



RESOURCES

TITLE | LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR DISCUSSING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION AMONG GARDEN EDUCATORS

CATEGORY | Garden Educator Training

SUB-CATEGORY | Leadership for Community Engagement & Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

OVERVIEW | This document outlines Education Outside’s introductory approach to discussing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) among our cohort of garden educators. This document highlights our most successful and easy-to-facilitate trainings on this topic. The focus of these activities and exercises is to set the stage for more effective DEI conversations over the year.

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Training Rationale:

These were successful DEI training activities that Education Outside conducted during bootcamp and in the first two months of the year. These activities are easy to facilitate in-house and they lay a solid foundation for inclusivity and rapport as well as creating a common DEI language among garden educators.

Suggested Time of Year:

Before the school year begins, during “bootcamp.” It’s extremely important to show your educators that diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is a priority for your organization at the beginning of the year.

Suggested Workshop Length/Staffing:

4 hours

Training Objective:

People experience the world through different lenses and it’s important to recognize that some staff may not have much experience discussing or unpacking these topics. Your first DEI session should aim to:

1. inform staff of what your organizational priorities and expectations are around DEI.
2. offer a chance for everyone to get to know each other and begin to celebrate and acknowledge the range of lived experience and familiarity with DEI topics.
3. develop a group-wide language and foundation of inclusivity.

Training Overview:

In order to achieve the above objectives, Education Outside held space for discussing how our organization expressed its culture and building community and common language around DEI.



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Activity Ideas:

- **Group Norms:** Setting group norms is an essential first step for DEI conversations and activities. Group norms allow everyone to participate fully and keep the conversation as inclusive as possible for all participants.
 - Share the importance of group norms and then ask the group to propose norms that feel important to them. It's often helpful to share some examples:
 - Try it on
 - Experience Discomfort
 - Breathe & Take Care
 - Confidentiality
 - One Mic
 - Take space, make space/ step up, step back
 - Ask clarifying questions if unsure
 - Practice "both/and" thinking
 - Use "I" statements, speak only your truth
 - Assume positive intent/stay accountable to impact
 - Expect and accept non-closure
- **6-Word Story:** This activity is inspired by Ernest Hemingway's famous six-word story: "For sale: baby shoes, never worn." Encourage garden educators to write a six-word story about themselves. Some potential prompts could be:
 - What's your story?
 - Why are equity and inclusion important to you?
 - How have your ancestors shaped who you are?
 - What brought you here?
- **Name Story:** Another powerful activity is the simple sharing of the history of one's name. These stories generally take about 1-2 minutes each.
- **Share and learn pronouns:** It's important to, ensure at the start of the year that staff members and educators aren't misgendered. Have a conversation about how you will approach gender inclusivity. Here is a sample activity:
 - Have your whole group stand in a circle and do the following:
 - Each individual will say "Y'all know <name>".
 - The group responds by saying "We know <name>".
 - The individual responds with "<their pronoun> likes to _____". When the individual says what they like to do, it's accompanied by a physical motion that exemplifies it, like stirring an imaginary pot for someone who likes to cook, or throwing an imaginary ball for someone who likes to play sports.
 - The group repeats back their response and says "<their pronoun> likes to _____"
 - Continue to go around the circle until everyone shares their name, pronoun, and something they like to do.
- **Discuss your organizational DEI practices and goals:** It is important for your educators to understand how your organization engages with this topic. We recommend preparing a presentation that outlines or prompts the following:
 - How does DEI show up in your organization's mission, vision, and values?
 - How does your organization prioritize and measure success in this work?

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- What expectations for DEI exist institutionally in your organization?
 - Specifically, what protocol do you follow when staff doesn't adhere to organizational values around DEI?

See Education Outside's Organizational Approach to DEI, linked in the Table of Contents, for more information on this topic.

- **Develop a common language around DEI:** We recommend creating a list of DEI vocabulary that is important for all of your educators to understand. Our list included the definitions below, retrieved from the various resources in the reference section. To make this an interactive activity, have participants mingle together while music plays. When the music stops, ask participants to find a partner near them. Display one of the words and ask the partners to discuss what they think the word means, or what comes to mind when they see the word. After this partner discussion, display the definition as well as a real-world example of how the topic shows up in society. Allow time for a full-group discussion or reactions.

- **Diversity:** Diversity has come to refer to the various backgrounds and races that comprise a community, nation or other groupings. In many cases, the term diversity does not just acknowledge the existence of a diversity of backgrounds, races, genders, religions, sexual orientations and so on, but implies an appreciation of these differences.
- **Equality vs. Equity:** Equity and equality are two strategies that are used in efforts to produce fairness. Equity is giving everyone what they need to be successful. Equality is treating everyone the same.
- **Inclusion:** The act of creating involvement, environments, and empowerment in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued in order to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate with equal access to opportunities and resources embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people.
- **Cultural Responsiveness:** Promotes an understanding of culture, ethnicity, and language. The difference between responsiveness and competence is that "responsiveness," does not imply that one can be perfect and have attained all the skills and views needed to work with culturally diverse clients. It assumes one just has the openness to adapt to the cultural needs of those with whom they work.
- **Power:** Ability to control, coerce or influence people based on privilege identities. Power may be positional and provide access to social, political, and economic resources.
- **Privilege:** Any unearned benefit, right, or advantage one receives in society by nature of their identities.
- **Oppression:** The combination of prejudice and institutional power which creates a system that discriminates against some groups (often called "target groups") and benefits other groups (often called "dominant groups"). Examples of these systems are racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, classism, ageism, and anti-Semitism. These systems enable dominant groups to exert control over target groups by limiting their rights, freedom, and access to basic resources such as health care, education, employment, and housing.
- **Intersectionality:** The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

- **Give an introduction on how to create an inclusive outdoor classroom:** Review what your garden educators should prioritize in creating an inclusive classroom in *Building Culturally Responsive and Inclusive Outdoor Classrooms*

Assessing Understanding:

- Exit Ticket: What's the most impactful thing you learned today? Please share one thing you are excited for and one thing you are anxious about related to diversity, equity, and inclusion this year.

References:

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4. Queensborough Community College. (n.d.). Retrieved June 5, 2019, from <http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/diversity/definition.html>
5. Sun, A. (2014, September 25). Equality Is Not Enough: What the Classroom Has Taught Me About Justice. Retrieved June 5, 2019, from <https://everydayfeminism.com/2014/09/equality-is-not-enough/>