

Creating a Culture of Care and Safe Learning

Section 3. Foundations for Learning

Equity

- What kinds of discrimination do we see happening in our groups—for example, do learners laugh, or roll their eyes when some other learners speak? Who receives this treatment? How do we address it when it happens?
- How can we make our program safe and inclusive for all learners, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, mental and physical health or ability?

Advocacy

- What are some of the common inequities that have affected our learners' experiences of learning? How have we dealt with these at the program level? At the community and societal level? Is there more we want to do?
- What activities can we do that promote learners advocating for themselves and each other?

The Learning Space

- What are people seeing when they walk into the program? What kind of feeling might people get from the space? How can our environment show that we care about learners' wellbeing on all levels—intellectual, emotional, physical, spiritual, social and aesthetic?

Informal Counselling

- How do we help learners to shift from deficit-identified stories to alternative, strength-based stories? How can we use conversations and writing prompts to support them in shaping their stories into stories of possibility?

Accessibility for learners with children

- What supports does our program offer for parents or others caring for children? What have we found to be the benefits of this (for adults, the children, the program, the community?). What has been challenging?

Section 4. Creating a Culture of Care and Safe Learning

First Contacts

- What do we do to make our first meetings welcoming and reassuring? Do we allocate enough time for first meetings to really pay attention and lay the groundwork for a relationship of trust? How do we respond to fears that come up during a first meeting? How do we respond to disclosures of present and/or past experiences of violence?

Working in Groups

- How do we avoid the detailed stories of violence which may be disturbing or traumatizing for the learner telling the story, other members of the group, and ourselves, while also being careful to avoid any sense that the realities of learners' lives are silenced or excluded?
- How do we ensure a shared talking space for active engagement of all voices? How do we acknowledge, invite, and draw out quieter members without being intrusive and causing stress?

Curriculum

- In what ways does our curriculum address the issues of violence? How comfortable do we feel with addressing these issues? What tools and strategies do we use to address violence?

Evaluation

- As the learner moves through the learning journey, what techniques and methods have we developed to help learners articulate their own progress? What non-traditional assessment tools do we use (journals, projects, reflections) that help the learner articulate and take control of their own assessment?