have been excluded from resources, equity may involve providing greater resources to compensate for past exclusion and discrimination.

In the after school and youth development arenas, providing equitable access means young people and their families can fully participate in programs without facing physical, financial, emotional, cultural or other barriers. Equity also involves offering programming which:

- Includes and reflects the communities served
- Seeks to reduce social and academic disparities between groups
- Challenges stereotypes and inequities
- Draws upon the input and decision-making of participants and their families and communities

The Importance of Equity and Diversity to After School and Youth Programs

These tools are based on the results of California Tomorrow's three-year national study of equity and diversity in after school and youth programming. In this study, which we completed in 2003, we learned that there is enormous and increasing ethnic, economic, and linguistic diversity in program enrollments across the country. We also developed a deep understanding of how differences in young people's backgrounds and experiences — their cultures, ethnic and racial identities, genders, class backgrounds, learning styles, sexual orientations, abilities or disabilities, family circumstances, and community contexts — affect what they need from the after school services we provide.

Our research suggests that there is great interest and concern for creating inclusive and equitable programs that are accessible to a wide range of participants and allow all children and youth to thrive. At the same time, many providers face important challenges and questions: How can they fully include and support children and families of many different backgrounds? How can they create safe spaces where differences lead to dialogue rather than tension, and where children learn to work with others in ways appropriate to our global society? What can programs do to help marginalized youth develop strong academic skills they may not otherwise be developing in school? How can they help young people maintain connections with their families and communities, and develop self-confidence, resilience, and leadership? How can they support youth in gaining the knowledge and ability they need to understand and address diversity-related challenges? And what can be done in the after school hours to help empower young people to stand up for what they believe, and to improve the neighborhoods and society in which they live?

As we looked at promising practices around the country, we found that five things really make a difference:

- 1. Inclusive and culturally responsive programming.** Because children's family and community backgrounds are core to who they are, how they learn, and what they may need from after school activities, successful programs are ones which are supportive, accessible, and responsive to the different aspects of their lives and identities. Such programs have staff who are sensitive to participants' backgrounds; materials which reflect diverse cultures, languages and experiences; and ties to young people's family and community resources. In addition, these programs recognize and respect diverse customs and traditions and do not tolerate bias or discrimination.
- 2. Development of strong identities.** Strong, thriving youth need a sense of belonging in the world and a belief in their own competency. An important part of this is having a strong sense of self, which must often be forged in the face of pressures to fit unfamiliar norms of culture, class, gender, physical ability or sexual orientation. Programs can help by actively supporting the development of young people's social and cultural identities, and by building their connections to family and community experience, history, heritage, and resources. In addition to providing an inclusive environment, this can be done through: direct cultural activities or instruction; home language development; providing community role models; creating space to discuss identity-related pressures; helping youth identify and challenge stereotypes; and supporting young people to feel fully comfortable in their home cultures and the dominant culture when the two differ.

What you can do

The Addressing Equity and Diversity Tool Kit has been designed to help programs expand their equity and diversity efforts. California Tomorrow's experience suggests that this involves: personal learning and staff development on equity and diversity issues; enhancing programming goals, strategies and activities related to equity and diversity; and looking at ways to more deeply align the organization's climate and culture with its equity and diversity goals.

The enclosed tools can assist program directors and staff in addressing all these areas by:

- Exploring their own experiences and sharing these with each other;
- Collectively examining their programs and organizations;
- Setting goals for further learning and program development; and
- Planning strategically for program improvement.

As you begin your work with the Tool Kit, we suggest clarifying what you hope to accomplish and setting out a basic timeline. Is the goal to raise people's level of awareness about equity and diversity dynamics? To evaluate your current programming? To generate new ideas? To address known concerns or problems? This is also a time to clarify the process your team will use, and to create a climate of safety for discussing issues which may be challenging and emotionally charged. For maximum benefit, we suggest using the tools in the order in which they are listed below. We also encourage you to personalize your reflection and assessment efforts to fit your own program's needs, goals and circumstances.

Tools for Programs

Starting the process: Pathways to Opening Dialogue A set of warm-up activities and sample ground rules designed to open staff conversation about the concepts of equity and diversity in a safe and comfortable way.

Self Reflection: Who Are We In This Work? A series of personal reflection questions and a process for group sharing and dialogue about staff members' own experiences and hopes related to equity and diversity.

Community Mapping and Reflection An interactive activity staff members can use to get a better picture of participants' day-to-day environments and the equity and diversity dynamics common in these young people's lives.

Who Are We Serving? Who Are We Not Serving? A guided worksheet for collecting and comparing demographic information about program participants, neighborhood populations, and program staff. This tool can help providers focus their programming priorities, identify neighborhood groups they may not be reaching, and assess the mix of program staff in relation to youth.

Listen to the Youth A set of activities and questions staff members can use to learn directly from youth about their experiences, communities, perspectives and needs.

New Eyes on Your Program An observation guide to help staff take a detailed look at the program environment — space, materials, and interactions — through an equity and diversity lens.

Program Assessment on Equity and Diversity A checklist and set of indicators designed to help staff members comprehensively assess the program's diversity and equity strengths, challenges and needs in the areas of: vision, staff, training, curriculum, environment, family and community connections, outreach, governance, organizational culture, and evaluation.

Taking Note: Can We Talk About This? A second, complementary assessment focusing on the strengths and challenges program staff have in openly discussing topics related to equity and diversity. This tool also offers some suggestions for enhancing a program's capacity to engage issues which may be unfamiliar or otherwise challenging.

Creating Your Action Plan A planning worksheet that draws together lessons learned from other tools in the Tool Kit and helps staff identify priority issues and action steps for personal and program development.

Acknowledgements

Tool Kit Team

Amy Scharf, *Program Director*
Jimena Quiroga, *After School Associate*
Nirmala Nataraj, *Program Assistant*
Laurie Olsen, *Executive Director*
Jhumpa Bhattacharya, *Production Director*

Designer

Guillermo Prado, 8 point 2 Design

Printer

Chimes Printing

Funding for the development of this tool kit was generously provided by the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and the East Bay Community Foundation. California Tomorrow also gratefully acknowledges the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation for supporting the national research and dissemination which gave rise to the creation of these tools. The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of any of these funders.

The Tool Kit team would also like to express our appreciation to: Elizabeth Friedler and Mona Shah for their helpful comments on previous drafts; Lisette López, Mona Shah, and Rubén Lizardo for invaluable contributions to earlier phases of California Tomorrow's after school, youth development and capacity building work; Reba Rose, Adeé Horn, and John Scott of the Community Network for Youth Development for the inspiration their partnership has provided in the design of the tool kit; and the many program directors and staff members who have tested and helped us refine earlier versions of these tools. We also wish to thank the following advisors to our Equity and Diversity in After School and Youth Programs Initiative: Leticia Alejandre, Joan Bissell, Michele Cahill, Linda Camino, An-Me Chung, Adriana de Kanter, Pat Edwards, Michele Fine, Luis Garden Acosta, Raul Gonzalez, Richard Gray, Jr., Heather Johnston Nicholson, David Kakishiba, Pilar O'Cadiz, Karen Pittman, Delia Pompa, Carter Savage, Carmen Vega-Rivera, Constanca Warren, Junious Williams, and Kristin Zimmerman.



Listen to the Youth

“Adults often try to say they know what is best for youth and what youth need—when in reality, they are only going off the feeling they have about what youth need.”

**17-year-old
Portola, CA**

Adults frequently feel they know and understand young people and their lives. However, a young person’s experiences can be complex, subtle, and/or difficult to articulate. This tool is designed to create an environment in which adults work to understand youth and apply their understandings to strengthening the program.

Young people have a great deal to teach us about their communities, their experiences, and their needs. Listening directly to youth can be very powerful as a means of educating and motivating staff to identify areas in which changes can be made to better serve youth, and to facilitate those changes directly. This is particularly critical when the communities that staff come from or grew up in are different from the communities of program participants. The gap in staff knowledge or understanding of young people’s lives can be dramatically bridged, simply by listening.

Choose one or more of the formats below to allow space for the young people in your program to speak about their lives. Once you have chosen your preferred formats, your only job is to listen to what the youth are telling you, even if you have a different perspective from theirs. We suggest you take notes on what the young people have to say, either during or after you talk with them. All staff should be encouraged to participate in one or more of the activities below. A facilitator who guides this process should set aside time so that participants can share with other staff what they learned from listening to the youth.

Focus Groups

This activity will involve a structured, facilitated conversation with a small group of youth around a few key questions. Be sure to include participants who are not customarily the most vocal in the program. When assembling the group, also be sure there is sufficient representation in terms of ethnic background, neighborhood, gender, etc. The following prompt questions can help structure your conversation; for younger children, it may help to simplify these questions or explain what you mean by terms like “diversity” or “support.” You may also add your own questions.

- ☞ Where do you live? What is your neighborhood like?
- ☞ Tell me about the diversity in your school or neighborhood. How do different people and groups get along?
- ☞ Where do you and/or your friends find support when you need it?
- ☞ What’s different between the way adults see the world and the way you and other youth do?

One on One

Staff members can also identify or create opportunities to talk in depth with individual youth about their experiences and perceptions of program and neighborhood diversity. This format is informal, but can be very powerful. The following prompt questions can help structure your conversation; again it may be helpful to simplify these questions for younger children. You may also add your own questions.

- ☞ What are some of the groups or communities you feel a part of? What do they mean to you?
- ☞ Where do you live? What’s your neighborhood like?
- ☞ Tell me about the diversity in your school or neighborhood. How do different people and groups get along?
- ☞ Where do you and/or your friends find support when you need it?
- ☞ What’s different between the way adults see the world and the way you and other youth do?

Youth-Led Community Walks

In this activity, you will have a young person lead you on a walk through his or her neighborhood. Alternately, this activity may include a small group of staff and a small group of young people. In getting a first-hand tour, you will learn about the different things your youth may encounter on a daily basis in their neighborhoods (e.g. preferred routes when walking to school, areas where they meet up with friends or classmates, or places they consider dangerous or safe). These experiences may be either negative or positive; it is important to get as complete a picture as possible rather than focusing on one or the other. The following prompt questions can help structure your tour; you may also add your own questions.

- ☞ Tell me about your neighborhood.
- ☞ What are the positive things you encounter on your daily walk? What are the challenges?
- ☞ Who are the different groups that live in this neighborhood? How do they get along?
- ☞ Where do you and/or your friends feel safe? Unsafe?
- ☞ What's different between the way adults see and know your community or neighborhood and the way you and other youth do?

Youth Community Maps

This activity can either be done on its own or in conjunction with the Youth-Led Community Walk. If you choose to do it in conjunction with the Youth-Led Community Walk, complete this activity after the walk. Youth will refer to their experiences during the walk while working on their community maps. You will need large construction paper and markers. Have one young person or a small group of young people in your program draw a picture of their neighborhood or community. The following prompt questions can help structure the community maps; you may also add your own questions.

- ☞ What types of buildings are around? What condition are they in?
- ☞ What stores or businesses do you see?
- ☞ What types of restaurants or places to eat do you see in your area?
- ☞ How do people get around in your neighborhood?
- ☞ What are the areas where you and your friends tend to spend a lot of time?
- ☞ Where do you feel most safe and supported? Are there places you feel unsafe or unwelcome?
- ☞ Are there parks or open areas for people to hang out?

- 🕒 What kinds of people do you see walking down the street? What kinds of conversations do you hear?
- 🕒 How do the different groups that live in the neighborhood get along?

Once the participants have completed their community maps, ask them to present to the rest of the group and say what they appreciate about their community or neighborhood, as well as anything they would like to change about their community or neighborhood. Thank everyone for participating in the activity and sharing.

After you've completed your conversations, interviews, walks, focus groups, and/or maps, be sure to write down both what you heard and your thoughts about what the youth discussed with you, to reflect on and share back with program staff at a later time.



Program Assessment on Equity and Diversity

After school and youth programs have tremendous power to build relationships and create environments that support young people in developing the healthy identities, skills, understandings, and leadership capacities they need in a diverse world.

In many ways the Program Assessment on Equity and Diversity Tool is the centerpiece of this tool kit. This tool is designed to assist program directors and staff members in assessing ten different aspects of their programs through an equity and diversity lens. It offers both a means of “taking stock” of current efforts and a set of benchmarks for the design and implementation of future work. The program assessment process is designed to complement many other activities in the Tool Kit. Some programs will find the assessment most helpful as a synthesizing tool, bringing together what they have learned through the program observations, youth engagement, story sharing, and demographic data collection they have done using other tools. Others may prefer to use it near the beginning of their work on equity and diversity, moving to other activities later, as they seek to go deeper in certain areas.

In either case, we encourage programs to use this tool as a basis for dialogue and to identify areas for further inquiry and development. We suggest that individuals begin by doing the assessment alone, then compare and discuss answers with colleagues.

Instructions:

1. Carve out some time and find a quiet place where you can sit by yourself.
2. Turn to the next page and read the section on Program Mission. Indicate your responses to the checklist of items appearing under the main heading. Then, using the bottom of the page or additional paper, jot down any reflections which come to mind and/or record other efforts your program is making to address the topic in question.
3. Turn to the Assessment Summary page at the back of the tool. Based upon your response to the checklist and any reflections you have added, decide which rating (Strength, Okay, Needs Attention, Urgent, Need More Information) is most appropriate for the topic you have just considered. Circle that rating and add any additional comments you feel would be useful.
4. Repeat this process with each assessment topic until you have completed all of them.
5. Look back over the complete set of ratings to identify your program's areas of greatest strength and greatest need.
6. After completing your own assessment, we encourage you to share, compare, and discuss your results with other program staff.

1. Mission

Our program has a conscious commitment to honoring diversity, promoting access and inclusion, and addressing equity challenges.

Circle your response:

Y=Yes, N=No, S=Sometimes, DK=Don't Know, NA=Not Applicable

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|----|----|
| Our program is explicitly committed to supporting the healthy social, cultural and cross-cultural, development of our participants. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our mission includes teaching values of respect and inclusion for all people. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our mission includes helping to address inequities and reduce gaps in opportunities and outcomes among different groups. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| We have a mission statement that includes goals relating to our equity and diversity values. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |

2. Staff

Staff serve all participants and families with respect for who they are and with a commitment to diversity and equity.

Circle your response:
Y=Yes, N=No, S=Sometimes, DK=Don't Know, NA=Not Applicable

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|----|----|
| Our program staff understand, value, and respect the various backgrounds and experiences of participants and their families. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our site staff and program leadership reflect the racial, ethnic, linguistic, gender, family, and community characteristics of our participants. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Staff members are knowledgeable about the different learning styles and special needs of our children and young people. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our staff is trained and supported in using instructional strategies appropriate to the populations in the program (e.g. bilingual and English as a Second Language; culturally-based, cooperative learning; Afrocentric teaching; working with different learning styles). | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our leadership and staff teams universally hold high and equitable expectations for all students in our program. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our leadership and site staff consciously work to build respect and trust in our program across boundaries of race, culture, gender, class, ability/disability, sexual orientation, and other areas of diversity. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Staff members challenge stereotypes and intervene when negative comments are made regarding different ethnic, sexual identity, gender, socioeconomic, or other groups. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Staff members' efforts on issues of diversity and equity are regularly assessed as part of their performance evaluations. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |

3. Training

Our program ensures that all staff members and program leaders have adequate training and capacity to affirm and model equity and diversity in programming, relationships, and outreach.

Circle your response:

Y=Yes, N=No, S=Sometimes, DK=Don't Know, NA=Not Applicable

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|----|----|
| Our program provides time, resources, and support for ongoing staff and leadership development to strengthen our work on issues related to diversity and equity. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our program encourages staff and leadership dialogue, training, and reflection about issues related to young people's culture, ethnicity, and racial experience. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our program encourages staff and leadership dialogue, training, and reflection about language diversity and the needs of English Language Learners. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our program encourages staff and leadership dialogue, training, and reflection about issues of gender development and gender equity. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our program encourages staff and leadership dialogue, training, and reflection about the needs and experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth and youth from LGBT families. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our program encourages staff and leadership dialogue, training, and reflection about working with disabled or special needs populations. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our program encourages staff and leadership dialogue, training, and reflection about issues of class and poverty. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our program encourages staff and leadership dialogue, training, and reflection about anti-bias curriculum and approaches. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our program encourages staff and leadership dialogue, training, and reflection about cross-cultural learning and conflict resolution. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |

4. Environment, Space & Materials

Our program’s environment, space, and materials are affirming and inclusive.

Circle your response:

Y=Yes, N=No, S=Sometimes, DK=Don’t Know, NA=Not Applicable

| | | | | | |
|---|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| The environment of our facility (e.g. decorations, wall hangings, art, posters) reflects our participants’ backgrounds and experiences. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our environment (e.g. decorations, wall hangings, art, posters) depicts positive multicultural images and reflects the diversity of our society (e.g. gender, age, family diversity, ethnicity, etc.) | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our environment (e.g. decorations, wall hangings, art, posters) offers messages of equity and inclusion and provides non-stereotypical images of gender, culture, class, nationality, race, sexual orientation, and ability/disability. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Program-related signs and announcements are translated into the languages of all participants and families. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Program materials (e.g. games, toys, books) are up-to-date, non-stereotypical, and reflect the backgrounds and experiences of participants and their families. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Program materials (e.g. games, toys, books) promote cross-cultural understanding and appreciation of difference. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our site is physically accessible to children, youth, and family members with disabilities. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |

5. Content & Curriculum

Our program’s content and curriculum support the development of positive identities, foster intergroup understanding, and help young people recognize and challenge social inequities.

Circle your response:

Y=Yes, N=No, S=Sometimes, DK=Don’t Know, NA=Not Applicable

| | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Our curriculum and activities incorporate elements of young people’s backgrounds (ethnic, racial, cultural, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and class), encouraging them to take pride in their whole selves and experiences. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Program activities and approaches help young people maintain connections to their families, heritages, home languages, and communities. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our curriculum includes activities that introduce young people to groups with backgrounds and experiences that are different from their own. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our program’s content and activities work to strengthen and develop cross-cultural relationships and skills. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| We help young people learn to recognize and challenge stereotypes, stereotypical images, bias, and discrimination. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our curriculum and interactions promote peaceful conflict resolution skills and address tensions that may arise out of participants’ differences. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our program provides opportunities for youth to contribute to their communities and to strengthen positive relationships between groups through service, leadership, and action. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our program’s academic support components draw on specific strategies for supporting learning among underachieving students – including the use of culturally relevant instruction, attention to both bilingual and English language development, attention to different learning styles and special needs, etc. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our content and curriculum are fully accessible to young people of all cultural, language, and economic backgrounds, and to youth with physical or learning disabilities. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |

6. Family & Community Resources

Our program works with parents/guardians, community members, and community organizations to strengthen and enrich our work.

Circle your response:

Y=Yes, N=No, S=Sometimes, DK=Don't Know, NA=Not Applicable

| | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Our program communicates with parents and guardians in ways that deepen our understanding of participants' varying backgrounds and their respective needs. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| We intentionally and consistently engage diverse parents and community members as vital resources in creating program components and activities. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| The program's decision-making involves families and community members in inclusive and culturally respectful ways. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| The program draws upon the resources of other community organizations with expertise on particular diversity and equity issues. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| We provide support for parents and guardians to encourage their full involvement in the program (e.g. translation, financial accessibility). | Y | N | S | DK | NA |

7. Organizational Culture

The internal culture of our organization supports the equity and diversity values we seek to promote in our work with young people and the community.

Circle your response:

Y=Yes, N=No, S=Sometimes, DK=Don't Know, NA=Not Applicable

| | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Our program and organizational leaders are connected with the community and youth we serve, and are in touch with day-to-day program activities. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Staff members' experience, ideas, and decisions are valued and incorporated within the organization. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Adults in the program work well together and model positive intergroup relationships for participants (e.g. reach across differences, avoid staff "cliques," etc.). | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Direct service staff and organizational leaders are equally diverse, and both groups are representative of community demographics. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| We can comfortably raise and discuss issues related to equity and diversity in our program. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Responsibility for identifying and addressing equity and diversity concerns is shared by staff of all demographic backgrounds and at all levels of the organization. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |

8. Outreach

Our program’s outreach and communication with families and the public is accessible and inclusive.

Circle your response:

Y=Yes, N=No, S=Sometimes, DK=Don’t Know, NA=Not Applicable

| | | | | | |
|---|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Our program’s outreach and communication with families and the public is accessible, culturally and linguistically appropriate, and inclusive (e.g. sensitive to different styles of interaction, conducted in people’s primary languages, respectful of all groups). | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our program is financially accessible to all members of the community. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our program’s outreach efforts extend to all groups in the community, including those which we may not currently be serving. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our outreach and registration materials are provided in the home languages of program participants and other families in the community. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Communication with the families we serve (e.g. conversations, newsletters, progress reports) is culturally appropriate, and if needed, provided in parents’ or guardians’ home languages. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our outreach materials, registration forms and communication are inclusive, reflective, and affirming of all types of families (e.g. LGBT, single parent, two-parent, multiple parent/step-parent, and other guardians). | Y | N | S | DK | NA |

9. Governance

Our governance structure seeks to ensure that we are responsive to the needs of the young people and the values of the communities we serve.

Circle your response:

Y=Yes, N=No, S=Sometimes, DK=Don't Know, NA=Not Applicable

| | | | | | |
|---|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Our advisory committee and board of directors include youth, parents, and community members, and are representative of the different backgrounds of our youth and families. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our advisory committee and board meetings are physically, economically, culturally, and linguistically accessible to all potential participants. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our program involves children and youth in program planning and in the design of curriculum and activities in age-appropriate ways. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |

10. Evaluation

Our evaluation process assists with strengthening the program’s ability to serve young people of all backgrounds and experiences.

Circle your response:
Y=Yes, N=No, S=Sometimes, DK=Don’t Know, NA=Not Applicable

| | | | | | |
|---|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| We evaluate our program based on a clear set of goals that take into account our diversity and equity values. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| We use our attendance data to assess how effective our program is in attracting and engaging young people from the different cultures, economic backgrounds, communities, and experiences reflected in our broader school or neighborhood population. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| To assess how well different children and youth are served, our program collects outcome data that is broken down by race, culture, language, socioeconomic status, gender, and special needs status. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| Our evaluation team, tools, and methods are appropriate to the populations in the program (i.e. they reflect the population served; they take into account cultural variations in behavior and learning styles; they are linguistically accessible to different language groups; they use categories inclusive of LGBT families, etc.). | Y | N | S | DK | NA |
| In an effort to better respond to young people’s specific needs and backgrounds, we actively involve participants and their families in our evaluation process. Participants are involved in age-appropriate ways. | Y | N | S | DK | NA |

Assessment Summary

Please review the information on each of the previous pages and, for each topic, circle the rating which you feel best fits your program. The ratings and any additional comments can be used to inform staff development conversations and/or programming changes.

Comments:

| | | | | | |
|--|----------|------|-----------------|--------|----------------|
| 1. Mission | Strength | Okay | Needs Attention | Urgent | Need More Info |
| 2. Staff | Strength | Okay | Needs Attention | Urgent | Need More Info |
| 3. Training | Strength | Okay | Needs Attention | Urgent | Need More Info |
| 4. Environment, Space & Materials | Strength | Okay | Needs Attention | Urgent | Need More Info |

Comments:

5. Content & Curriculum Strength Okay Needs Attention Urgent Need More Info

6. Family/Community Resources Strength Okay Needs Attention Urgent Need More Info

7. Organizational Culture Strength Okay Needs Attention Urgent Need More Info

Comments:

8. Outreach Strength Okay Needs Attention Urgent Need More Info

9. Governance Strength Okay Needs Attention Urgent Need More Info

10. Evaluation Strength Okay Needs Attention Urgent Need More Info



Starting the Process: Pathways to Opening Dialogue

It is an exciting process to enhance your program’s work on issues of equity and diversity. One important starting point is building a climate of safety so that everyone can constructively talk about these issues. This tool will help your staff begin to explore concepts and definitions of equity and diversity in a safe and easy way. Some of the activities draw out people’s personal experiences; others help groups look at the topics more analytically.

Because any work with equity and diversity that your program undertakes will inevitably draw on people’s varied passions and feelings, as well as their ideas, it is important that you build an openness to dialogue among all participants, and reach some agreements on guidelines for respectful and constructive conversation. Along with these warm-up activities, we have included a sample set of ground rules to help you create a safe space for dialogue. We encourage you to use or modify these ground rules to suit the needs of your organization.

Facilitation will be required to conduct the following activities.

Choose one or more of the following activities to help open your staff dialogue on equity and diversity issues.

Completing the Thought

This activity will help people tap into their own experiences around equity and diversity, and to learn a little about the experiences and thoughts of those they work with. It is also a good energizer, as it involves moving around and talking to several different people.

Participants should get into pairs. Each pair receives the first “thought,” and both members of the pair complete it, sharing their answers with each other. This should take three to four minutes. When all pairs have completed the first “thought,” everyone rotates to a different partner and the facilitator begins the next “thought” for the pair to complete. This process repeats for as many “thoughts” as the group wishes to complete and discuss.

Below are some suggested “thoughts” for people to complete. Your staff may choose to use some or all of these and/or create your own:

- ☞ My people are...
- ☞ My community is...
- ☞ One strength I get from my family or culture is...
- ☞ Growing up, I learned that in order to be a “good man”/“good woman,” I was supposed to...
- ☞ One time I really felt like a “fish out of water” was when...
- ☞ Something that made me feel valued for who I am was...

An alternate format for this activity is to introduce a “thought” to your entire group, and have everyone go around and share responses together. This will take longer than completing sentences in pairs, so depending on how many people are involved, you may wish to do only one or two rounds in a given session.

After people have shared their answers, you may want to have an informal discussion about the similarities and differences in participants’ experiences, or about a particular theme that came up. If you plan to debrief, we suggest allowing 10-15 minutes for discussion.

Equity and Diversity Webs

The concepts of equity and diversity are complex and hold a variety of meanings and feelings for different people. In order to integrate equity and diversity goals into your program's work, it is helpful to have a clear and shared sense of what these concepts mean and how they apply to the children, youth, and communities you serve. Creating webs offers a way to collectively surface the many aspects of equity and diversity, and to begin developing a common understanding and shared vision of these concepts.

The facilitator for this activity begins by writing the word "equity" or "diversity" in the center of a piece of chart paper or on a board in the front of the room. Then s/he can draw lines out from that word, like spokes on a wheel, and write on each spoke whatever associations people have with the term (e.g. "respect for all"), or particular components that give it meaning (e.g. "affirmative action"). This is a brainstorming activity; all associations are valid, and the group can create as many spokes as there are ideas.

It is often fruitful to keep brainstorming beyond the first "lull" after an initial burst of ideas; the additional insights that arise when people look beyond what they already know can sometimes add a great deal to their understanding. The web brainstorming process can be used twice to explore the concepts of both "equity" and "diversity." You may also want to create webs for other related concepts.

The following prompts can help keep conversation moving:

- ☞ What images or pictures come to mind when you think about equity or diversity?
- ☞ Are there any other meanings to the word?
- ☞ What are some terms that mean the same or similar things?
- ☞ What data would you look at to tell you about equity or diversity?
- ☞ What's going on in the surrounding community around equity or diversity?

After the group has generated a fairly detailed web for each concept, everyone should take a moment to look back on it. Discussion of the web may center on one or more of the following questions:

- ☞ What are some common themes in people's definitions?
- ☞ What are some points of difference?
- ☞ Is there anything that surprised you in what other people added to the web?
- ☞ What do you feel are the most relevant aspects of the concept you are describing to the communities you work with?

Four Corners

Like the Equity and Diversity Webs, the Four Corners activity provides a way to explore various aspects of equity and diversity. Compared to the webs, it provides less of a systematic overview of the concepts, but gives participants a chance to talk more deeply about a few of the concepts' different dimensions. It also provides the opportunity for people to see and discuss their different perspectives and the experiences that have given rise to those perspectives. In conducting the Four Corners activity, attention should be given to creating a safe space and to clearly communicating that there is no "right" or "wrong" definition or opinion.

Before the session, each of the four quotes on the next page should be copied onto a separate sheet of chart or poster paper, and should be hung in a different "corner" of the room. Writing should be big enough to see from across the room.

After reviewing the purpose of this activity, the facilitator should explain that the four quotes posted around the room speak to issues of equity and/or diversity in different ways. Then s/he should ask participants to stand near the quote that they most relate to or which they feel most represents the equity and diversity work they want to be doing.

At this point, be sure to note that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers and that the goal of this activity is to help people better understand their own perspectives, other people's perspectives, and the overall issues. When everyone has selected a quote, each group should discuss amongst themselves why they chose the quote they did and what it means to them.

After several minutes of discussion, the facilitator should ask each team to report what they came up with. For further debriefing of this exercise, the following questions can be used:

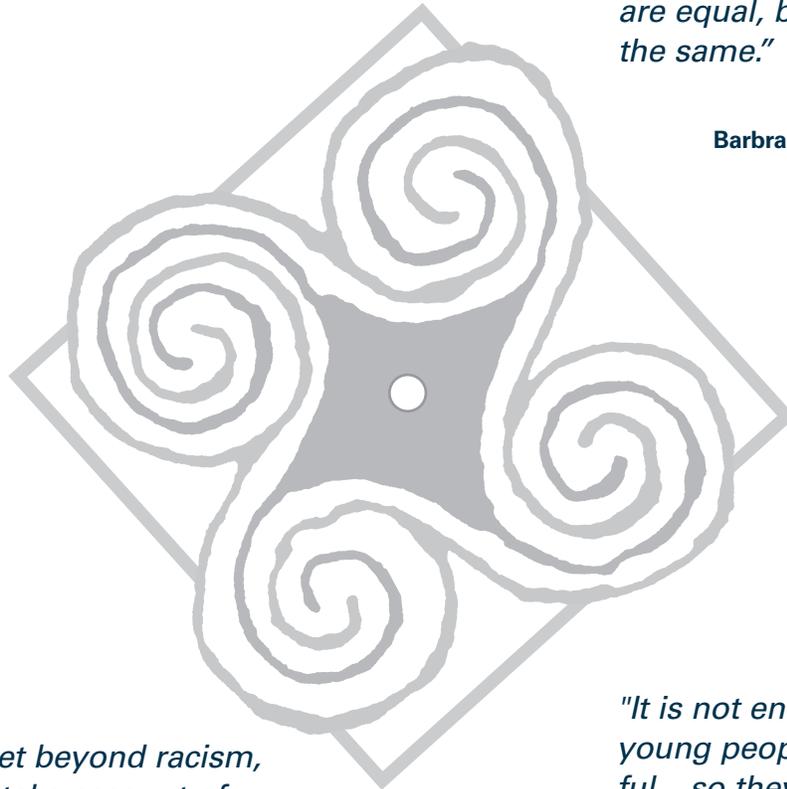
- ☞ How did the quote express your values around equity and diversity?
- ☞ How do you see the different quotes fitting together or diverging in terms of what they express about equity and diversity?
- ☞ What did this exercise reveal to you about the work you want to do around equity and diversity?

"Our young must be taught that ...beneath the skin, beyond the differing features and into the true heart of being, fundamentally, we are more alike, my friend, than we are unlike."

Maya Angelou

"Just imagine how boring life would be if we were all the same. My idea of a perfect world is one in which we really appreciated each other's differences: short, tall; Democrat, Republican; Black, White; gay, straight – a world in which all of us are equal, but definitely not the same."

Barbra Streisand



"In order to get beyond racism, we must first take account of race. There is no other way. And in order to treat some persons equally, we must treat them differently."

Harry A. Blackmun

"It is not enough to teach our young people to be successful... so they can realize their ambitions, so they can earn good livings, so they can accumulate the material things that this society bestows. Those are worthwhile goals. But it is not enough to progress as individuals while our friends and neighbors are left behind."

César Chavez

Sample Set of Ground Rules*:

The process of developing ground rules for dialogue and other group processes should be iterative, including the buy-in of all participants. As a starting point for this process, the facilitator may consider proposing all or some of the following ground rules used by groups in the past. We suggest applying the guidelines below to discussions and activities throughout this Tool Kit:

Speak From Your Own Experience. Sometimes this is phrased as speaking in an "I" voice. It is intended to convey the idea that while we can speak from and about our own experiences, we should be careful not to speak for others or assume our experiences represent all those who share our respective backgrounds.

Be Aware of How You Are Using Air Space; or Create Space for Everyone to Share. This guideline encourages everybody to practice making space for others to share their ideas and concerns, and it gives your facilitator the group's permission to intervene and ensure that everyone has a chance to speak.

Expect and Be Willing to Explore Differences of Experience and Opinion. Often we do not share the same perspectives or experiences with regard to different topics and issues. This guideline encourages the group to view the surfacing of differences as a normal, positive, and ongoing part of the process of working together. It is not necessary that everything raised or discussed in any one conversation must be resolved through that conversation.

Make a Commitment to One Another's Development and Learning. Be open to taking time at a later date to constructively follow up, on a more personal note, on any issue or concern that surfaces discomfort and/or interest for you or a colleague. As in the previous ground rule, the idea here is not to try to convince each other of the "rightness" of either of your positions, but instead to work toward mutual understanding of your respective positions. The respect and consideration you extend to each other in such situations may assist you both in moving forward.

Respect Confidentiality. Given that dialogue in diverse organizations may surface issues and concerns that are emotionally charged in some way, it is important that the group agree to ensure participants feel safe sharing their honest feelings and opinions. This means keeping sensitive issues within the context of a roads and development process. Participants, particularly those in positions of authority, must be willing to uphold the principle that dialogue on equity and diversity should facilitate group learning, and should not be a vehicle to gain leverage or advantage over a subordinate or colleague.

*Starting with a set of proposed ground rules is advised; but always expect to engage the group in modifying, clarifying, and adding to your list.