



# Developing Culturally Responsive Practices in Schools

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# BEST FOR ALL

We will set all students on a path to success.

## ACADEMICS

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ALL TENNESSEE STUDENTS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION, NO MATTER WHERE THEY LIVE

## STUDENT READINESS

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TENNESSEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS WILL BE EQUIPPED TO SERVE THE ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS IN THEIR CAREER PATHWAYS

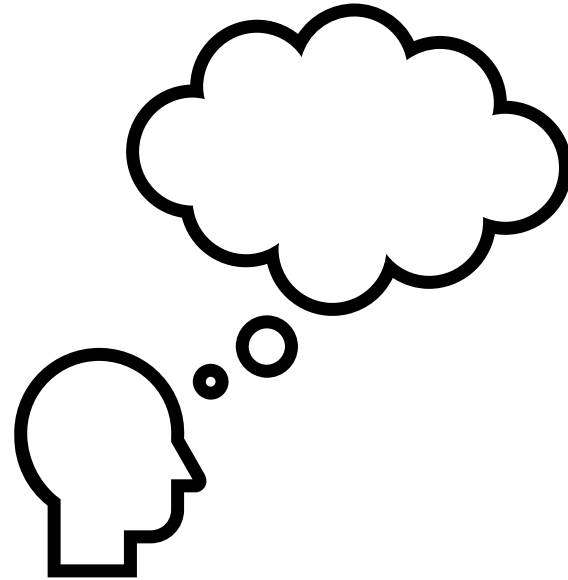
## EDUCATORS

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TENNESSEE WILL SET A NEW PATH FOR THE EDUCATION PROFESSION AND BE THE TOP STATE IN WHICH TO BECOME AND REMAIN A TEACHER AND LEADER FOR ALL

# Culturally Responsive Practices

What does it mean to be *culturally responsive*?



# What does it mean to be culturally responsive?

- “Being culturally responsive requires having the ability to **understand cultural differences, recognize potential biases, and look beyond differences to work productively with children, families, and communities whose cultural contexts are different from one’s own.**”



# Culturally Responsive Practices

- Become familiar with the practices, understandings, and interpretations of cultures, and worldviews of others.
- Develop skills to listen, relate, understand, and value different cultures.
- We all want to be respected and understood as individuals, not just as members of some demographic group.



# Culturally Responsive Practices

- If in doubt, mindfulness and signs of respect go a long way.
- Don't be afraid to admit you don't know something. It is okay to ask for clarification or an opportunity to learn.
- When dealing with diverse populations, flexibility and adaptability are essential.

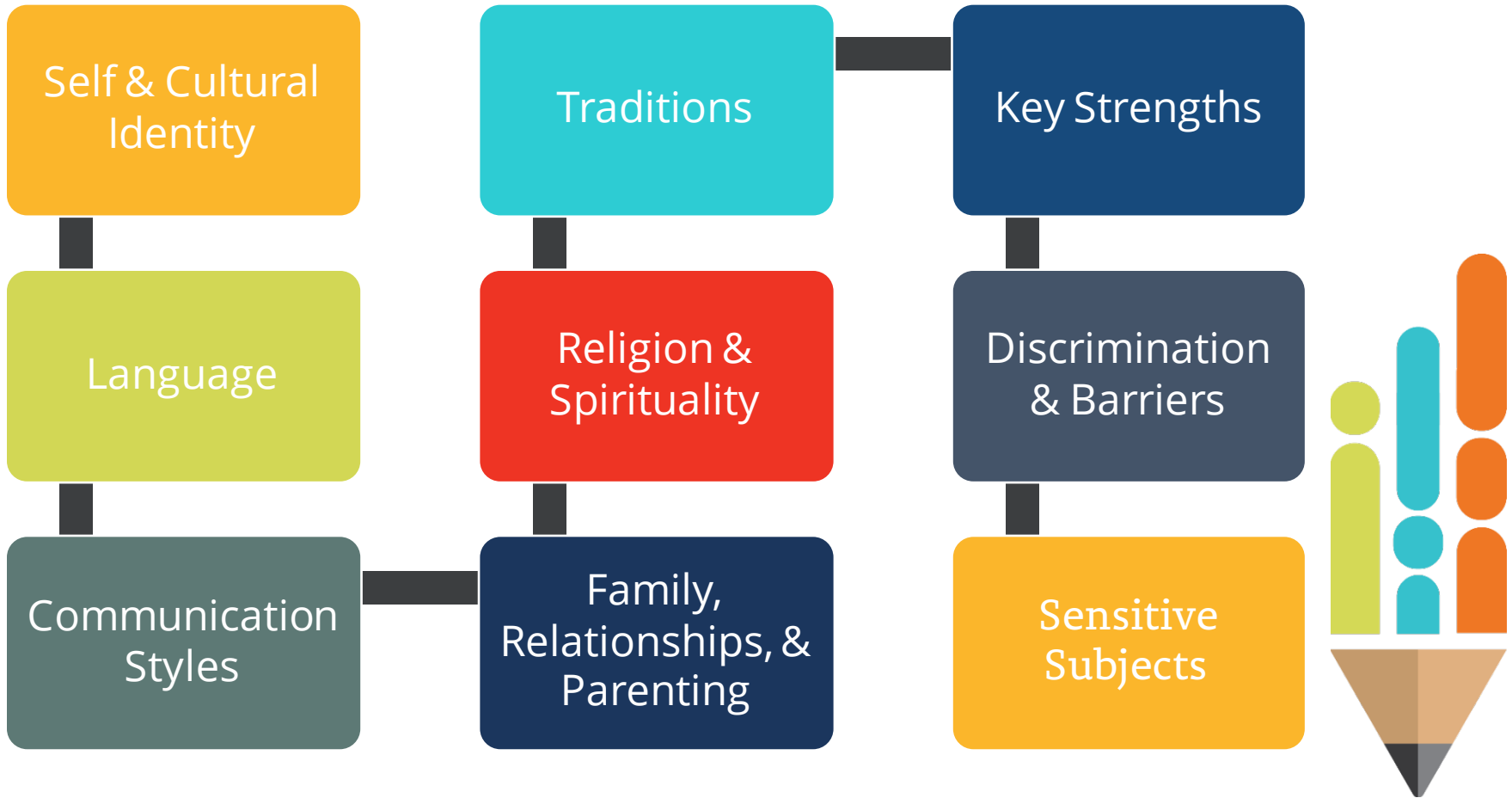


# Culturally Responsive Practices

- Lead with empathy rather than sympathy
  - Place yourself in their position
- Focus on teaching skills vs. information
  - Encourage projects focused on problem solving, communication, and collaboration.
- Foster a school and class environment where open dialogue is encouraged



# Key Considerations to Explore





# Self & Cultural Identity

- How do members of the group refer to themselves and members of their group?
- How do members of the group view their cultural connections?



# Self & Cultural Identity Example

Members of an immigrant community may reference experiences and accomplishments based personal identity and resilience.

Consider students stories sharing struggles taking place while immigrating to a new country with limited resources. Stories may include details related to working as a group to establish a system of support that includes securing housing and locating employment to be part of a community.

# Culture

Culture is the shared characteristics of a group of people. Cultural traditions, celebrations, and practices play a vital role in shaping a person's sense of connection to their cultural heritage.



Nationality

Ethnicity

Race

Language

# Language

- Do members of the group share a language or face any language barriers?



# Language

Many adults and children who have limited English proficiency refrain from asking for help and will not ask voluntarily. They may smile or nod, seeming to indicate that they understand what is being said, when in reality, they do not.

# Communication Styles

- Are their common communication styles and approaches that should inform your interactions?



# Communication Styles

It is not common in some cultures to look directly at an authority figure or an older person. They may prefer to look down or away. Some cultures consider this a sign of respect.

A person's silence is considered a sign of respect in some cultures, rather than a refusal to participate. Many cultures are used to teacher-centered classrooms in their native countries and feel uncomfortable being asked to participate.

Different cultures perceive personal space differently.

Many cultures have different values regarding the importance of time and being on time.

# Family, Relationships, & Parenting

- Are there key patterns in relationship roles and family dynamics among members of the group?
- How do members of the group define the concept of “family”? (e.g. Is family thought of as nuclear family, or is there a more expansive, inclusive concept of family?)
- Do members of the group have common approaches to parenting and disciplining children?





# Family, Relationships, & Parenting

Parents from different cultures have distinct parenting approaches. For example, in Scandinavia, infants nap outside in winter, while in Italy, children may taste alcohol with their families. These practices may differ from other regions with indoor play areas and strict drinking age limits. These cultural-specific parenting techniques are neither right nor wrong, but rather carry their own advantages.

# Religion and Spirituality

- What role, if any, does spirituality or religion play within the group?
- What holidays, if any, are important to members of the group, and how are those holidays celebrated?
- Do members of the group tend to view religion and spirituality as something that can be discussed publicly, or is it a private topic?



# Religion and Spirituality

Different religious communities may have different opinions or beliefs about certain holidays.

For example, traditionally, many observant Jewish view Halloween as a pagan holiday and choose not to celebrate it. However, in recent times, Halloween has increasingly been perceived as a secular celebration rather than a strictly religious or pagan event.

# Traditions

- What traditions and shared experiences are highly important to the group?
- What key life events and experiences are celebrated or otherwise marked by the group?
- Does the group have unique or rare traditions that may be misunderstood by others outside of the group?



# Traditions

Different cultures have many unique traditions.

For example, Día de los Muertos, also known as Day of the Dead, is a celebration that originated in central and southern Mexico. It is distinct from Halloween and is not intended to be a spooky holiday. According to this tradition, the souls of deceased children are believed to reunite with their families on November 1, while the souls of deceased adults visit on November 2. This cultural celebration involves honoring and remembering departed loved ones

# Key Strengths

- What strengths (e.g., humor, extended family networks, resilience, connections to community, tribal affiliation, relationship with elders, etc.) does the group celebrate and rely upon for success?



# Key Strengths

Different groups utilize key strengths to work as a community or to continue practices that are unique to the group.

For example, many American Indian communities prioritize traditional cultural methods in their practices, considering the whole child within the context of their family and community. They recognize the value of indigenous wisdom and incorporate traditional teachings into modern services.

This approach includes utilizing kinship networks, storytelling, rituals, rites of passage, and kinship support. By blending traditional practices with contemporary care, they foster a culturally enriched and strengths-based approach to promoting well-being.

# Discrimination and Barriers

- Are there areas of particular sensitivity that you should be aware of related to discrimination and challenges (e.g., legal, financial, social, etc.) that members of the group experience?
- Are there ways to discuss—and provide strategies for overcoming—potential challenges that members of the group may encounter?





# Discrimination and Barriers

Children and families can face discrimination in various ways, including:

1. Verbal and emotional abuse
2. Harassment and bullying
3. Physical abuse and violence
4. Racial remarks or derogatory names
5. Disrespectful or unequitable treatment (i.e., from peers, adults, sponsor families, legal guardian, etc.)

These are some of the most common forms of discrimination that individuals may encounter, impacting their well-being and sense of belonging.

# Sensitive Subjects

- What subjects, topics and issues are off-limits for discussion?
- Are there topics that are deemed private and only discussed within groups of trusted family or friends?
- Are there respectful ways that sensitive or taboo subjects can be approached if information is needed for family assessment, etc.?



# Taboos

Pork consumption is prohibited in certain religions, such as Judaism and Islam.

In Indonesian culture, it is customary to regard a person's head as sacred and, therefore, touching or patting someone's head is considered off-limits.

Many parts of the world have a preference for removing shoes before entering a home.

Blowing one's nose or sneezing in public is considered taboo in several countries, including Turkey, France, China, and others.

# Culturally Responsive Schools...

- Develop cultural diversity knowledge base.
- Promote culturally relevant curricula: Incorporate multiple perspectives and ensure diverse representation in classroom materials.
- Set high expectations for all students: Communicate academic expectations while validating cultural identities.

# Culturally Responsive Schools...

- Appreciate different communication styles: Understand and adapt to diverse communication approaches.
- Encourage multicultural instructional examples: Integrate students' prior knowledge and cultural experiences into the curriculum.

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# Thank You!

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You may access the PD by navigating here:

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