

# BELONGING CULTURE GLOSSARY

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## SESSION B1: VALUES, IDENTITIES, AND COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

**Community Agreements:** Co-created as a shared or mutual understanding for how individuals in a group setting agree to interact with one another. Community agreements can be based on being supportive and inclusive of all community members, and are also a useful tool for setting expectations when challenges and conflicts may arise between participants.

*Example in Practice:*

- Sample - Community Agreements
  - Safety: We will center our service in the safety and well-being of participants and families who make up the communities that we serve.
  - Equity: Our service will prioritize the needs of those who have experienced marginalization as a result of institutional policies and practices (structural harm).
  - Participation: Everyone in attendance has a voice, should be heard, and will contribute to the collective learning.
  - Engagement: We will create space for participants to share their voices and ideas. There will not always be universal agreement among participants. Be prepared to lean into your own discomfort as we learn together, and if you disagree with a person you are encouraged to constructively critique what they are saying, but do not attack the person.
- Sample Process - Establishing Community Agreements:
  - What do you need to feel safe in this space?
  - What do you need to feel seen in this space?
  - What do you need to learn in this space?
  - What do you need to have fun in this space?

# GLOSSARY

**Identity:** The qualities, characteristics, beliefs, conditions, etc. that form the basis for how a particular group of individuals views themselves and how they are viewed by others.

*Example in Practice:*

- The identities you define yourself in across the following domains: race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, religious or spiritual identity, socioeconomic status, nationality.
- Individual traits and characteristics are another example of identity (i.e. being loyal, being kind).

**Intersectionality:** The complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect, especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups.

*Example in Practice:*

- Individuals have individual identities that intersect in ways that impact how they are viewed, understood, and treated. For example, black women are both black and women, but because they are black women, they endure specific forms of discrimination that black men, or white women, might not.

**Moral Compass:** An internalized set of 3-5 core values that reside deep within us and guide our decision-making.

*Example in Practice:*

- Your core values are honesty, empathy, and respect. You are presented with a choice in your work that may require you to be dishonest, and because of your core value around honesty, you choose to not engage with that option.

**Values:** The basic fundamental beliefs that guide our attitudes and actions. They help us determine what is important to us as we grow and develop.

*Example in Practice:*

- Being open-minded: As someone who values being open-minded, you are a critical thinker who can embrace hearing about new ideas, concepts, information, and ways of being even if they do not align with how you may personally view the topic. You also value these same characteristics of being open to new perspectives in other people as well.

## SESSION B2: CREATING SAFE SPACE - THE BRAIN SCIENCE OF BELONGING

**Affirmation:** The practice of intentionally noticing and admiring the uniqueness of culturally and linguistically diverse individuals. It includes viewing positively those elements that the dominant culture tries to portray as unattractive or undesirable – such as their hair, skin color, verbal agility, or energetic style.

*Example in Practice:*

- Consistent acknowledgment of those around you and the value they bring into your space is a starting point for affirmation. One strategy for affirming others in this way is getting into the regular practice of sending notes or emails with words of encouragement and affirmation, or if in-person, sharing your affirmation with that person directly as well. In large group meetings, building time for the group to affirm one another is an additional practice that fosters affirmation and opens the space for gratitude.

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- On a structural level, we are affirmed in spaces that we can access as our full selves and in environments that affirm our identities. For example, a transgender person being forced to use a bathroom that is not aligned to their own identity may not feel affirmed as their authentic self in that particular environment.

**Amygdala Hijack:** The process when the amygdala is in an active state of stress, fear, or anxiety. It signals the body to release the stress hormone, cortisol. The cortisol blocks rational thinking and temporarily reduces the capacity of the working memory making learning difficult.

*Example in practice:*

- Some of us may have experienced moments that we attributed to someone being good or bad, or being a good friend or a bad friend, not realizing we were witnessing someone experiencing an amygdala hijack where they were incapable of cognitive functions, such as learning, problem solving, or creative thinking. Our cognitive thinking is totally cut off because of an amygdala hijack, and we respond entirely to the context and the content of that situation.

**Cortisol:** Cortisol is the primary stress hormone. Chronic exposure to cortisol because of stress reduces working memory and suppresses the body's immune system.

*Example in practice:*

- A manager who is constantly yelling at corps members, or a program site that is consistently verbally negative or emotionally demanding can create an atmosphere of stress and anxiety, thus raising the cortisol levels of corps members. Prolonged experiences of elevated cortisol can result, which leaves people in a state of distress and even exhaustion.

**Dopamine:** A chemical in the brain associated with attention and reward stimulated learning. Our brains release dopamine when we are playing, laughing, exercising, and receiving an acknowledgment (e.g. praise) for achievement.

*Example in practice:*

- Since dopamine is tied to motivation, it is helpful to think about what type of rewards motivate you and then tie those rewards to your goals. Corps members accomplishing their goals – no matter how big or small the goals – and being rewarded and recognized for achieving those goals will trigger the release of dopamine.

**Fixed Mindset:** Fixed mindset individuals believe their basic abilities, their intelligence, and their talents are just fixed traits. For high achievers, their goal is to be perceived as smart and/or competent at all times. For low achievers, their goal is to avoid challenging work so as not to confirm their own limiting beliefs of self.

*Example in practice:*

- When presented with performing a new or difficult task, a person with a fixed mindset will try to avoid the challenge of performing that task because they believe that they will fail at the task. By not attempting to perform the task in the first place, a person with a fixed mindset believes that they are not "failing." Because fixed mindset people tend to be concerned about outcomes and not embarrassing themselves, they are less likely to engage in something that has a risk of failure and thus are unable to learn from said failure.

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**Growth Mindset:** In a growth mindset, individuals understand that their talents and abilities can be developed through effort, active learning and engagement, and persistence.

*Example in practice:*

- When presented with performing a new or difficult task, a person with a growth mindset will embrace the opportunity to grow and expand through performing this task, even if there is a risk of failure. If they do fail at the task, the person with a growth mindset is less likely to feel negative or embarrassed over failing to complete the task, and instead will look to use their failure as an opportunity to learn from a mistake and improve next time.

**Limbic Region:** The limbic region is the second brain layer. Also called the mammalian brain. It is involved in regulation of emotion, memory, and processing complex socioemotional communication.

*Example in practice:*

- Have you ever noticed that sometimes when you are recounting a story about a long, difficult day, you start feeling the emotions that you felt on that day, even when the day may have been weeks or months earlier? That's because emotions are packaged with your memory. Those memories and emotions are packaged together in the limbic region of your brain.

**Oxytocin:** A neurotransmitter that stimulates our sense of connection with others. It is often called the bonding hormone.

*Example in practice:*

- A single minute of positive social interaction is enough to trigger a short burst of oxytocin. Similarly, free expression of emotions like laughing together at a common joke, smiling in the form of a greeting, and sharing stories supplement your oxytocin levels. When a fellow corps member or manager is speaking with you, listen deeply. Both parties experience an increase in oxytocin and you benefit from greater trust and productivity at your program site.

**Safety-Threat Detection System:** Helps the brain in carrying out its prime directive: minimize threats and maximize well-being.

*Example in practice:*

- Building and maintaining positive relationships keeps the safety-threat detection system in check. Simple things such as greeting people and asking them about things they enjoy and/or are looking forward to, finding informal opportunities to connect, or sharing positive news about someone with other people that person knows (i.e. a family member, friend) can all support in building relationships and keeping that safety-threat detection system in check.

**Validation:** Refers to the explicit recognition and acknowledgment of historical institutional racism, negative stereotyping, and generalizations that impact culturally and linguistically diverse individuals.

*Example in practice:*

- To validate someone is to give understanding and communicate acceptance of their feelings, ideas, and individuality. Communicating one's positive regard for another is the basis of respect. We show respect through validation and empathy by asking about ideas and feelings. Respecting someone means asking them how they would feel before making a decision which affects them.

## SESSION B3: THE PRACTICE OF CENTERING VOICE

**Centering Voice:** Uplifting, trusting, and valuing the lived experiences of the people most impacted by the issues and inequities you want to address. This includes working towards approaches where those who are most impacted are a part of leading, identifying solutions, setting priorities, creating policy agendas, and shifting narratives.

*Example in practice:*

- Sustaining efforts to center voice requires individual, organizational, and collective reflection on how inequities came to be and are maintained. Shared actions then need to be identified and implemented to disrupt the reproduction of inequities and their impacts.

**Solidarity:** Unity or agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals with a common interest; mutual support within a group.

*Example in practice:*

- Joining a mutual aid collective in your community/city/town is one example of performing an act of solidarity.

## SESSION B4: BECOMING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE

**Authentic Self:** A person's qualities, including their skills, abilities, interests, talents, limits, insights, experiences, memories, beliefs, purpose, and wisdom. It is the expression of our core values through how we act.

*Example in practice:*

- Being able to engage in healthy and assertive communication with fellow corps members and program staff and expressing your opinions or feelings, even when it feels vulnerable to do so, allows you to be your authentic self. A program site environment that promotes collaboration, open dialogues, and the exchange of ideas while respecting our individual diversity will foster an environment that supports being your authentic self.

**Bias:** Having strong favor for or against an individual, group, idea, or thing without having sufficient prior knowledge.

*Example in practice:*

- In the interview process, the person leading interviews may gravitate towards people who are similar to them in racial identity, gender, religion, or a number of other factors. This bias can lead to a less diverse service year site if it is influencing the selection of candidates. Ensuring diversity in the staff at a program site can mitigate the impact of this bias.
- In day to day interactions, bias may manifest when a person judges another person based on how attractive they perceive that person to be. This can create the problem of ignoring people for what they're actually capable of doing. It is important to focus on the tasks themselves, and not what the person doing the tasks looks like.

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**Cultural Competence:** The process of using familiar cultural information and processes to scaffold learning and engagement. Cultural competence emphasizes communal orientation and focuses on relationships, cognitive scaffolding, and critical social awareness.

*Example in practice:*

- Being open and willing to learn about other cultures – the goal isn't to become an expert in those cultures, however it is important to be willing to share about your own culture and learn about the culture of those you're in community with. Cultural competence means being aware of one's own cultural identity and having the ability to learn and build on the varying cultural and community norms of others.

**Implicit Bias:** Refers to the unconscious attitudes and stereotypes that shape our responses to certain groups especially around race, class, and language. Implicit bias operates involuntarily, often without one's awareness or intentional control. Implicit bias is not implicit racism.

*Example in practice:*

- When a person forms an opinion or judgment about someone else based solely on their name. The name may give implicit hints about the race or gender of the person. This can affect the person in a number of ways since it may introduce other biases as well.

**Microaggressions:** Small, subtle verbal insults or nonverbal actions directed at people of color and other historically marginalized groups that intentionally or unintentionally communicate mistrust or hostility.

*Example in practice:*

- Verbal: A verbal microaggression is a comment or question that is hurtful or stigmatizing to a certain marginalized group of people. For example, saying, "You're so smart for a woman" would be a verbal microaggression.
- Behavioral: A behavioral microaggression occurs when someone behaves in a way that is hurtful or discriminatory to a certain group of people. An example of a behavioral microaggression would be a restaurant host ignoring a transgender person and instead serving a cisgender person (someone whose biological sex matches their gender identity) first.
- Environmental: An environmental microaggression is when a subtle discrimination occurs within society. One example of an environmental microaggression would be a college campus that only has buildings named after white people and slaveowners

**Privilege:** A right, immunity, or benefit enjoyed by a particular person or a restricted group of people beyond the advantages of most.

*Example in practice:*

- Having white skin is a global privilege due to colonialism, but it is especially privileged in the United States. America was founded around systemic racism, and everything from policy to pop culture reinforces white privilege. Longtime anti-racism activist Peggy McIntosh once described this privilege as "an invisible package of unearned assets."

## SESSION B5: ANTI-RACIST RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

**Centering Voice: Anti-Racist Restorative Practice:** A healing-centered, liberatory framework used by practitioners, communities, and organizations to address inequities and structural harm, affirm the dignity and cultural wealth of communities, and to develop policies, practices, and institutions that affirm the fullness of our humanity and build toward our collective well-being.

*Example in practice:*

- Acknowledging: Acknowledging the racist and oppressive systems, practices, and policies, inherently and foundationally at work in our systems and institutions that dehumanize and support a human hierarchy of value. This involves developing an awareness and understanding of the historical and current context and constructs.
- Centering: Centering the voices and lived experience of those who have been most impacted and targeted by these systems and constructs.
- Turning: Turning toward those who have been most impacted and targeted by these systems and constructs to receive instruction on what needs to be done.
- Seeking: Seeking out those oppressive systems, practices, and policies and working in solidarity with those most impacted and targeted to abolish those systems, practices, and policies; radically re-imagine new systems, practices, and policies; and establish anew.

**Carceral Logic:** Refers to the variety of ways our bodies, minds, and actions have been shaped by the ideas and practices of imprisonment – even for people who do not see themselves connected explicitly to prisons.

*Example in practice:*

- People seeking food stamps are subjected to mandatory and/or random drug testing; Post-secondary education applications are asked about criminal records; Many states bar those with felony convictions from voting.

**Collective Well-Being:** The concept that individual well-being is bound up in the well-being of others. Individuals cannot support and promote well-being for others if they do not attend to their own well-being, the well-being of their families and communities, and the well-being of the spaces and organizations they are a part of.

*Example in practice:*

- Exude strong morals and values: high self-standards and act with integrity
- Share the workload: be collaborative; offer help when possible and distribute teamwork equitably
- Help others succeed: take pleasure at people's successes, avoid being competitive
- Take a clear stand on issues that matter, with tact and confidence
- Promote inclusivity: appreciate and acknowledge the value of a diverse site
- Promote simple healthy activities such as taking brief frequent breaks during the day
- Prioritize your own self-care, set boundaries, and maintain healthy habits – feeling well leads to doing well, which includes relationships and communication



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**Equity:** Meeting communities where they are and allocating resources and opportunities as needed to create equal outcomes for all community members.

*Example in practice:*

- Championing the individual cultures, identities, talents, abilities, languages, and interests of each individual by ensuring they receive the necessary opportunities and resources to meet their unique needs and aspirations. In an equitable system, everyone has access to the resources, opportunities, and rigor they need, irrespective of their race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, learning path, accessibility needs, family background, family income, citizenship, or tribal status.

**Healing Centered-Engagement:** Strength-based strategy that advances a collective view of healing, and re-centers culture – a central feature in well-being.

*Example in practice:*

- A healing-centered approach requires a different question that moves beyond “what happened to you” to “what’s right with you” and views those exposed to trauma as agents in the creation of their own well-being rather than defined as victims of traumatic events.

**Indigenous Practice:** Refers to the understandings, skills, and philosophies developed by societies with long histories of interaction with their natural surroundings. For rural and indigenous peoples, local knowledge informs decision-making about fundamental aspects of day-to-day life.

*Example in practice:*

- Indigenous communities on the Pacific Coast celebrate through potlatch ceremonies. In Kwakwaka'wakw, one of the coastal languages, potlatch means “to give.” While Western societies associate wealth and power with how many possessions and how much money someone has, the West Coast Nations recognize a wealthy, high-status person by how much they have been able to give away in their life. Gifts that hold special significance include copper and songs. Potlatches are held to celebrate or to rekindle relationships with non-human relations, to give thanks, to mourn the passing of a loved one, or as part of rites of passage, like marriage or naming ceremonies. The guests of a potlatch receive many gifts; in the past, useful household items, blankets, or food were often distributed. Potlatches were historically hosted in a “big house,” a large building in a coastal village.

**Justice:** Refers to a process of engaging with people and communities in ways that can be characterized as equitable and centered in dignity. Seeking to make whole what has been harmed.

*Example in practice:*

- The civil rights movement is one of the most well-known historical examples of justice in the U.S. The movement advocated for racial equality and to advance the interests of African Americans. The efforts resulted in radical changes to the U.S. economy and society in subsequent decades, including the introduction of the Civil Rights Act, which outlaws businesses from discriminating against legally protected groups.
- Advocates of justice often push for policy reform in areas such as healthcare, immigration, or the criminal justice system to remedy potential biases toward certain demographic groups.



# GLOSSARY

**Performative Allyship:** An act of publicly signaling solidarity against social injustice without challenging the system that reinforces these unjust conditions. The focus shifts towards gaining social currency via recognition for pretending to do something in place of taking real action to help communities.

*Example in practice:*

- Posting a black square on Instagram to signal your solidarity instead of doing the actual work of challenging harmful and unjust systems of oppression.

**Radical Healing:** Refers to a process that builds the capacity of people to act upon their environments in ways that contribute to well-being for the common good.

*Example in practice:*

- Radical healing is political. And when we say political, we do not mean Democrats and Republicans. When we say political, we mean it is focused on healing that comes from shifting policies and practices of any institution or organization. For example, asking, "How do we examine our practices and policies to create space for healing and a further reduction of harm?" In other words, "How do I arrive at Healing Justice?"

**Restorative Justice:** An approach that seeks to move towards healing for all when incidents of harm occur. It seeks to tend to the needs and obligations of all individuals that are impacted by harm, and takes a community-centered approach as a form of accountability. It is seen as an alternative to methods of accountability that are exclusionary, punitive, or retributive.

*Example in practice:*

- Restorative justice is an alternative to retributive justice because each form of justice asks three very different questions:
  - Who has been harmed?
  - What are the resulting needs of everyone who has been impacted?
  - Who has an obligation or role to play to address those needs, repair the harm (to the degree possible), and restore the harmed relationship?

**Sociopolitical Context:** A term used to describe the series of mutually reinforcing policies and practices across social, economic, and political domains that contribute to disparities and unequal opportunities for people of color and other historically marginalized populations in housing, transportation, education, and health care, to name a few. These unequal opportunities result in unequal outcomes along racial and class lines.

*Example in practice:*

- The COVID pandemic exists in a sociopolitical context, which exists within other long-standing contexts such as inequality in education, housing, healthcare, and employment, all of which individually or collectively result in poverty and lowered quality of life and life expectancy.

**White Fragility:** Discomfort and defensiveness on the part of a white person when confronted by information about racial inequality and injustice.

*Example in practice:*

- "I have a Black friend/family member, so I'm not racist."
- "Racism ended with slavery."
- "I've struggled in my life, so I'm not privileged."
- "I am colorblind, so I'm not racist."

## SESSION B6: CREATING GENDER INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS

**Body Sovereignty:** Concept that each person has the right to full control of their body. It supports complete body autonomy in every regard and the belief that there is no “right” way to have a body.

*Example in practice:*

- A positive relationship between the self and the body. Society seeks to have people conform to a standard that it prescribes. This works on many levels: food, clothing, sexual activity, tattoos, piercing etc. supports complete body autonomy in every regard.

**Cisgender:** An umbrella term for individuals whose lived sex, gender identity, and/or gender expression falls within cultural norms and meets societal expectations based on their assigned sex at birth.

*Example in practice:*

- If a doctor determines a person’s sex at birth to be male and this person identifies as a man, they would be known as cisgender.

**Cissexism:** Behavior that grants preferential treatment to cisgender people, reinforces the idea that being cisgender is somehow better or more “right” than being transgender, and/or makes other genders invisible.

*Example in practice:*

- Using greetings like “ladies and gentlemen,” which can alienate nonbinary folks; describing cisgender people as “normal;” supporting or being kind to a trans person, but still using the wrong pronouns or names to refer to them; making statements that presume all men have penises and all women have vaginas; asking for someone’s “real” name or “preferred” pronouns: trans people’s names are their real names and their pronouns are not preferred, but simply their pronouns.

**Gender:** Various traits, characteristics, and roles that a culture associates with or assigns to physical sex.

*Example in practice:*

- Expecting women to dress in typically feminine ways and be polite, accommodating, and nurturing while expecting men to be strong, aggressive, and bold.
- Every society, ethnic group, and culture has gender role expectations, but they can be very different from group to group. They can also change in the same society over time. For example, pink used to be considered a masculine color in the U.S. while blue was considered feminine.

**Gender Expression:** The way we show our gender to the world around us.

*Example in practice:*

- Someone may dress or style their hair in an unexpected way, one that’s different from their sex at birth. It is not the same thing as whether a person is gay, transgender, or another gender identity. Some research suggests that LGBT people actually face less discrimination than those with a nonconforming gender expression.

**Gender Identity:** An individual’s deeply held sense of being male, female, or another gender. This is separate from biological sex. The internal perception of one’s gender, and how they label themselves.

*Example in practice:*

- “I am \_\_\_\_\_.” This is the gender identity you self-identify as.

# GLOSSARY

**Intersex:** Refers to a variety of conditions in which an individual is born with reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't fit the typical understanding of female or male.

*Example in practice:*

- A man could be born with ovaries instead of testes or a woman could be born with XY chromosomes. Intersex occurs at a rate of about one in 1500 births but most people are assigned either male or female sex at birth regardless of being intersex.

**Sex:** The categorization of bodies by genitalia and other biological features. Sex is assigned male or female at birth, but some people understand their sex as something outside of these two categories.

*Example in practice:*

- Sex is generally classified at birth as male, female, or intersex based on the appearance of the external genitalia. If these are ambiguous, sex is assigned based on internal genitalia, hormones, and chromosomes. Sex is generally recorded on a birth certificate but can sometimes be changed on this document as well as on other legal documents such as a driver's license.

**Transgender:** Individuals with an affirmed gender identity different than their sex assigned at birth. The term transgender is an umbrella term that can apply to a diversity of gender identities and expressions.

*Example in practice:*

- Any individual whose affirmed gender identity is different than their sex assigned at birth.

**Transphobia:** The fear, hatred, disbelief, or mistrust of people who are transgender, thought to be transgender, or whose gender expression doesn't conform to traditional gender roles.

*Example in practice:*

- Transphobia can take many different forms, including: negative attitudes and beliefs, aversion to and prejudice against transgender people, irrational fear and misunderstanding, disbelief or discounting preferred pronouns, gender identity derogatory language and name-calling, bullying, abuse, and even violence.
- Transphobia can create both subtle and overt forms of discrimination. For example, people who are transgender (or even just thought to be transgender) may be denied jobs, housing, or health care, just because they're transgender.
- People may hold transphobic beliefs if they were taught them by other people, including parents and families who encourage negative ideas about trans people and who hold strict beliefs about traditional gender roles.