



NEW YORK STATE MIGRANT EDUCATION PROGRAM

TITLE: Our Culture is a Positive Tool in Schools

DESCRIPTION: This session will help parents define culture, name and identify the various aspects of their culture, and understand and embrace the value of their cultures. Parents will gain a strong understanding and belief that one of their roles as parents is to bring this cultural knowledge to the schools and help schools realize its value. This workshop will provide an opportunity for parents to get to know each other.

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SERIES: This is Module 1 in the 5-part “Developing Self-Advocacy Skills” series. “Our Culture is a Positive Tool in Schools” creates the base for the rest of the series to build on. The rest of the modules can be used in any order.

Facilitator Guide

OBJECTIVE(S)/LEARNING TARGET(S)

At the end of this session, parents should:

- Develop a basic understanding and awareness of the definition of culture
- Identify different parts of their culture
- Begin to see the value of their culture
- Understand how to use this knowledge/understanding when engaging their children’s schools

WORKSHOP/MODULE DESIGN

This session is designed to work with parents in a group setting, but can be adapted for use with parents individually at home or with a group of adolescents.

Participant Agenda

- Welcome and Overview
- Introduction: What is Culture?
- Activity: Culture Toolkit
- Large Group Discussion: Cultural Wealth - The Value of our Cultures
- Closing & Next Steps: Sharing Your Cultural Wealth with Others

CONNECTION TO THE NYS MEP

THEORY OF ACTION:

Developing Self-Advocacy Skills

- Being firmly grounded in one’s own identity, makes a person a stronger self-advocate
- Practice sharing pride in self and culture

Identity Development

- The focus reinforces that their life/community are a valid part of the learning experience
- Develop pride in who they are
- Think about their life/culture

SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS

- Participant Agenda (*English, Spanish, Karen, Burmese*)
- Participant Handouts
 1. *Self-Advocacy Continuum*
 2. *Culture Toolkit*
- Chart Paper, Markers/Pens

STAFFING NEEDS

- When this workshop is being done with a group at a local Parent Engagement activity, childcare will be needed.

- Interpretation should be provided when the parents and facilitators speak different languages, or more than one language is present.

ADJUSTING FOR USE WITH INDIVIDUAL FAMILY IN THE HOME

If you are facilitating in a home with one family, the activities become conversations between you and the family with everyone sharing.

ADJUSTING FOR USE WITH ADOLESCENTS

These workshops will work with young people. Review the Facilitator Guide, and decide what elements you will use with students. You may need to modify some of the activities to work with your adolescents.

Facilitator Note: The estimated times (total 80 minutes) in this Guide are based on using one language. When adjusting to incorporating a second language, a general rule is to double the time needed.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

(10 minutes)

Facilitator Note: Welcome the group to the workshop, state the name of the workshop, and then move into introductions. As you know, workshops are often foreign to migrant parents whether they are immigrants or not. When participants are shy, move around the group and give attention and a warm smile to each person as they introduce themselves.

In addition to asking parents to say their Name, pick one question from below for everyone to share, or feel free to use one of your own question.

Questions

- Name?
- Share something you love about your family.
- Share something you learned from your family that makes you proud.
- Share something about your children that makes you proud.
- Share the meaning/history of your name.

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

(5 minutes)

Key Points

- Self-Advocacy is a journey, a process.
- When families move, parents can use help to learn the new community.
- It is important for parents to help school realize the value of their culture.
- We will have an opportunity to get to know each other better.
- We will think about ways to share our cultural information with others.

It might sound like: *This is the first module in a 5-part series focused on the journey of developing self-advocacy skills. This is a journey, a process, with each workshop providing a step along the way.*

We know that you have experience advocating for things you need, and interacting with schools to get what your need for your child can be hard. Parents have told us that when they move to a new community, they need extra help getting to know what resources are available.

When you look at the Self-Advocacy Continuum handout, there are arrows that cross each other in the middle, showing the journey we go on. When we arrive in a new community, we often need help from someone else, like the migrant educator, to help us negotiate issues with the school. Then as we get to know how things work, and what is available in our new community, we can be more independent, and take over more of the advocacy for our children and ourselves.

Today's session is one step in the process. The workshop today will help you define culture, name and identify the different parts of your culture, and understand and embrace the value of your cultures. Our hope is that you will gain a strong understanding and belief that your role as parents is to bring this cultural knowledge to the schools and help schools realize its value.

At the end, we will talk about ways to share our cultural information with others.

Facilitator Note: If you are facilitating this in a home with one family, personalize the conversation instead of using the general 'parents'.

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS CULTURE?

(5 minutes)

Key Points

- We will define culture.
- We will make culture personal.
- Everyone will have an opportunity to share some important aspects of their cultures.

It might sound like: When I say culture, what does that mean to you?

Facilitator Note: Pause so participants can share what they think it means.

Wonderful. Culture has different meanings, but the way we will talk about culture today is that it means how you do things, your way of living. It is the clothes you wear, the food you cook and eat, the languages you speak, the music you listen to. It is who is in your family, the experiences you had growing up and now that you are parents. The experiences you had in another state or in another country. Culture is the stories your parents and grandparents told you and the stories you tell your children. It is how you deal with stuff. It is the celebrations you have. It is how you live your life.

Now that I told you what culture is, can you give me an example of your culture?

Facilitator Note: Pause to give participants think time to give an example of their culture.

Great. That is a good example. Now we are going to do an activity to help us know more about our culture.

ACTIVITY: CULTURE TOOLKIT WORKSHEET

(40 minutes)

Process

1. Walk through the handout.
2. Facilitator models Section 1.
3. Individual journaling with Culture Toolkit Worksheet. *(5 minutes)*
4. Small group discussion. *(15 minutes)*
 - a. Participants each share 3 responses from Section 1
 - b. Participants each share 1 response from section 2
5. Whole group processing: Ask for a few highlights from each small groups. *(10 minutes)*

Facilitator Note: When you introduce the activity, model how to do the activity by using three (3) responses to the Cultural Toolkit Worksheet from your culture and life as the example, [instead of the example written in brackets].

Key Points

- Sharing different aspects of each individual's culture with one another.
- Develop an understanding of the different components of culture and its benefits.
- Opportunity to learn from others.

It might sound like: We are going to share some of our cultural facts with each other. This activity will help us better understand the different aspects of our culture and how it can help us. It will also allow us to learn about each other.

We have a Culture Toolkit Worksheet handout. Section 1 has eleven (11) examples of our culture for us to think about and you will need to pick three (3) to share your answers with your group.

I am from...

My family is from...

Here is a picture of where I'm from...

I speak...

My family has _____ (number – how many?) people.

Here is a picture of my family.

One family tradition that my family likes to do is...

My family likes to celebrate...

When I was a child, my favorite thing to do was...

Now, my favorite thing to do is...

I like _____ most about my culture.

Facilitator Note: You can invite participants to use their cell phones to find personal pictures or access the sites to locate pictures of cultural artifacts that may add a visual to their answer. If possible, you can ask parents to bring a cultural artifact to the meeting with them.

If I was talking about my culture, I might share these three (3) things about my culture:

[My family is from Puerto Rico. When I was a child my favorite thing to do was go to my abuela's house and eat arroz con pollo. My family likes to celebrate birthdays.]

Section 2 has two (2) things to think about and you need to pick one to answer and share with your group.

When I go to my school/(my child's) school, I think they see my culture like:

One thing I wish my school/(my child's) school knew about my culture is:

If I was going to share one of these, I might say, [As a parent, one of the things I wish my child's school knew about my culture is that we have a long history of caring about school and success in school.]

Any Questions?

You have five minutes to think about your answers and to pick three (3) from Section 1 and 1 from section 2 to be ready to share.

Facilitator Note: If you have enough participants, break into groups of three, for parents to share their responses. Then bring back to the large group and ask each group to share a few highlights from their group.

Facilitator Note:

It is important to let participants know that this is an ongoing process. Challenge them to continue learning about their culture outside of the session. Challenge them to share this information with their children so as to articulate the importance of culture to their children.

When working with an individual or family, have a conversation with these questions as a base, or give the parents the worksheet and walk through it as a formal activity. Invite them to share an item or physical artifact from their home if that best helps them share. Give them the space to show it and explain its meaning.

GROUP DISCUSSION: CULTURAL WEALTH – THE VALUE OF OUR CULTURES

(10 - 15 minutes)

Facilitator Note: When you introduce the activity, model how to do the activity by choosing one (1) response to the Cultural Toolkit Worksheet from **your** culture and life as the example, **[to replace the author's example written in brackets.]**

Key Points

- We will understand the value of our cultures.
- We will share this value with each other.
- We will help each other see the value in our cultures.

***It might sound like:** It is important to know that everything you shared about your culture is important. Your culture has value, like money. Your culture gives you hopes and dreams. Your culture gives your children something they should be proud of. The next activity will help us understand how your culture is important and valuable. I will ask you some questions that will help you think about the value of your culture. We will take some time to each share and have conversations about what is said.*

Look back at your Culture Toolkit Worksheet that we just filled out. Think about your answers and how that is important/valuable.

If I look at my Toolkit, I can focus on the question [that asks me what I like most about my culture. Since I am Puerto Rican, I like that my culture incorporates aspects of many different

racas and cultures – such as European (Spain), African, and Native (Taino). The value in this is that my Puerto Rican culture has a rich history that spreads across different continents and has a lot of impact on the world. It is a rich history.]

Large Group Discussion: Guiding Questions

- What were the hopes and dreams your parents had for you and your family?
- What are the hopes and dreams you have for you and your family?
- How do the different people in your family help you when you are in need?
- How do the different people in your family celebrate when good things happen?
- Think about the languages you speak. How can that be important for you and your family?

Facilitator Note: This activity flows directly out of the Culture Toolkit activity. It is designed to reinforce the value of everyone’s culture. Whether this individual identified that their family likes to hunt, or that their family likes to go to dances, it is important to identify the value in that. For example, hunting brings food to the family, and connects us to nature. Dances create a space for community to gather and children to know they are surrounded by people who care. We want all parents to have pride in who they are.

Try to make this feel like a dialogue between all the participants in the room. Feel free to jot down notes on a chart.

When discussing the multiple languages spoken (*if relevant to the group*), help the parent realize that many jobs seek workers that speak multiple language and also how knowing how to speak different languages help with other academic areas.

Close by highlighting the wealth of culture within the room.

CLOSING AND NEXT STEPS: SHARING YOUR CULTURAL WEALTH WITH OTHERS

(5 minutes)

Key Points

- Teaching your children and others about your culture is important.
- Bringing culture into your child’s school is valuable.
- Thank you for your time and commitment to your children’s education.

It might sound like: *Now that you shared some things about your culture and you know that your culture is valuable, it is important to teach your children about your culture and help them be proud of it. What are some things you can do to help your children know more about their culture and be proud of it?*

Examples:

- *Share stories and traditions you enjoyed from your own childhood/ youth*

- *Holidays, celebrations*
- *First time hunting, biggest fish you caught*
- *Make a favorite recipe*

It is also important that the school knows more about your culture. What are some things you can do to help the school know about your culture and help them know your culture is important?

Examples

- *offer to share a story with child's class that reflects their culture*
- *offer to have child take in a cultural artifact from their culture for show/tell,*
- *for older students – parents can share a story with their child for a school essay they are writing etc.*

It has been great spending time together today. Thank you for your time and commitment to your children's education.

APPRECIATIONS

(5 minutes)

Key Points

- Time to share appreciations for self, others, or a new concept or idea learned.
- Create a climate that honors individual risk-taking.
- Create a forum for supporting each other.

***It might sound like:** We like to close our workshops by taking time to share something you appreciate about yourself, someone in the group, or an idea or concept that you have learned. Appreciations are important because they create a climate that honors individual risk-taking. It can be hard to share in front of others. Workshops are a new way to learn for some of you. Appreciating what we have learned from each other is a good way to support each other.*

Facilitator Note: If you are facilitating in a home, first appreciate something about what the parent shared. Then ask the parent to identify what they appreciated most about what they shared today.