



Guiding is for Everyone

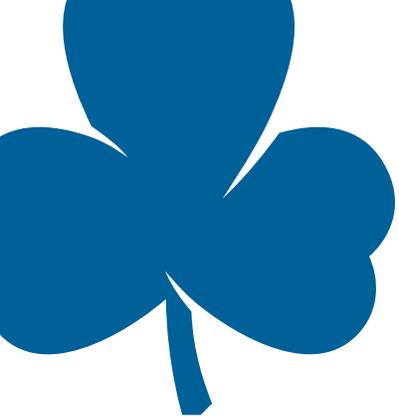
Handbook



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Guiding is for Everyone

This document will support you in creating a safe and inclusive space for everyone in Guiding by providing definitions and concepts you can use to examine and understand your thoughts, decisions and practices as well as practical tips and ideas you can use to take action.

This document is for everyone who supports girls in Guiding and GGC as an organization – whether you're a volunteer or staff member. Although this document is very comprehensive, it does not and cannot replace training and capacity-building efforts that we all must engage in. GGC is committed to providing volunteers and staff with opportunities to build skills in providing inclusive Guiding. Please check out all of the trainings available to you on the topics of inclusivity and equity [here](#).

As an organization and as individuals, we are all on an inclusion journey. As we learn and grow, we will all make mistakes – and making mistakes is part of how we learn. However, making mistakes and learning through critical reflection can also be uncomfortable. By embracing a growth mindset and believing that your abilities can grow and stretch with work and a commitment to continuous learning we can achieve inclusivity and equity for everyone that is a part of our organization now and will be in the future.



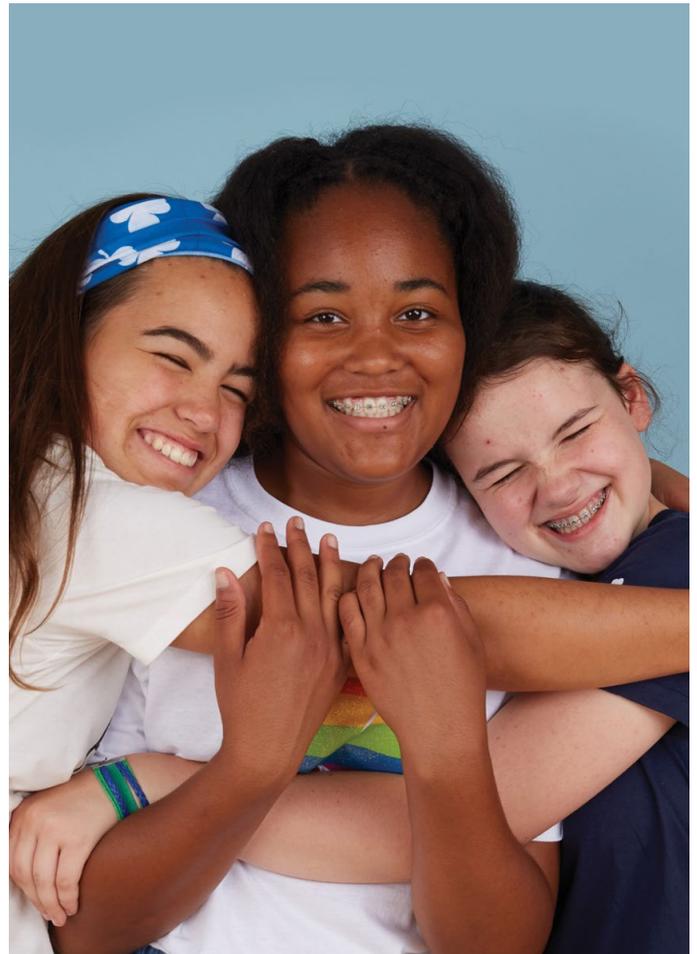
What We Believe

GGC seeks to be a catalyst for girls empowering girls and to serve all girls in Canada equitably. Guiding should be a place where all girls and women feel welcome and included. Guiding should be a place where all girls and women can say: “I belong here.” At Girl Guides of Canada, we have many guidelines and policies which outline how we foster inclusion, and how we work toward equity and value diversity.

Girl Guides of Canada-Guides du Canada (GGC) recognizes and values the richness of human diversity in its many forms, and therefore strives to ensure environments where girls and women from all walks of life, identities, and lived experiences feel a sense of belonging and can participate fully. This commitment to inclusion means GGC’s culture, programming, and practices encourage self-awareness and awareness of others; room for difference; and environments where girls and women feel safe, respected, supported, and inspired to reach their potential. – GGC’s Inclusivity Statement

Girl Guides of Canada does not tolerate unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, citizenship, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, political beliefs, socio-economic status, health related status, sexual orientation, marital status or any other grounds enumerated in the human rights legislation of the jurisdiction in which the individuals are located. – GGC’s Code of Conduct (excerpt)

When we as volunteers and staff act in ways that are in line with our Inclusivity Statement and uphold our policies and guidelines we will fulfill the Diversity and Inclusion vision of GGC:



A more inclusive and accessible Girl Guides of Canada – by and for diverse and marginalized communities – so that we can have a better world by and for all girls. – GGC’s Diversity and Inclusion vision

As an organization, we are achieving this by:

- Identifying and removing barriers to full participation
- Supporting volunteers and staff to question and examine their biases, assumptions, privileges and the status quo
- Connecting and learning from, and partnering with marginalized communities and the organizations that serve them
- Actively seeking evidence to inform inclusion efforts

Some specific resources have also been developed to provide more detailed and nuanced information on specific inclusion issues. These include Guideability, which provides guidance on the inclusion of members with accessibility needs, and the Guidelines for the Inclusion of Transgender Members, which offers helpful information on inclusion of gender diverse members.

GGC’s Approaches to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

This section provides a framework for how we can foster inclusion, work toward equity and value diversity in Guiding.

Defining Diversity, Inclusion and Equity

Diversity is what differentiates us from one another. The differences in characteristics are what determine who we are and how we define and categorize ourselves and other people along dimensions such as race, sexual orientation, ability, income, education, religion, age, political views, value systems, languages, etc.



Inclusion is the deliberate actions taken to make a change in order to make space for difference. It is active, not passive, work. Inclusion does not require the person we are working to include to change; it makes space for the person as they are. Inclusion requires people to value, respect and accept diversity.

Equity is when there is fairness and equality in outcomes, not just in support and opportunity. Equity recognizes that advantages and barriers exist for different groups of people. Equity is ensuring everyone has access to the same opportunities, even if different resources are required to ensure the same access. Equity recognizes that advantages and barriers exist, and that, as a result, we don't all start from the same place in terms of our access to mainstream society and its various institutions (health, education, politics, etc.). Equity is giving everyone what they need to be successful.

In summary, we are all different from one another – that is diversity. And because of this difference, we are not all afforded the same benefits and opportunities because we are born with different identities and therefore into different social locations. This leads to inequity - some people have privileges and power that specific groups of people with marginalized identities don't. It's important to work toward inclusion – removing barriers and giving everyone the opportunity to be valued. By removing barriers and giving everyone the opportunity to reach equal outcomes we create equity between all people through creating solutions that meet everyone's need.



Diversity and Inclusion Commitments and Principles

What does a commitment to diversity and inclusion look like in Guiding? The commitments and principles below provide a framework each of us can employ as we work towards inclusion with our actions as Girl Guide members and our interactions with one another.

Our commitments are what we value and help us determine what is important.

Our principles are explicit rules that are grounded in and therefore support our commitments.

Commitments:

Humility

In Guiding, we step back in order to welcome and provide space for the experiences and voices of marginalized people. We build a sense of belonging by recognizing that the people we aim to support are experts on their own lives and experiences. When we're challenged, we listen and acknowledge – and when we've made a mistake, we actively work to grow and change.

Accountability

We're open, honest and transparent about why and how decisions are made. We take responsibility for following through on our commitments to creating equitable and inclusive environments. And we're accountable to the process, not just to the end result.

Collaboration

The work of diversity and inclusion can't be accomplished in isolation or with a singular focus. We work with people who are affected by our actions and decisions, so we actively seek their input. We engage with thoughts, ideas and approaches that are different from our own, in order to imagine, facilitate and realize new possibilities. We build relationships with individuals, communities and organizations based on respect, mutuality and trust.

Courage

When it comes to supporting diversity and inclusion, we're committed to doing what's right, even when what's right may not be easy. We don't shy away from difficult, discomfoting or unsettling conversations, because we trust these conversations will move us in a positive direction. As an organization, we resist simplistic solutions to complex problems, and directly confront systems of inequity wherever we find them.

Integrity

We consciously and consistently make decisions that will move us towards a more inclusive culture. We recognize that trust is earned – not given – and we work to earn trust by ensuring our commitments are demonstrated with tangible actions. We take ownership over our impact on others and invite them to join with us along on the same journey.



Principles:

These principles inform GGC's direction for the future and immediate actions we will take as an organization to influence outward and inward facing policies and procedures of Girl Guides of Canada.



1. **Do no harm.** People's feelings of safety (physical, mental, emotional, psychological, social) are not compromised in order to achieve an outcome. This means making space and at times reframing what Guiding looks like so that people can participate as they are.

Harm or trauma is the mental, emotional, social, developmental, economical and generational impact on a person. It is the effects of inequitable practices and systems – language and action – that continue to force people of color, gender minorities, people with disabilities and other historically marginalized peoples to experience pain and suffering, barriers and challenges, as well as limitations and exclusion from spaces where they should be treated with fairness, respect, and dignity; and as equal to all others.



2. **Address inequity in systems and structures, not in people.** When people experience challenges and barriers in Guiding, it is the responsibility of GGC as a whole, and not the people who face barriers, to address those barriers.





3. **Work with marginalized communities.** We have a lot to learn from the identities and experiences of the people we want to serve. Inclusive spaces must be built collaboratively with marginalized people.



4. **Practice patience in relationship building.** Relationship building takes time and requires us to prioritize the people we want to build relationships with. Making space for what is important for marginalized communities enables us to better serve those communities.



5. **Create a culture of learning.** Inclusion work requires an openness to different ideas, perspectives and worldviews. It also requires accepting that mistakes are inevitable; what matters is that we admit to our mistakes and take steps to learn from them.



6. **Work toward sustainability.** Any actions taken to build equity must ensure equity in the long term. The long-term impacts on marginalized people must be considered in everything we do to serve marginalized people.



7. **Explore new approaches to Guiding to build leading practices.** Leading practices are formed when we take best practices and apply them to the unique context of Guiding.



How can we be Girl-driven and value Diversity, Inclusion and Equity?

In Guiding, we take a girl-driven approach to all that we do, which means GGC values the individuality of each girl. As an inclusive organization, GGC strives to ensure that the diverse voices, cultures, and identities of girls are honoured by giving them the power to choose and lead their experiences at the unit and organizational level. GGC's inclusive girl-driven approach can be summed up as follows:

- Every girl feels a sense of belonging so she can have voice.
- Every girl is accepted for who she is so she can have choice.
- Every girl has positive experiences that affirm her identity so she can take action.

There are five pillars to the girl-driven Guiding experience – here's what they mean for diversity and inclusion:



1. Safe Space – Guiding is a supportive environment where girls can talk about their aspirations and challenges knowing they'll be listened to and respected. To hold a safe space for girls, we must make all girls feel welcome, listened to and respected. This means ensuring that all girls feel a sense of belonging. Belonging means the group makes space for you as you are, and you do not have to change to fit into the group.

Practice: Listen with empathy so that girls can share their true selves and feel understood and accepted without judgement.



2. Growth Mindset – Guiding is about meeting girls where they are and allowing them to stretch their abilities, experiment, and fail without fear. Learning is a sequence of mistakes from which you make meaning. As we all learn about difference and how to include others, we will make many mistakes. A growth mindset allows us to practice and receive forgiveness as we and those around us make mistakes and learn from these experiences.

Practice: Observe confidentiality so that girls can trust you enough to share their failures and mistakes with you knowing that their mistakes will not be shared with others.



3. Positive Identity – As an organization for girls, we want to inspire girls to dream big! Guiding is a place where girls can meet diverse women role models and debunk gender and cultural stereotypes. For girls to develop their sense of positive identity, they must be able to be authentic and be valued for who they are. This means creating a space where we value different identities and lived experiences.

Practice: Challenge stereotypes so that girls know you will step in whenever there are inappropriate remarks or behaviour. This will ensure that girls can show up as they are without fear of being tokenized or pigeonholed and will allow girls to think positively about themselves and their peers both despite and because of their differences.





4. Shared Leadership – Leadership is about ownership, responsibility, and contribution. In Guiding, girls contribute to their unit in their own way and their opinions matter. Girls can lead from the front, from the back, and alongside others.

- Leadership means different things to different people
 - Leadership mirrors our values, and therefore it may look different within different cultures. If you value collectivism, connectedness and togetherness, leadership can look like shared ownership, responsibility and contribution. If you value relationships, your leadership style will be about building connections between people and honouring that connection. You will not risk the relationship even if it means moving your agenda forward.
- The type of leadership you choose matters
 - Look for opportunities to support and lead from the back so that different voices are heard and valued. If your voice is not often heard, consider what your voice can contribute to the group. If you are supporting a group who can benefit from your voice and strength, perhaps consider if it would be best to lead alongside them.

Practice: Make participation voluntary so that girls can develop their own leadership styles in line with their personalities, identities, communities and values. Not every girl will be or want to be the type of leader that leads from the front. Allow girls to choose to lead from behind or lead alongside others.



5. Engaging Community – Guiding will equip girls with skills and opportunities to engage in their local community and the Guiding community as an active citizen. Girls will be supported in identifying issues that are meaningful to them, participating in decision-making and taking actions to make a lasting impact. When you consider your local community try focusing on the assets in the community and not just the challenges (deficits). This simple reframing can help you to see and engage with communities in more positive and nuanced ways.

Practice: Ask open and honest questions when working with local communities. This allows you to explore and ask for the perspectives of the community and the girls in your unit before jumping to fixing or correcting what you perceive to be issues.

Each of the pillars requires collaboration across the organization so that all girls and Guiders can benefit from the best and most positive experiences possible. This cannot happen without a rigorous and intentional drive for diversity, equity, and inclusion.



Inclusive Guiding Practices

Taking into account the frameworks presented above – diversity and inclusion commitments and principles and the girl-driven pillars – we will now explore how we can apply them to Guiding scenarios in practical ways that create inclusive practices.

How to use this section:

- Read through all of the scenarios to understand GGC's stance on different inclusivity issues.
- Look for scenarios that are similar to ones you might come across in your Guiding work and reflect on the suggestions for how to respond to the scenario and make decisions that are inclusive of all girls in Guiding.
- You can apply GGC's stance to similar or related situations you are looking for guidance on.





Guiding Traditions and the Girl-driven Experience

Scenario: A parent approaches you at the beginning of your unit meeting and says that her daughter felt very happy to be included in determining how you open and close your unit meeting. The girls decided to start the unit meeting by telling each other how they are feeling and something exciting they did since the last meeting. You are happy that you made changes to the way you have always opened and closed your meeting because you can see a noticeable difference in the feelings of belonging among the girls.

GGC's Stance: GGC is an organization that is committed to an inclusive girl-driven experience. When inclusivity and being girl-driven is in conflict with continuing to practice Guiding traditions, we must adapt our practices to prioritize inclusivity and providing a girl-driven experience.

Every girl, from any culture, race, religion, and background who engages with Guiding through our programming should feel she is in the right place and that she belongs. Guiding has evolved in many ways and will continue to do so as a means of reaching and empowering girls and women across the country, and maintaining the relevance of the Guiding Movement.

Making your Guiding traditions more inclusive:

1. Consider the things you have always done as part of your Guiding practice from the perspective of the current girls in your unit. If any girls might not feel comfortable or excited about the tradition, consider revising it.
2. Engage the unit in deciding what practices and ceremonies you will use as a way to come together as a unit by discussing what they like, what makes them feel uncomfortable, etc.
3. Speak to other Guiders, choose activities from the program platform, and consult the *New Guider learning Path* training modules for alternatives and new Guiding practices. These materials all have GGC's diversity and inclusion frameworks and principles integrated into them.
4. Start new inclusive Guiding traditions and share them with other Guiders.





Approaching Difficult Conversations

Scenario: You and your co-Guider are taking your unit into the city to attend a Guiding event. While walking along a street, the group encounters a few people who are homeless. One girl whispers to another, “What are they doing here? Can’t they go to a shelter?” Your co-Guider says, “Ugh, yeah. I hate coming into the city because of this very problem. I don’t like seeing them because it makes me feel uncomfortable.”

GGC’s Stance: GGC believes in the dignity and value of all people. We believe that all people have something to share and contribute. We also believe that we need to address inequities in systems and structures, and not place blame on individuals who are experiencing barriers.

Making your difficult conversations more impactful:

1. **Practice active listening.** Ask for clarity to ensure that you understand what is being said. Asking questions is a key way to make people feel heard. Asking for clarity is especially important when you hear words that signal a feeling or emotion. For example, if someone were to say, “I don’t like seeing them because it makes me feel uncomfortable,” you could respond with “when you say ‘uncomfortable,’ what does that mean to you?” This shifts the responsibility onto the person to figure out why the situation has evoked their feelings in a particular way.
2. **Understand and validate.** Use empathy to understand where the person is coming from. Ask yourself “why are they making the comment they are making?” Paraphrase their experience and validate their feelings, while putting the responsibility on the person to work through their ambivalence or reactions.
3. **Respond.** We encourage everyone to engage in consciousness raising – making people more aware of a social issue – by asking “why did this happen/ is this happening?” when you see or hear about unfair situations. Name inappropriate behaviours and provide information about why it was offensive, racist, homo/ bi/trans-phobic, etc. You can always rely on GGC’s Inclusivity Statement, Code of Conduct, and commitments and principles in this document to guide you through this process.
4. **Move towards change.** The goal of engaging in difficult conversation is to help the other person move towards a desire for change. You may hear signals that they are ready to move through change from themselves. They may use phrases such as:
 - “This doesn’t make sense to me, but I need some time to work through it.”
 - “This amount of information is overwhelming, but I want to understand.”

Use open-ended questions to allow the participant to generate their own solutions. “What would you need to better understand these concepts?” If the person has signaled that they are willing to move towards change, it is important to validate the process they have gone through, and let them know where they can get more information.





Secularism

Holiday Celebrations

Scenario: You want to have a Christmas party, because it's something you love to do, and something you have always done with your unit. You think a few girls in your unit don't celebrate Christmas, and you want to tell those girls that attendance is optional, but they are more than welcome to attend.

GGC's Stance: GGC is a secular organization, which means that Guiding is not affiliated with, nor privileges any religion or faith-based beliefs, behaviours and traditions. As a secular organization, we welcome girls and women from all and no religious affiliations. Being a secular organization signals Guiding's belief in providing a safe space and sense of belonging for all girls. We are all ambassadors for GGC, and when we actively practice and promote religious practices in the unit, we may be unintentionally turning away future members who don't share those beliefs. Moving from practices that have their roots in religion or are religious allows us to remain true to our values and work towards serving all girls.

We cannot assume to know what any girl celebrates or wants to celebrate based on physical appearance, the community they come from, their parents' religious affiliation, etc. Being welcomed to attend an event and being able to participate fully may look different in practice.

Making your unit holiday celebration more inclusive:

1. Ask the girls in the unit if there are any special days coming up that they'd like to learn more about and celebrate. Ask and learn about why the day is significant, and what it means to them. Then take the time to find out how the girls celebrate and incorporate different aspects of the traditions (e.g. giving, spending time with family and friends, sharing a meal, etc.) into their celebration.
2. Look for common values shared by the significant days that the girls celebrate and build an activity, party or outing based on those values (e.g. organizing a community service trip to a local shelter to practice values of giving, sharing, and appreciation). Your unit might very well decide a party is the right choice for them (e.g. a party where girls exchange winter-themed gifts they made for each other).
3. Focus celebrations around seasons of the year. Check out the activity called "*Sparks Celebrate!*" on the program platform, in the Guide Together Program Area under the Our Story Theme. This activity focuses on building a celebration calendar using the seasons as inspiration. This activity can be modified for all other branches. Everyone has different activities their families engage in during different seasons, and those can be the basis of a celebration.
4. Use *A Guide to Making Winter Celebrations Inclusive* to help you think through and plan for your next Winter celebration.





Songs

Scenario: You are choosing songs for your camp and you love the traditional Guiding songs. You choose a few songs that have the word “God” or “Lord” in them and that refer to other religious symbols.

GGC’s Stance: GGC is a secular organization which welcomes girls and women from all and no religious affiliations. Being a secular organization signals Guiding’s belief in providing a safe space and sense of belonging for all girls. Moving away from religious practices that effectively exclude many girls allows us to remain true to our values and work towards serving all girls.

We cannot assume that all the girls in our unit share any/all identities or beliefs based on physical appearance, the community they come from, their parents’ religious affiliation, etc. Some questions we can ask ourselves are: How can we respectfully talk and learn about different roles religion might play in girls’ lives without leaving anyone out? How can we practice humility and curiosity to help us really get to know all the girls in our unit?

Making your song selection more inclusive:

1. Choose songs that are still meaningful to you that don’t have religious symbols and words.
2. Modify songs that you love to be more secular. We are hard at work – in collaboration with members – to provide a music resource that is inclusive (songs that are secular and don’t have religious symbols or words), does not have culturally appropriated songs, and does not have copyright-protected songs that GGC does not have permission to print. The *Let’s Sing* music resource will be available during the Spring 2020. Use this songbook as a reference.
3. As a unit activity, ask girls what songs they love, and consider the lyrics from an inclusion lens. As a group or individually work on editing and modifying their favourite song to be more inclusive.





Churches and Use of Space

Scenario: You are responsible for finding unit space for a new Spark unit that is opening. You know that holding your unit meetings in a church may pose a challenge and put up a barrier for some girls to join your unit, but you don't know what to do.

GGC's Stance: GGC is a secular organization which welcomes girls and women from all and no religious affiliations. Being a secular organization signals Guiding's belief in providing a safe space and sense of belonging for all girls. Meeting in religious places creates the impression of a religious connection for Guiding, and affectively excludes many girls. Meeting in nonreligious places allows us to remain true to our values and work towards serving all girls.

We recognize that we create barriers for some members of the community when we hold unit meetings or events in churches. As an organization that is committed to inclusivity, continuing to hold meetings and events in religious facilities may adversely affect GGC's ability to be welcoming to a number of different communities who would not feel comfortable going into a church and also create the impression that Guiding is a religious organization. The spaces in which units meet are safe spaces for all girls and women, therefore any spaces that do not align with GGC's diversity and inclusion commitments, are not suitable as a meeting space.

How to choose a unit location that is more inclusive:

1. Consider opportunities to move your unit to new, affordable and accessible locations, with no religious affiliations. Consider community centres, libraries, schools, housing or condo multipurpose rooms. Get creative and ask to use the spaces of local dance studios, tutoring businesses, etc.
2. Where it is not possible to find a space in your community and places of worship are your only option for a unit meeting, consider holding your unit meetings in spaces that have shown themselves to be inclusive and safe spaces for different marginalized people in your community. For example, a church which has a welcoming and positive space policy.
3. Where it is not possible to find a space in your community and places of worship are your only option for a unit meeting, implement measures that will not exclude (either implicitly or inadvertently) girls of other faiths or beliefs or for those with no religious affiliation. For example, instead of advertising the unit meeting using the church name, use the physical address. Designated GGC administrators can negotiate a contract with the places of worship so that it is in line with GGC's Inclusivity Statement. Please refer to GGC's Guidelines for Reviewing Contracts with Places of Worship for more details on how to negotiate contracts with places of worship so that we can continue to offer safe and inclusive unit spaces.





Accommodating Religious Practices

Scenario: Your district wants to hold a food themed event where girls would get to learn about food prep, healthy eating and gardening. As a group, you pick a date to hold this event. When you announce the date of the event, a member alerts you to the fact that the scheduled date falls on Ramadan, a month-long Muslim religious observation, during which practicing Muslims fast from sunrise to sundown.

GGC Stance: Though we are a secular organization, GGC knows that some of our members follow different faiths, come from diverse religious backgrounds and practice a variety of spiritual traditions, alongside those who have no religious affiliations. In order to be inclusive, we can make space for religious practices, while ensuring we do not impose these practices on anyone.

How to make space for religious practices in a secular organization:

1. Consult a faith calendar when planning for events, outings, etc. Ensure that you are not holding events on faith-based holidays and celebrations. Where your event does overlap with a faith-based holiday, ensure that the activities planned for the event respect the traditions observed during that holiday. For example, with Ramadan, a food-based event would be difficult for people who are fasting.
2. Provide space and time for people to practice their religion during event and unit meetings. For example, ensure there is a quiet space for people to pray, meditate and take a moment.
3. Consider if and how your Guiding work and activities would pose barriers for and/or impact people from different faiths and spiritual backgrounds. Work to reduce barriers and increase positive impacts.
4. When providing religious accommodations, we must ensure that we are doing so while being inclusive of those who do not observe any religious traditions. For example, when providing time to pray, we would not pray as a group, but would allow time and space for individuals who wish to do so.





Coming out as 2sLGBTQI+

Scenario: You are doing an activity with your unit from the Explore Identities Program Area on the program platform, and during the activity one of your Pathfinders comes out to the unit as being queer. You also identify as queer, and you wonder if you should share this so that you can empathize and ensure that the Pathfinder doesn't feel alone. But you are not sure if you should and if GGC would support your decision.

GGC's Stance: We want all girls to have a safe space in Guiding and we want girls to be able to bring their whole selves to Guiding. This means encouraging self-awareness and awareness of others while building room for difference. In order for us to do this, we need Guiders to model these same behaviours and bring their whole selves to Guiding. Where appropriate, and where Guiders feel comfortable, we encourage Guiders to share different parts of their identities with individual girls and their unit in order to normalize, empathize and build their positive self-identity. If you do not share the same identity as the girl, you can still support her developing a positive identity by following the tips below.

How to have a positive impact on girl's self-identity:

1. Ensure that Guiding is a place where girls' can meet diverse women role models, this includes Guiders, and debunk stereotypes. When looking for guest speakers broaden your search to ensure you can host women from different communities and backgrounds.
2. Challenge stereotypes, biases and assumptions; this will ensure that girls will think positively about themselves and their peers both despite and because of their differences. When girls see this practiced, they are more likely to be able to share who they are without fear of being tokenized or pigeonholed.
3. Where appropriate, and where you feel comfortable, share different parts of your identity with individual girls and your unit in order to normalize, empathize and build positive self-identity.





Celebrating Culture

Scenario: You and your co-Guider would like to plan a few unit meetings to teach your unit about Indigenous culture. You have consulted some Indigenous resources online, and you have found a few crafts you'd like to teach your unit. One of the crafts is making a totem pole the other is making a dreamcatcher.

GGC's Stance: GGC encourages all members to plan and engage in programming and activities that respect cultures. We disrespect cultures when activities use someone else's culture without thinking about and acknowledging how our actions affect the people whose culture we are engaging. When we do that we are engaging in cultural appropriation. Cultural appropriation is when we make use of a symbol, activity, aspect of a culture that is reserved solely for those who are part of that culture. In this case totem poles and dreamcatchers are parts of Indigenous culture which are reserved solely for Indigenous peoples and have meaning and significance that we can't capture by treating them simply as a craft.

The greatest teachers about culture are people who know and understand the culture deeply, including principles for engagement with one another, leaders and elders; with nature and environment; with norms and values, etc. GGC recognizes that the best teachers are the people from the culture we are engaging in or learning about and therefore we encourage all members to involve the people and communities in the activities and events that are about any culture.

How to honour and learn about Indigenous culture:

1. Ask all girls what is important to them about their culture. Have a conversation about inclusivity and be open to learning about Indigenous culture while understanding that it is important that we don't come with our own judgements about a culture so we can honour and celebrate it. Explore and use resources created for the purposes of teaching Indigenous cultures, languages and teachings to support this conversation.
2. Connect with people from local Indigenous communities who can tell the girls in the unit about their culture. You can connect with local Friendship Centres, Indigenous educators and nearby Nations to gather resources, identify guest speakers and learn about local events.
3. Consider if girls who identify as Indigenous (First Nations, Metis, Inuit, Status or Non-Status) in your unit would feel safe, included and valued in your activities and celebrations. In line with our girl-driven experience, ask Indigenous girls in your unit individually to see if they feel comfortable including her perspective in planning your activity.
4. Incorporate land acknowledgements into your Guiding practice. You can use the opportunity of preparing and delivering land acknowledgements to learn more about the land you gather on, and what responsibilities we all have as Canadians to the land and the people who were the first inhabitants of the land. You can find out more about this in the [Indigenous Land Acknowledgement FAQ resource](#).





Scenario: A Guider has set up a culture day and she has asked girls to dress up in traditional clothing and bring a dish from their home country. All girls will participate in making crafts from different cultures.

GGC's Stance: Often culture is reduced to only a few aspects such as food, clothing, song and dance, and celebrations. Cultures are about so much more – they tell us how to interact with one another, leaders and elders; with nature and environment; with norms and values, etc. When a symbol, object or even word, is taken out of the context of its people and their culture, the meaning and relevance of it are minimized or even dismissed.

We tokenize when we include someone as a symbol or because we're obliged to without truly thinking about them, dedicating time to them or respecting their culture. We don't want to tokenize girls or cultures.

Making your cultural activity more inclusive:

1. View diversity within your unit as an asset; ask the girls to list all the cultures they belong to. Create a list of all the days that are important, holy and celebrated by the girls, their families and their communities. Ask them how they would like to learn more about each other's cultures.
2. Consider if all the girls in your unit would feel safe, included and valued in your activities and celebrations. It can be difficult to strike a balance between recognizing/valuing differences in your unit and singling girls out for their differences. If you feel a girl's culture, community or need isn't being considered in the celebration, try approaching her individually to see if she feels comfortable including her perspective in planning your celebration.
3. Ask all girls what is important to them about their culture. Have a conversation about inclusivity and being open to receiving what the culture holds in high esteem and importance without our own judgement so you can honour and celebrate culture.
4. Connect with people in your community who can tell the girls in the unit about their culture. Expand the scope of positive role models enabling girls to experience different leadership styles, communities, ways of communicating, etc.





Physical Accessibility

Physical accessibility

Scenario: You want to take the girls in the unit hiking. One of the girls in the unit uses a wheelchair. The hiking trail you had originally chosen is not accessible to wheelchairs. You want to ensure that all the girls in your unit can attend the same outing, and so you let the parents know that you will have to choose another hiking trail or change the activity entirely. Some parents ask why the girl who uses the wheelchair can't just do another activity at the original trail.

GGC's Stance: Our unit meetings and Guiding events are spaces where every girl should feel a sense of belonging. By thoughtfully and collaboratively choosing inclusive activities with the girls in your unit, we can make all girls feel included and valued.

How to make your unit outings more inclusive:

1. Involve all the girls in your unit in the planning of your outings. This way the needs of all girls will be considered right from the get-go. You can also speak to the parents of the girls about GGC's commitment to inclusivity at the beginning of the Guiding year, so everyone understands it.
2. Visit venues beforehand to ensure they are accessible and a space in which all girls would feel comfortable. This may also include ensuring the venue has values that are in line with GGC's inclusivity commitment and ensuring it doesn't have materials on the walls that the girls or families of the girls in your unit would find offensive.
3. Don't forget to think about what happens after you arrive at an outing location. Think about the activities the girls will engage in. Consider these questions:
 1. Is there time in between activities for health breaks, if necessary?
 2. Are the activities accessible for those with physical disabilities? **Tip:** if you have to stand up in an activity, have an accommodation for those with mobility restrictions and devices.
 3. Are all activities accessible for all fitness levels? Are the activities accessible financially?





Financial Accessibility

Scenario: You are planning a camping trip for your unit. You notice one of the girls in the unit seems less engaged in the planning of the trip and appears to be upset, so you go and talk to her. She says she wants to go to camp with the unit but doesn't think she can afford to go.

GGC's Stance: We never want a girl to miss an opportunity to join or participate in Guiding due to lack of funds. GGC recognizes the reality of financial barriers, and understands that asking for financial assistance can be stigmatizing for girls and their families. When we actively consider different financial barriers that may arise, and include multiple options for accessing our activities, we can make all girls feel included and valued.

How to make your unit outings more financially accessible:

1. As much as possible, make costs upfront and transparent at the beginning of the Guiding year for parents and families, and be sure to clearly and frequently state that there is a capacity for mitigating costs as needed.
2. When planning your unit activities, consider whether or not the cost could be a barrier and put families in an uncomfortable situation of having to choose between disclosing their financial situation in order to ask for assistance, or telling their child that they can't attend the activity. Where cost might be prohibitive, look for alternative activities that are more financially accessible.
3. Build activity cost subsidization into your budgets to ensure you have the capacity to be flexible and meet the needs of the families in your unit.
4. Inquire with your district, area, administrative community, or province to see what funds and processes are in place to support families needing financial assistance in accessing unit activities.
5. Consider implementing a "pay what you can" model to create a pool of funds for activities. State approximately how much money you need to gather for the Guiding year and pool the money together (rather than associating the specific amount with each girl). This gives families an opportunity to support each other in accessing programs and activities and removes the stigma for families who can afford to pay less. You can then plan your activities according to the amount of money you have collected. Any extra funds can be put aside for the next activity in case you come up short.





Bias and Oppression

Scenario: You attend a diversity and inclusion workshop, and when you are asked to think about your biases, you say that you don't have any. You think that you treat everyone the same because you just see people, you don't see race, sex, disability, etc. In fact, you haven't even noticed the race, sexual orientation, family income or abilities of the girls because you feel it is none of your business.

GGC's Stance: We want to ensure we treat people equitably and fairly; this does not mean we treat everyone the same. People all have different identity dimensions that we need to consider. These identity dimensions are parts of who they are, including their race, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc. If we ignore different parts of people's identities by not "seeing" it, we are erasing parts of their identity rather than validating them. When we don't see or validate people's identity, we have a limited understanding of who they are and what they experience including racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, etc. GGC's inclusivity statement calls on us to have 'self-awareness and awareness of others,' so that we can consider the lived experiences and realities of girls and women in our interactions and engagement with them.

How you can practice critical self-awareness:

1. Think about the girls in your unit and their identity dimensions. Consider your reactions and feelings when you think about their race, family income, sexual orientation, country of origin, etc. If you feel uncomfortable thinking about these topics, don't ignore the feeling, or stop thinking; lean into the discomfort. Ask yourself, how may my experiences differ from the girls in my unit?
2. Find out more about bias and more specifically your own biases. Honestly self-reflect and think about assumptions you might make, thoughts you might hold, and actions that might be biased. We all have biases, so if you can't come up with any, take a break and try again later. Ask yourself 'can my attitudes, beliefs and values harm anyone?'
3. Once you have had a chance to think, reflect, and absorb (this may take many cycles), you can consider how you can apply what you have learned in practical ways during your interactions, including your interactions with the girls in your unit.