



GUIDELINES TO ACHIEVING INCLUSIVITY

These guidelines are intended to help you consider your current Guiding traditions and practices and to provide you with some suggested alternatives to assist you in continuing to “take action for a better world” and continuing to shape inclusive Guiding experiences for girls and women. Making appropriate choices such as those cited above, will require some effort, but common sense and an awareness of the backgrounds and circumstances of your Unit Members should help you to make suitable selections that are inclusive of all.

How Do I Become More Inclusive?

GGC recognizes that everyone is shaped by their life experiences, their communities, culture and values. How we recognize our own personal or collective beliefs and actions, how we understand how these might influence our actions, and how we work with them is what will make the difference in creating an environment where everyone who comes to Girl Guides of Canada is welcomed, safe, and valued.

Inclusivity at GGC is a conviction that all girls and women need to be included. If GGC is to be open and welcoming to all girls and women, then it is critical that you give second thought as to how you can achieve this for your Unit or council.

Guiders should ensure that every girl can participate and is not left out of activities. However, helping girls feel included involves more than simply participating in activities.

An inclusive program considers:

- The activities you choose
- How your activities are presented
- The examples you use
- Subjects you talk about and those you don't

When all girls are included in an activity that is appropriate for their interests, their needs, their backgrounds and their abilities, then all girls will have been treated with respect and inclusivity is working.

It is important that you remember you are moving forward along a continuum: as you begin to develop an awareness of what you are doing and how you are doing it, you will begin to recognize your own biases, as well as the differences among the girls in your Unit.

The following actions will guide you in the process:

- Create a safe space in which everyone feels valued, respected and represented.
- Understand your own biases are coming from your own life experiences. No two individuals see or experience the world the same way as you.
- Become conscious of all the things you do simply because that is the way you have always done them. Breaking through these walls means asking questions of yourself and of others.
- Make inclusivity a part of everything you do in Guiding. Once you begin thinking about an inclusive program, you will begin to see more and more opportunities for information, activities and events that help the girls in your unit discover that different realities exist and there are many ways in which to experience the world.
- When selecting resources, consider if they are relevant to all the girls in the Unit, and whether or not the girls will see themselves reflected and valued in the materials. Remember to also provide resources that are diverse, as these will help girls understand how others experience the world.
- Involve the girls in your Unit in the process of looking at activities with an open mind and a critical eye to inclusivity.

An inclusive program values all participants, makes room for everyone to contribute in a meaningful way, makes allowances for different life experiences and realities, and provides a safe space for all to share, learn and grow together.

There are three INCLUSIVITY ASSURANCE QUESTIONS to ask yourself as you begin the process of developing any activity.

To help you understand the steps needed in developing an inclusive program or activity using these inclusivity assurance questions, we have provided below an example of an activity that most branches participate in on a regular basis: Camping.

1. What is the purpose of this activity? (Why am I doing this?)

A Guider might respond to this with the following rationale: to complete outdoor program requirements; to develop skills; for fun and learning; to teach independence and teamwork, and to interact with nature.

An inclusive Guider would ask herself:

- Do all parents and girls agree with these goals?

- Do all parents and girls value camping for these purposes?
- Is camping considered a fun activity in all cultures?
- Do all cultures value the camping experience in the same way?
- Does everyone have the same interpretation of ‘camping’?

2. Who will be included and who might not be able to participate?

A Guider might respond: “everyone in the Unit.”

An inclusive Guider would ask herself:

- Is the camp accessible to all girls in the unit?
- Can everyone afford the cost of the camp?
- Can everyone take part in all activities or are there physical ability concerns?
- Does the menu consider allergies, cultural or dietary concerns?
- Does the timing of the camp allow everyone to attend?
- Is the ‘kit-list’ self-explanatory or is the language common only to those who camp?
- Does the camp fall on any religious or cultural holidays?
- Why are some girls not attending the camp?

3. What can I add, remove or change to ensure everyone can participate in a meaningful way?

An inclusive Guider would ask herself:

- What alternatives are there for girls and families when camping is not a possibility?
- Can some girls attend the camp only part of the time, i.e., day camp?
- Are there provisions at the camp for cultural rituals?
- Are there appropriate menu choices, i.e., halal or vegetarian items?
- Can the girls earn badges and complete their program work in other ways?

Creating an inclusive program is not just about having a diverse group of girls. It is about all of us understanding the value of respecting differences, considering other points of view and giving girls in our Units an awareness of the diversity in our community, society and the world around us. Being inclusive creates a safe space which makes possible a more diverse Membership.

The examples provided are meant to be a spring board to more creative ideas that support Robert Baden-Powell’s vision “to include all races and nations, to unite them with a common framework of

activities and attitudes.” The sharing of a Guider’s experiences, ideas and best practices are the next steps in this path.

Adult Member Training

GGC offers a variety of training opportunities. To help in the delivery of a more inclusive program and for additional information on how to consider alternatives to traditional practices, adult Members have the opportunity to avail themselves of the National Bias Awareness/Equity Training offered by GGC. This training module is accompanied by a *Guider’s Handbook*, from which some content has been reproduced in this document. For more information on this training module or other training modules offered by Girl Guides of Canada, contact your local training adviser. For additional resources, check out your local library or search for resources on the internet.