

# Fostering Community Engagement in Environmental Education Using NAAEE Guidelines for Excellence



**Misty Klotz (KBS - MAEOE)**  
**Ellen Koehler (MSUE Tollgate Farm and Education Center)**  
**Bora Simmons (National Project for Excellence in EE)**

# Michigan Partners

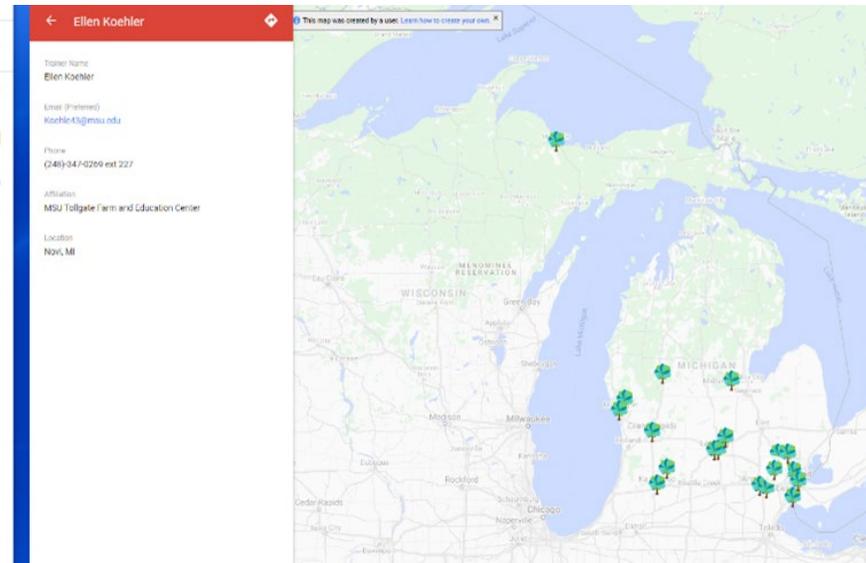


**Guidelines for Excellence**

## Guidelines Trainers' Bureau Map



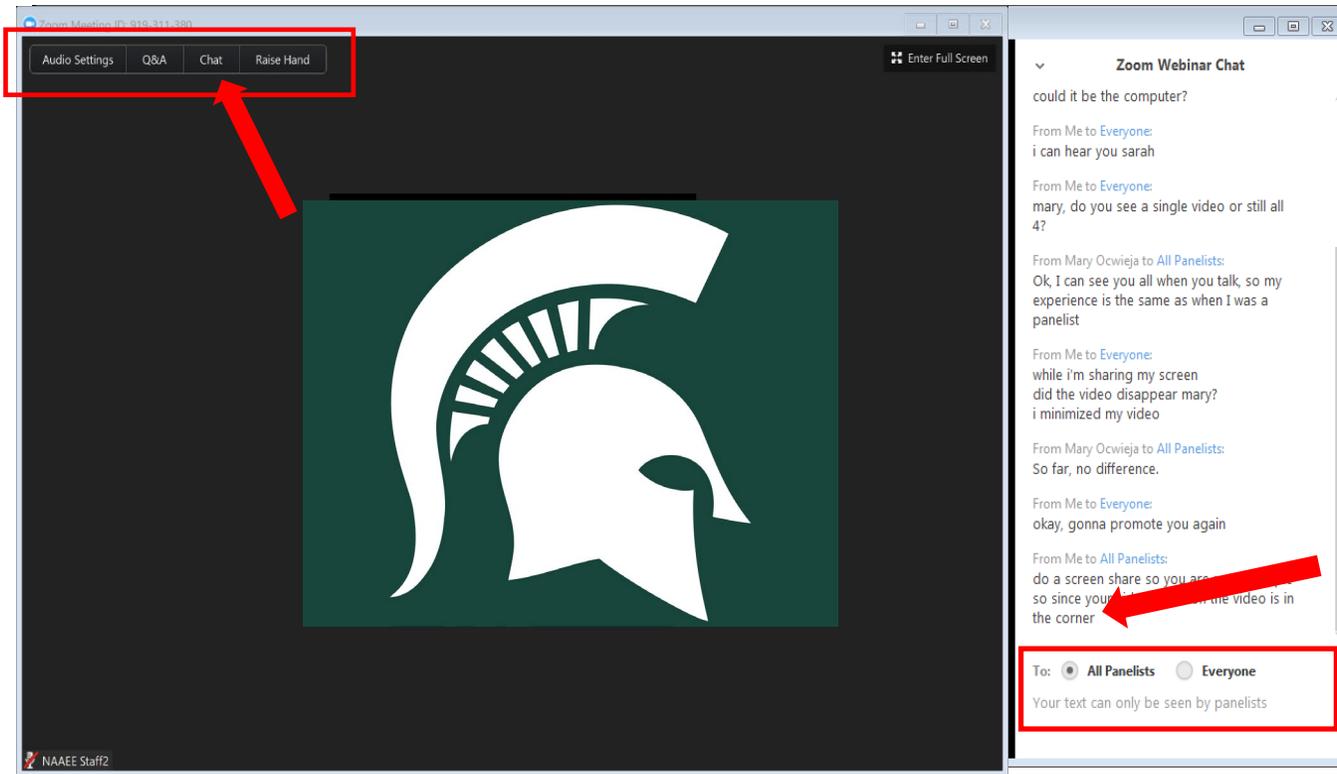
[www.naaee.com](http://www.naaee.com)



[www.maeoe.com](http://www.maeoe.com)

# How to Interact With Us

All audio lines are muted. Click “chat” on the toolbar.



Send a message to the whole group, or just to panelists using the dropdown menu at the bottom of the chat box.

**Please type your questions into the chat box.**



**We'll collect them and ask the speakers as many as we can!**

**If you have any technical  
problems, please message  
Ashley in the chat.**

# Introducing our Speakers...



**Misty Klotz**  
W. K. Kellogg  
Biological Station



**Bora Simmons**  
National Project for Excellence in  
Environmental Education



**Ellen Koehler**  
MSU Extension Tollgate  
Farm and Education Center

**Fostering collaborations and  
taking our work more fully into  
communities.**

# Webinar Objectives

Become familiar with the Community Engagement Guidelines and how they can be used to improve the quality of our practice

Identify tools for fostering community engagement strategies in your work



# Agenda

- Overview of the National Project for Excellence in Environmental Education
- Introduction to Community Engagement: Guidelines for Excellence
- Questions and discussion throughout



Thanks in advance for  
your questions!

A bit of background  
of the National  
Project for Excellence  
and the Guidelines for  
Excellence series.



# Primary Sponsors

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From Inspiration to Impact

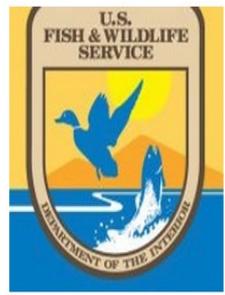
U.S. EPA Office of  
Environmental Education



This webinar was developed under Assistant Agreement No. NT-83695801-0 awarded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). It has not been formally reviewed by EPA. The views expressed are solely those of Bora Simmons and EPA does not endorse any products or commercial services mentioned.

# Other Partners

- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- State and Provincial EE Associations
- Organizational partners – such as Keep America Beautiful, Project Learning Tree, Arbor Day Foundation, Project WILD, Project WET



# An initiative of NAAEE

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naaee

North American Association  
for Environmental Education





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# Promoting excellence in environmental education



# Six Primary Products

- Materials Guidelines
- K-12 EE Guidelines
- Professional Development
- Nonformal Programs
- Early Childhood
- Community Engagement



# Our Collective Wisdom

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- Developed *Guidelines* through a public participatory process
- Engaging educators in a deep discussion about quality environmental education practice
- Building EE as a profession
- Promoting Excellence

# Community Engagement Guidelines

*They're all about:*

Working  
with  
communities



Guidelines for Excellence  
**Community Engagement**



naaee

North American Association  
for Environmental Education

*These guidelines focus on:*

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- ✓ environment
- ✓ community well-being
- ✓ sustainability
- ✓ resilience

*These guidelines provide suggestions for supporting:*

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- ✓ inclusive working environments
- ✓ social equity
- ✓ effective partnerships
- ✓ collaborative coalition building
- ✓ community capacity & resilience



# What is community?

Please type your ideas in the chat.

What communities do you belong to?

Jambord link

# Breakout rooms

Do you see any community connections?

# Definitions of Community

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- 1. A group of people living in the same place*
- 2. A group of people having a particular characteristic in common*
- 3. A feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals.*

# In the Community Engagement Guidelines, we focused on:

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- 1. Neighborhoods, towns, cities, and other geographically based communities*
- 2. May also be useful for working with communities of interest, identity, culture, or belief*

# Jumping into the Guidelines: A bit of a roadmap.



Guidelines for Excellence  
**Community Engagement**

# Key Characteristics



- 1. Community Centered**
- 2. Based on Sound Environmental Education Principles**
- 3. Collaborative and Inclusive**
- 4. Oriented Toward Capacity Building and Civic Action**
- 5. A Long-Term Investment in Change**

# Key Characteristics

## Key Characteristic



3

### Collaborative and Inclusive

Environmental education works in collaborative and inclusive relationships, partnerships, and coalitions.

#### Guideline 3.1 Build coalitions and partnerships strategically

By working with diverse partners and coalitions who share your interests, concerns, and goals, environmental educators strengthen their connections with the community and the effectiveness of their efforts.

##### Indicators:

- Identify existing coalitions and partnerships and develop strategies to work with them.
- Identify potential partners with complementary concerns and goals to your environmental education aims.
- Work with partners to identify how the strengths, networks, and contributions of members complement each other in working toward shared goals, while also accomplishing their own goals.
- When appropriate, jointly develop an agreement that defines the purpose and goals of the partnership.
- Establish clear roles and responsibilities for partners.

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# Key Characteristics

## Key Characteristic

3

### Collaborative and Inclusive

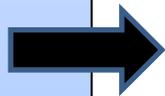
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# Guidelines in Practice

## Aqua Pura Fotonovela – Comics Connect a Community with Water

### GUIDELINES IN PRACTICE

#### Agua Pura Fotonovela—Comics Connect a Community with Its Water

If a picture says 1,000 words, how about a book full of them—along with a story that speaks to people's experience? That was the idea behind the Agua Pura Fotonovela, a creative initiative in Santa Barbara, California.



With the goal of increasing water quality awareness in the city's growing Latino neighborhoods, Agua Pura organizers began their initiative by seeking interested community partners. They collaborated with a Latino community center, as well as a group of promotoras—peer educators (generally women) serving as advocates, outreach workers, translators, and liaisons between their communities and health and social organizations.

Together, the partners used dialogue meetings and a community survey to learn about people's water use and concerns. While residents expressed strong interest in water quality and health, there was generally low awareness about tap water safety, household chemical disposal, and sources for water quality programs and information.

Given what they found, how could Agua Pura best inform the community about the issues they cared about most? Here's where the fotonovela came in.

A fotonovela is a comic book-style story illustrated with photos. The fotonovela has long been used as a community empowerment tool. The engaging format helps leapfrog communication barriers, from the challenges of multiple languages used in multicultural neighborhoods to literacy challenges in marginalized communities.

The creation of the Agua Pura fotonovela was participatory, with students from the community designing cartoon storyboards vetted by community members. In the final story, *Carlos y el Agua Limpia* (*Carlos and Clean Water*), teenager Carlos helps his family with chores while educating them on proper waste disposal, how to keep water clean, and tap water safety.

With community members as actors and using local filming, printing, and distribution resources, Carlos's story proved to be a popular and engaging educational tool. Over 2,000 copies of *Carlos y el Agua Limpia* were distributed to interested community members.

For more information on the Agua Pura Fotonovela project, and to see Carlos in action, see <http://cete.hama.ucanr.edu/?mpact=758>.

Agua Pura originated as a partnership among the University of California, Santa Barbara Environmental Resources Center, Santa Barbara City College, and the Santa Barbara County Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development Program. See Agua Pura: Latino Communities. University of California, Cooperative Extension, Environmental Resources Center, and Santa Barbara County Cooperative Extension. <http://www.agsci.ucsb.edu/aguapuracomplete.pdf>.

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# Did You Know?

## DID YOU KNOW?

### Community Engagement: Is It Right for Your Project?

All projects are not alike, and not every endeavor will benefit from extensive community engagement. Community engagement should be authentic, matching the form of engagement to the actual role the community will play. See Resource #9, page 94, *Designing Civic Engagement*, for help determining your goals, which may range from simply informing participants (one-way communication), to consulting or involving participants, all the way to full partnerships.

Projects are especially likely to benefit from more comprehensive, collaborative engagement if one or more of the following factors apply:



- **Complexity:** The topic you are addressing is difficult to understand, values-based, or controversial.

*Successful participation will help the community understand issues better, and will allow the project to benefit from an array of perspectives.*

- **Size and Diversity of Stakeholder Group:** Your project will impact a large or diverse group. A stakeholder is anyone who can affect, or who will be affected by, your project.

*More interactive types of engagement are helpful if you are still in the process of defining the stakeholder group, or if you know there is a wide array of stakeholders.*

- **Balance of Power:** There is a pre-existing imbalance of resources or decision-making authority among stakeholders.

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# Resources, Resources, Resources

## Ten Great Resources for Community Engagement

Throughout, *Community Engagement: Guidelines for Excellence* refers to websites, organizations, and publications you can use to explore unfamiliar topics, approaches, and practices. Some of these resources rise to the top as so broadly helpful that they belong in everyone's library or bookmarks folder. Here's a top ten:

### Everyday Democracy

[www.everyday-democracy.org](http://www.everyday-democracy.org)

Everyday Democracy's programs and services help create communities that work better for everyone because all voices are included in public problem solving, and help strengthen our democracy. Everyday Democracy offers community assistance and training to support a process of "dialogue to change." Its website features many case studies and a variety of tools and techniques.

### National Audubon Society's Diversity and the Conservation Movement

[https://naaee.org/sites/default/files/eepro/resource/files/diversity\\_module.9.22.15.pdf](https://naaee.org/sites/default/files/eepro/resource/files/diversity_module.9.22.15.pdf)

Developed in partnership with National Audubon Society, NAAEE, Toyota TogetherGreen, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and EE Capacity, *Diversity and the Conservation Movement* offers context, case studies, and tools to inform dialogue and action toward strengthening diversity and inclusion in conservation. Bonta, Marcelo, Tony DeFalco, and Chandra Taylor Smith. *Diversity and the Conservation Movement*. Edited by John Carey. New York, NY: National Audubon Society, 2015.

### National Audubon Society's Tools for Engagement

<https://naaee.org/sites/default/files/eepro/resource/files/toolsofengagement.pdf>

This comprehensive toolkit is organized into

### National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD)

[www.ncdd.org](http://www.ncdd.org)

NCDD represents dialogue and deliberation practitioners and scholars from a wide variety of fields. NCDD hosts conferences, creates educational materials, and facilitates online and in-person professional networking. NCDD's online resource center offers thousands of resources for dialogue, deliberation, and public engagement. Here you can find descriptions and links to books, articles, case studies, evaluation tools, videos, organizations, and foundations.

### National Extension Water Outreach Education

<http://fyi.uwex.edu/wateroutreach/>

This website features extensive resources, research, and practical tools, including "Water Outreach Education," which encourages the use of best education practices to plan an effective natural resources outreach strategy, and "Changing Public Behavior," which offers tools to increase involvement using target audience information.

### North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE), eePRO

<https://naaee.org/eepro>

This online resource for environmental education professional development offers resources, research, and listings of webinars, workshops, and other learning opportunities. eePro is also an online forum for special-interest discussions.

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# Supporting Resources



## Resource #1

### Community Well-Being, Sustainability and Resilience

**Purpose:** Provides insights into using systems-based concepts such as community well-being, sustainability, and resilience to align environmental education with broader community concerns, capacities, partners, and alliances.

*Community wellbeing is about the happiness and health of the community in which we live. Our sense of wellbeing is affected by our physical and mental health, the relationships between us, the natural and built environments in which we live, the economy, and our ability to have a say in the decisions that matter to us.*

*Community wellbeing is about how all these things come together to support us to live happy, healthy and meaningful lives.*

—City of Darwin, Community Wellbeing Plan<sup>6</sup>

*Sustainability is based on a simple principle: Everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. To pursue sustainability is to create and maintain the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony to support present and future generations.*

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# Scenario

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You live in a medium sized community in an area known for recreation and agriculture. In addition to working in agriculture and tourism, many commute to a nearby urban area. The region has been faced with an increasing number of flooding events due to climate change.

Imagine that you are thinking about becoming involved in finding community-based solutions to the flooding.

How would you get started?

Please type your ideas in the chat.

# Key Characteristics



## 1. Community Centered

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Anchor environmental aims within the context of community interests, issues, and capacities. Put the community at the heart of environmental education.

3. Collaborative and Inclusive
4. Oriented Toward Capacity Building & Civic Action
5. A Long-Term Investment in Change

# Understanding the Interconnecting Systems

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# Getting to Know the Community

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- ✓ What do you already know about the community?
- ✓ What are the community's assets?
- ✓ What do you need to know that you don't know?

# Linking Goals and Capacities

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- ✓ How do environmental issues impact the community?
- ✓ Which groups, individuals, and efforts already address environmental issues, sustainability, and community well-being?
- ✓ Who are the potential allies who can help build bridges among groups?
- ✓ How can your EE efforts contribute to addressing community concerns?

# Reaching Beyond Usual Partners

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- ✓ What are existing areas of community concern (health, physical fitness, economic development, religion, youth development)?
- ✓ What service organizations have roots in the community?
- ✓ Who needs to be involved?

# Key Characteristics



1. Community Centered

## 2. Based on Sound EE Principles

Engage communities in ways that rely on established principles and practices of the field.

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4. Action

5. A Long-Term Investment in Change

What do you need to know about the issue or concern to develop your educational strategy?

**Poll # 1:** Which of these are important when designing a community-based educational strategy?

---

- a) Complexity of the issue or concern
- b) Political sensitivity of the issue or concern
- c) Potential community impacts
- d) What you want to achieve through education
- e) Audience
- f) All of the above

# Matching EE Strategies to Your Goals

---

Do you want to:

- ✓ **Convey information**
- ✓ **Build understanding**
- ✓ **Improve skills**
- ✓ **Enable sustainable actions**

# Matching EE Strategies to Your Goals

---

Do you want to:

- ✓ **Convey information** [e.g., posters, brochures, website]
- ✓ **Build understanding** [e.g., workshop, presentation, environmental monitoring]
- ✓ **Improve skills** [e.g., mentoring, technical training, opportunity to practice skills]
- ✓ **Enable sustainable actions** [e.g., training for organizational effectiveness, mediation, learning networks, joint fact finding]

# What is Civic Engagement?

Please type in the chat room.

Civic Engagement  
is any individual or group actively addressing  
issues of public concern.

What do you need to know about the issue or concern to develop your civic engagement strategy?

## **Poll #2:** Which of these are important when designing a civic engagement strategy?

---

- a) Complexity of the issue
- b) Political sensitivity of the issue
- c) Potential community impacts
- d) What you want to achieve through civic engagement?
- e) Audience
- f) All of the above

# Civic Engagement Goals

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**Inform**

**Involve**

**Collaborate**

**Empower**

# Key Characteristics



1. Community Centered
2. Based on Sound EE Principles

### **3. Collaborative and Inclusive**

Work in collaborative and inclusive relationships, partnerships, and coalitions.

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5. A Long-Term Investment in Change

# Collaborative and Inclusive

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- ✓ Build coalitions and partnerships strategically
- ✓ Value and incorporate equity and inclusion
- ✓ Plan and implement collaboratively
- ✓ Learn from and resolve conflict

# Key Characteristics

1. Community Centered
2. Based on Sound EE Principles
3. Collaborative and Inclusive
- 4. Oriented Toward Capacity Building & Civic Action**

Support capacity building for ongoing civic engagement in community life, contributing to long-term community well-being, sustainability, and resilience.



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# Capacity Building and Civic Action

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- ✓ Integrate EE with complementary communication, education, and social change approaches
- ✓ Build capacity for effective learning, decision-making, and action
- ✓ Move toward civic action

How does the community engagement work  
you are doing in Extension  
illustrate capacity building?

Please place your examples in the chat.

# Key Characteristics



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- 5. A Long-Term Investment in Change**

Creating change is typically a long-term initiative, requiring a commitment to relationship building and an ongoing and evolving process of engagement.

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You and your partners  
probably don't know  
everything...

Invest in your own  
training



Incorporate learning, improvement, and adaptations by building in assessment, evaluation, reflection, and feedback mechanisms into program planning and implementation.





INVEST  
IN  
CHANGE

Plan for long-term support and  
viability



Embrace change and celebrate  
progress!

# Community Engagement: Guidelines for Excellence



# Questions?



# NAAEE Guidelines for Excellence



Guidelines for Excellence  
**Community Engagement**



[https://cdn.naaee.org/sites/default/files/eepresource/files/community\\_engagement\\_-\\_guidelines\\_for\\_excellence\\_0.pdf](https://cdn.naaee.org/sites/default/files/eepresource/files/community_engagement_-_guidelines_for_excellence_0.pdf)

# NAAEE eeLEARN



<https://naaee.org/eepro/learning/eelearn>

# Find additional resource at eePRO.

<https://naaee.org/eepro/join-eepro>



naaee

North American Association  
for Environmental Education

ee PRO  
The hub for environmental education professional development

- eePRO
- Learning**
- Groups
- Blog
- Calendar
- Opportunities
- Resources
- Jobs
- People
- Research

**Focus Feature**

**BLOG** 3 likes

### EE Builds Community

NAAEE Board President, Pepe Marcos-Iga writes about the role of EE in building community in this blog post, "EE Builds Community."

BY PEPE MARCOS-IGA | OCTOBER 8, 2015  
EE Central

**Groups**

- EE Central
- Advocacy
- Affiliates
- Climate Change
- Connecting to Nature

**Spotlight**

**Learning**

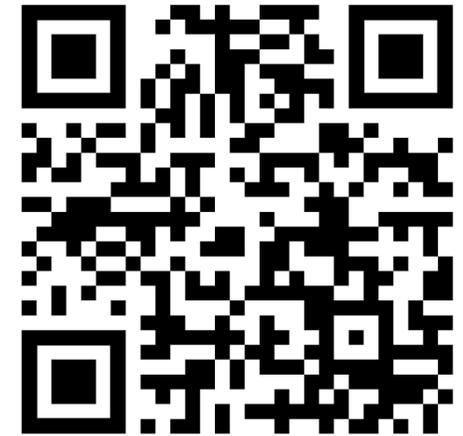
Looking to expand your mind and improve your p workshop, or training you'd like to share with your the right place!

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Note: If you are posting a conference, scholarship or grant, please post it on our [Opportunities](#) page

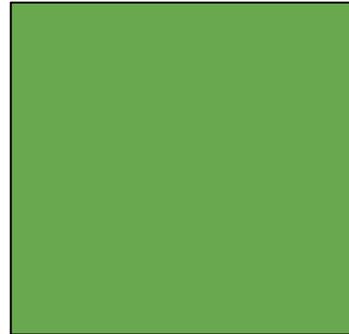
- Webinars
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- Online Courses
- Higher Ed Programs
- Conferences
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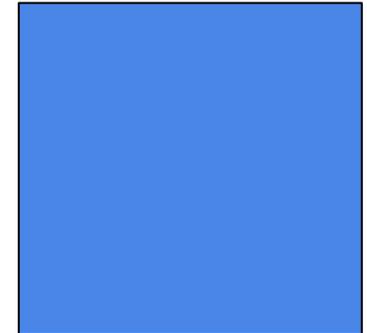
# Summary Jamboard

Jamboard with sticky note

What is easy  
for you to do?



Where is your  
growing edge?



**Hope to see you next time!**

# Final Thoughts

“Whatever community organization, whether it’s a women's organization, or fighting for racial justice ... you will get satisfaction out of doing something to give back to the community that you never get in any other way.”

- Ruth Bader Ginsburg

# Thank you for joining us!



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