

PEAR Team Meeting 11 – Meeting Notes– April 24, 2024 12-2 pm

Welcome & Icebreaker – Janette 12:06 pm

Icebreaker asking the group to respond to the prompt below.

- Name
- Pronouns
- Role(s) if you like
- Some solid advice someone gave you

Facilitators Present:

Janette Chien, she/her, State Parks DEI Director

PEAR Team Present:

Reco Bemby, he/him, President Big Tent Coalition

Cassandra Alarcon, she/her, Parks Admin Assistant 3 Operations Division

Michael Hankinson, he/him, Planning Program Manager

MJ Sampang, she/her, Senior Coordinator Community Development Washington Trails Association

Lynn Makowsky, she/her, Project Specialist 2 Spokane

Alyssa Smith, she/her, Boating Education Specialist/Life Jacket Loaner Program

Clare Delong, she/her, Parks Communications Director

Robin Waldroop, she/her, Community Member

Suzanne Kagen, she/her, Program Specialist 2 at Lake Sammamish State Park

Cha Cha Sawyer

Natasha House,

Observers Present:

Tonna Jensen Sigler, she/her, State Parks Administrative Assistant

Michelle Burke, she/her, State Parks Property & Acquisition Specialist

Chris Carlson

Agenda

Janette welcomed the group at 12:06 pm and reminded the team of our community norms that we came up with as a group. We can work to support one another to be

accountable for these norms. Please reach out if you would like to make any adjustments to these community norms.

Janette started the meeting with agenda and reviewed the ice breaker

- Welcome new member
- Equity Impact Review (EIR) Topic: Interpretation
- Unpacking DEI: What's Next for Me? Roadshow Data
- Updates
- Closing

Janette welcomed our new member Suzanne Kagen, Program Specialist 2 at Lake Sammamish State Park. Janette asked Suzanne to introduce herself and share what brought them to the PEAR Team.

Suzanne shared that she uses she/her pronouns, works on permitting and outreach and partnerships and friend groups, DEI comes in handy and is a passion of hers.

[Equity Impact Review \(EIR\) Interpretation](#)

Janette reminded the group of the Interpretation overview presentation from the last meeting and reviewed the prompts below.

Consider your experiences:

What have your experiences with Interpretation been like? At state parks or parks in general...

- How would you describe them?
- What did you find meaningful about it?
- What were you wanting more of? Or less of?
- How will you engage with Interpretation in the future?

Consider forms of Interpretation:

What forms of interpretation resonate with you and why? For example, :

- Informal walk and talks
- In-person programming (e.g. camping 101, guided nature walk)
- Interpretive Centers
- Signage or plaques
- Virtual interpretation
- Other
- What are some barriers that visitors experience as we consider the various forms of interpretation? (*e.g. language, technology, comfort approaching Parks staff*)

Consider Interpretive Content:

What types of stories resonate with you as a visitor?

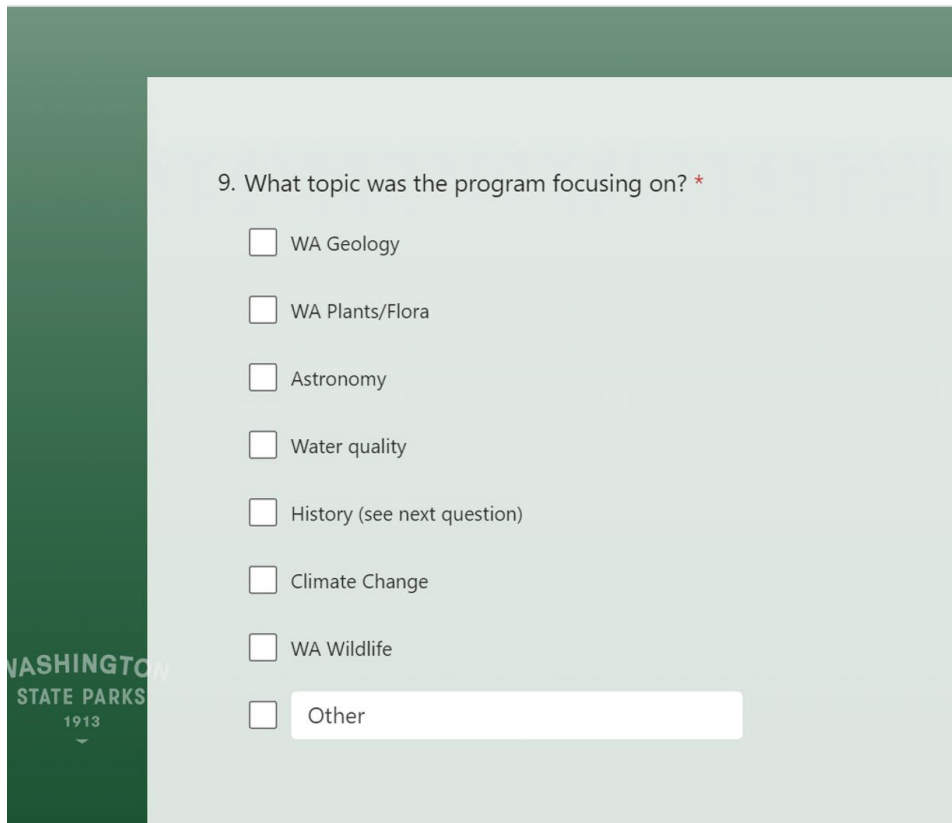
- What makes you feel connected to your parks?
- What interpretation or stories brings you to the park?
- What kinds of stories do you want more of?
- What approach to interpretive content feels equitable (the quality of being fair or just)?

Janette reviewed the the form being used to collect Interpretive data across the state. Originally, the question asked staff:

What topic was the program focusing on?

- WA Geology
- WA Plants/Flora
- Astronomy
- Water Quality
- Euro American History
- Native American History
- WA Wildlife
- Other

PEAR team gave some feedback that the categories are not the most inclusive, poarticularly for the categories of history. The question has now been updated:



9. What topic was the program focusing on? *

- WA Geology
- WA Plants/Flora
- Astronomy
- Water quality
- History (see next question)
- Climate Change
- WA Wildlife
- Other

WASHINGTON STATE PARKS 1913

WASHINGTON STATE PARKS 1913

10. If you previously selected that your program focused on history, can you tell us specifically whose? (select all that apply)

- African American
- Euro American
- Indigenous Heritage
- Latino American
- Other

11. Notes or special things to add?

Janette briefly mentioned that these historical categories are still not all inclusive of many communities but it is encouraging that they are expanded upon from its previous iteration.

Groups were given time to review the prompts from the last meeting, continue the conversation and share out.

Michelle shared how our group discussed using technology for interpretation so as landscapes change it's easy to updated interpretation materials. This makes a larger variety of languages

Reco shared that it's important to heal the trauma around camping. The cultural connections through interpreters are so important. He shared these resources

- <https://www.unspokentruths.org/about>
- <https://bijaema.org/>

Janette shared the book, [Wild Girls](#) How the Outdoors Shaped the Women Who Challenged a Nation. Wild Girls, celebrates these trailblazing women who used outdoor experiences not only for joy but also as techniques to resist assimilation, racism, and sexism. Their navigation of woods, stargazing, sports, and peaceful protests were acts of independence and vision.

Janette shared another prompt. Groups were given more time in breakout rooms and asked to share out.

Consider your discussions and the challenges/limitations of the Interpretation Program

What are 3 priorities you would like to see Parks Interpretation focus on?

- Outdated interpretive signs, inaccurate information, unbalanced histories.
- Having more diverse histories, reaching out to communities and local historians

- Broaden opportunities for public outreach
- Hosting a large event to discuss Parks History
- Educate ELT on the importance of getting more resources for Interpretation.
- More diverse human history in parks

What are 3 recommendations you want to offer the Interpretation program?

- Engage with the communities outside of Parks
- Educate and employ staff accordingly
- Bring in guest speakers
- Getting funding – to have long term systemic support to make change
- Increase interpreters, more diversity. Can HR reduce requirements to get more diversity in interpreters?
- Cross train all staff in interpretation, mentorship program

10-minute break

Break until 1:10 pm

Unpacking DEI: What's Next for Me? Roadshow Data

Janette shared about the Unpacking DEI roadshow her, and Melinda have been facilitating over the last year. Over the last year the DEI Team went and met teams on location for this training. By the end of summer 595 total staff will have completed this training.

Janette shared the word cloud data from this training's warm up activity.

Diversity

- 1460 words total
- 79 "different"
- 60 "variety"
- 53 "differences"
- 27 "backgrounds"

Inclusion

- 1314 words total
- 50 "everyone"
- 50 "welcoming"
- 35 "acceptance"
- 29 "belonging"
- 29 "together"
- 26 "open"
- 23 "inviting"

Equity

- 1254 words total
- 74 "equal"
- 50 "fairness"
- 49 "opportunity"
- 37 "fair"
- 20 "playing field"
- 19 "access"
- 18 "balance"

Janette asked the group for their thoughts:

This could give you a little bit of insight into how to approach this topic with this group.

People who work in DEI may not agree on the definitions of these words but people who don't work in DEI do think things like equal and equity have the same definition.

It's also good to note that these were done in small groups.

Learning Outcomes

I can define the difference between equality and equity and identify examples. 91.6%

Strongly agree/agree

I can recognize how my identities (e.g. race, gender, class, ability, etc.) connect to larger systems and structures (e.g. laws, policies, social norms, etc.) 94.8% strongly agree/agree

We also asked for feedback in the survey. We asked to rate your satisfaction on a scale from 1-5, the average was 4.36. 90.2% of people agreed that this training is important in their role at state parks.

What worked well?

- "very inclusive training that brought in our real work life and professional experiences"
- "i like the engagement of the training, the hands-on aspect"
- "i liked talking with my teammates and hearing their perspectives and experiences"
- "i appreciated the personal stories of the presenters"
- "you know a training is working when the room gets tense! great content, good teachers, good stats and videos"
- "nice to talk about DEI in the context of our roles"
- "the openness to talk about this topic"
- "hearing about what DEI means to WSPRC and me in my position"
- "informative & pleasant"
- "softer approach than other training in the past with state parks"

- "I enjoyed getting to hear examples/thoughts from my coworkers on what works and doesn't work in Parks with DEI. I also liked the emphasis on how we can incorporate DEI in our every day."
- "great to get staff thinking about what DEI is and how we impact others. appreciated learning differences between equality and equity"

What did not work well?

- "more time. I feel like this is just the tip of the iceberg and want more"
- "more examples that relate to the parks"
- "good starting point for DEI but would like to see more in-depth work; need for DEI assistance in hiring and workforce development"
- "would be nice to see structure for safety for immunocompromised people baked into events (masks available, space between groups)"
- "less emphasis on color and race and more talk about equity in all colors"
- "acknowledge that this DEI curriculum is one perspective"
- "concrete actionable things we can do; more info on agency actions and measures of success"
- "an overview. DEI professionals assume we all know what it's about. But give a focus: Why is DEI important to State Parks? What's the business outcome?"

Other feedback:

- "The Training made me feel safer"
- "It's great to know that the agency is prioritizing and putting resources behind this. It feels very different from when I first started"
- "It's frustrating that the agency is preaching DEI like this but we're not seeing equity in decisions that happen in our agency"
- "As a white man (which means nothing to me), I felt targeted"

Janette Paused for questions/comments:

Cassandra shared that DEI is not easy. Not that people don't want to move forward with it, but people feel like things have changed. It's hard to step into this agency and make change. Janette is doing such a great job. I love that we are getting feedback that people feel safer.

Suzanne shared that "It's frustrating that the agency is preaching DEI like this but we're not seeing equity in decisions that happen in our agency" I wonder if this reflects how long you've been with the agency. I've been told that when an idea is right a lot of things will happen very quickly. The changes made may be small but by evidence of this group we've made progress.

Michael shared that he wanted to build on what Suzanne is saying, whatever we accomplish here can't be hollow. We can make it actionable by having policies. We need to come up with policies that will institutionalize what we are coming up with here.

If we don't have rules to guide our staff things will fall apart. We need policies updated as things are changing so we don't take steps back.

Lynn shared that she was curious about the data from the Unpacking DEI training. She knows how it went in her area and was wondering to see how it went in other locations because it can be isolating on the East Side.

What's next for DEI Learning with Parks?

Conversational Communities to cultivate a Pro-Equity Anti-Racism agency culture

- Parks Ally Group – ongoing learning community to learn how to be an impactful ally to communities of color.
- Parks DEI Community of Practice (*to be launched*)
- DEI Learning with Executive Leadership Team
- Parks Employee Resource Groups
 - BIPOC
 - 2LGBTQ+
 - Parks Moms
- Continued engagement in Statewide Business Resource Groups
- Pride Planning Committee

Janette paused for questions/comments:

Cassandra asked how often DEI learning is happening with ELT. DEI learning with the Executive Leadership Team has been done in full day sessions and is happening about five times a year. What is the accountability that ELT is doing a trickle down from these learning sessions? Janette shared that right now her focus is having ELT be participants in this learning for themselves before they can be a leader in DEI. DEI is a very siloed topic. Janette shared that they are in the early stages of ELT being a body in the body of learning.

Natasha asked if we are an agency that operates by making a business case to ELT for the need of these initiatives. Janette shared why does it have to be a business case for it to matter to leaders? We want to serve and connect to the public in a way that feels equitable for all. Presenting the business case might provide insight for those leaders that are having a hard time buying in.

Clare shared that DEI isn't an add on it's interwoven into our work.

Michael shared that ideas are born from staff and presented to ELT and don't always come from ELT. Our ELT team seems like they are willing to be educated.

Janette shared that this team is here to be direct and push for change.

Updates

Janette shared about the first month of the Everyone Outdoors Program. Everyone Outdoors:

- Provides applicants with the opportunity to apply and receive free annual Discover Passes.
- Open to applicants Washington-based **groups or organizations** that face barriers to outdoor access.
- The three agencies will fund passes each month based on need. Requests not funded in the current month will roll over to the next month.

First application cycle (3/5 - 3/22)

- Received 52 applications from groups/orgs, requesting 1390 total passes
- Awarded 14 applicants (130 passes total), Denied 15, Rollover 23

Second application cycle (3/22 - 4/19)

- Received 18 applications, requesting 298 total passes.

The Washington State Parks Foundation donated \$5,000.00 for this program.

Next month for our Equity Impact review we will look at the Planning Team's public input process.

Closing

Janette asked the group to share one thing they are leaving the space with and ended the meeting at 1:55 pm.



PEAR Team Meeting 11

April 24, 2024



Community Norms	Practices
GOAL ORIENTED & STRUCTURED MEETINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitators provide agenda, meeting notes, and organization • Time checks – limit tangents to keep us on track • PEAR Team meetings recorded during presentation portions
THOUGHTFUL PARTICIPATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center PEAR goals to empower discussions • Raise your virtual hand • Balance speaking and active listening • Open-minded observations and feedback, lean into curiosity, ask questions before assuming, seek to understand • Use accessible language (explain acronyms, terms, etc.) • Practice compassion, patience, and understanding • Trust the process; be open to feedback • Trust that we are stronger together than alone
RECOGNIZE EACH PERSON HAS UNIQUE EXPERIENCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak your truth • Appreciate everyone’s differences and commonalities • Awareness of diversity within BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) community • Awareness of privilege (white, able-bodied, education, etc.) • Notice and re-consider blanket statements
SUPPORT PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judgment-free zone • Recognize this is an intergenerational space • Consider the role(s) of silence and its impact in our space • Take care of yourself • Acknowledge intent, assess impact • Honor confidentiality for the group’s contributions



Agenda

- Welcome new member
- Equity Impact Review (EIR)
Topic: **Interpretation**
- **Unpacking DEI: What's Next For Me?** Roadshow Data
- Updates
- Closing



Welcome!

Suzanne Kagen, Program Specialist 2, Lake Sammamish State Park

Happy Administrative Professionals Day!

Shout out to Tonna and Cassandra!!!



Let's check in!

- Name
- Pronouns
- Role(s) if you like
- Some solid advice someone gave you



Interpretation: 3 sets of questions

1. Your experiences
2. Forms/Format of Interpretation
3. Interpretive Content



Consider your experiences:

What have your experiences with Interpretation been like? At state parks or parks in general...

–How would you describe them?

–What did you find meaningful about it?

–What were you wanting more of? Or less of?

How will you engage with Interpretation in the future?



Consider the forms of Interpretation:

- What **forms** of interpretation resonate with you and why? For ex:
 - Informal walk and talks
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- What are some **barriers** that visitors experience as we consider the various forms of interpretation?
(e.g. language, technology, comfort approaching Parks staff)



Consider the Interpretive Content:

- What types of stories resonate with you as a visitor?
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Consider the Interpretive Content:

9. What topic was the program focusing on? *

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11. Notes or special things to add?



Bonus Question:

Consider your discussions...and the challenges/limitations of the Interpretation Program...

What are 3 priorities you would like to see Parks Interpretation focus on?

What are 3 recommendations you want to offer the Interpretation program?



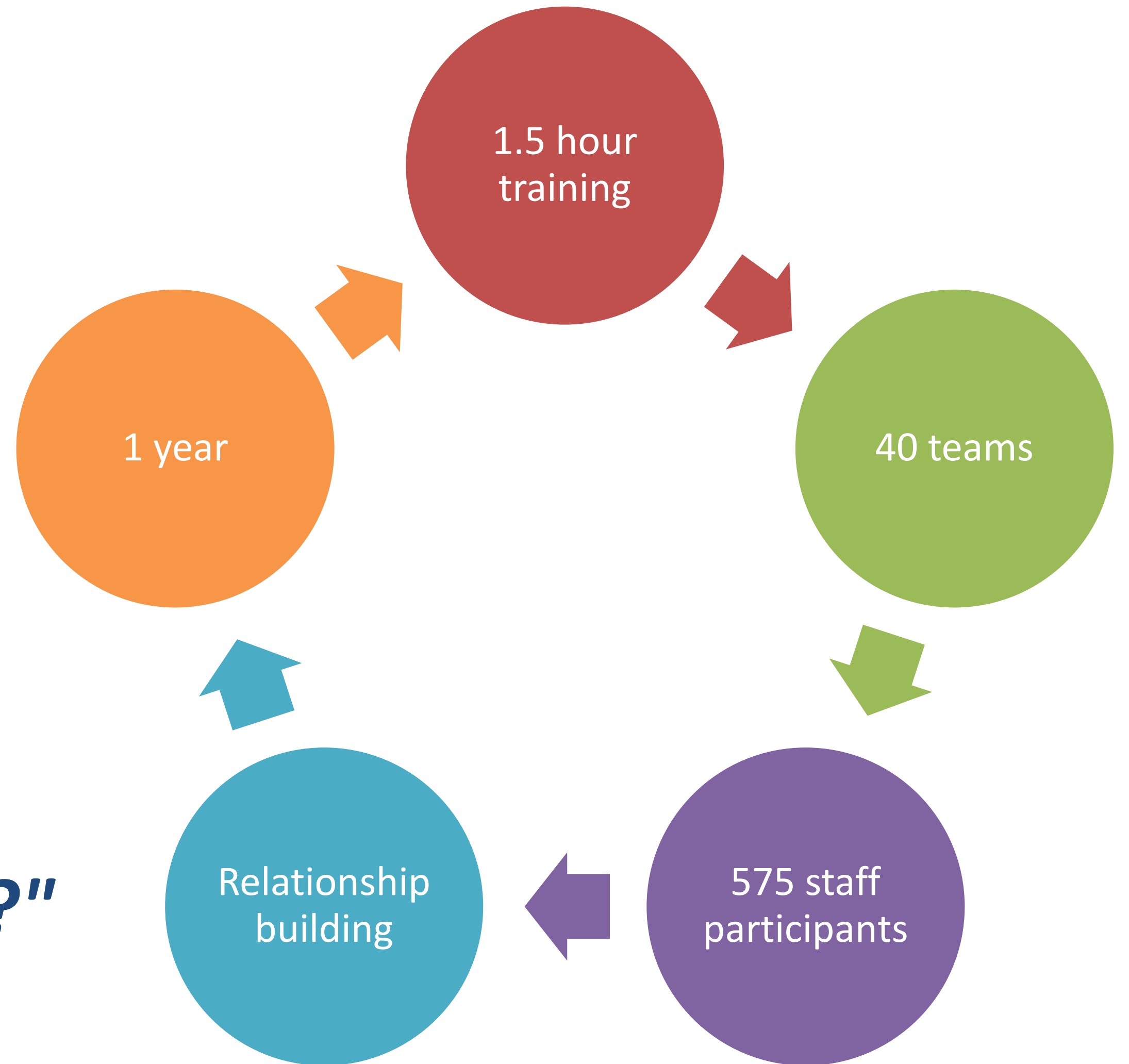
**5 minutes in your group to recall and continue
your discussions**

Small groups - share out



Back to breakout rooms!





DEI Roadshow
***"Unpacking DEI:
What's Next For Me?"***

WARM UP ACTIVITY

What words/phrases/images come to mind when you hear the word...

Diversity?

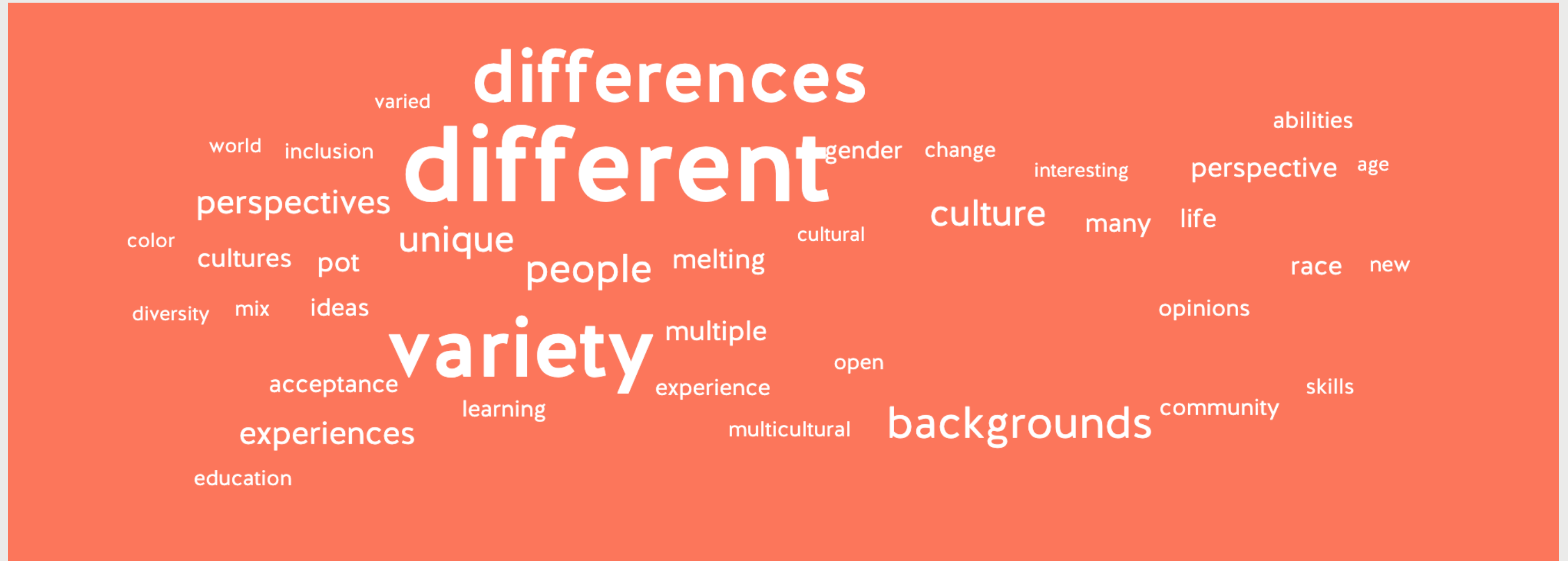
Inclusion?

Equity?



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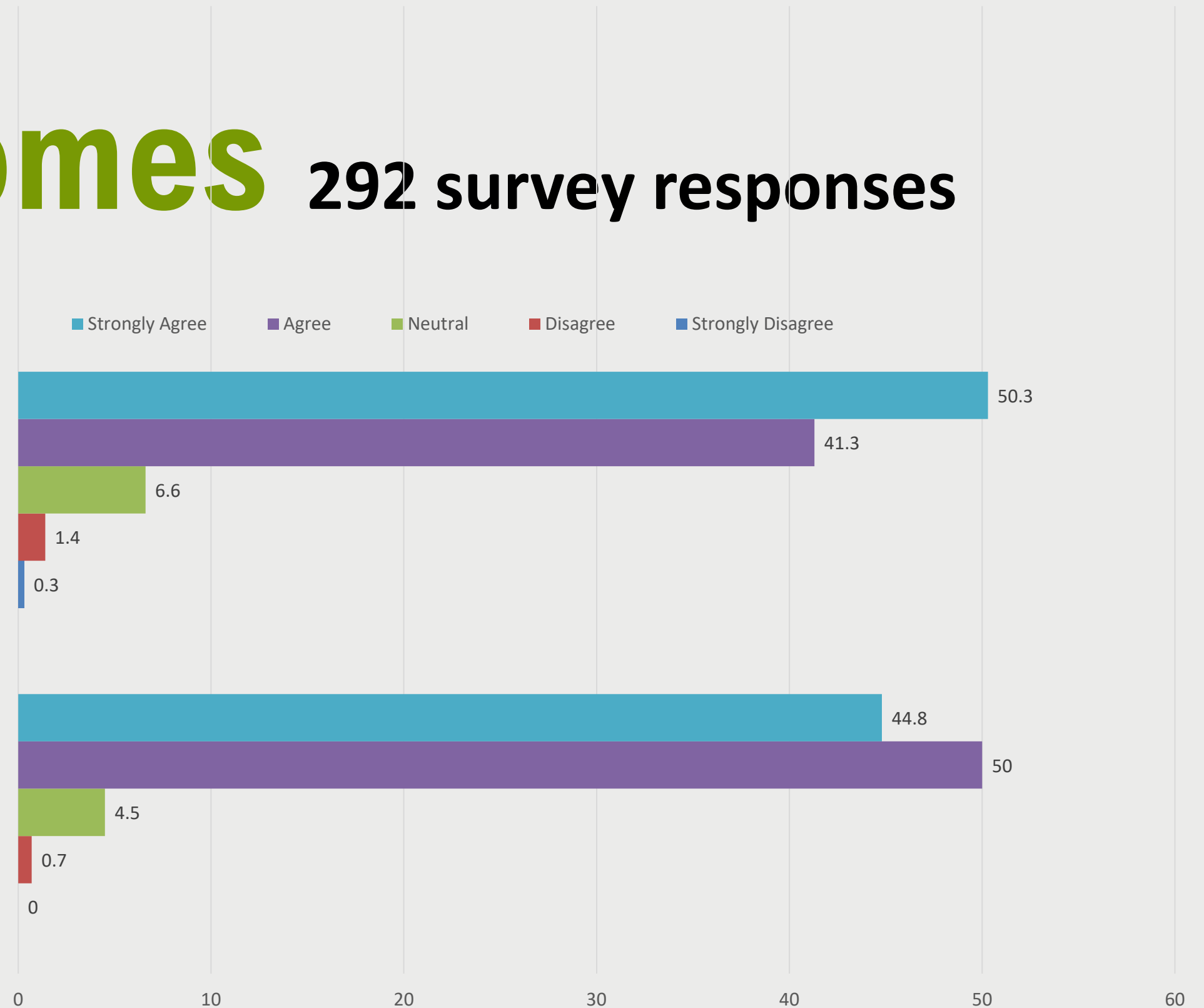
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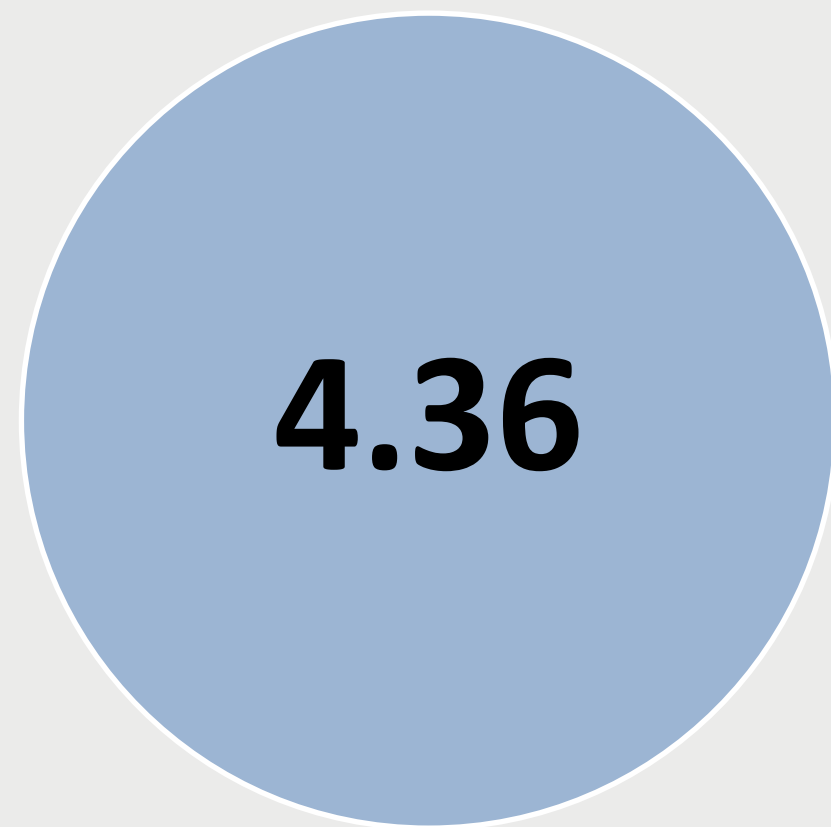
Learning Outcomes 292 survey responses

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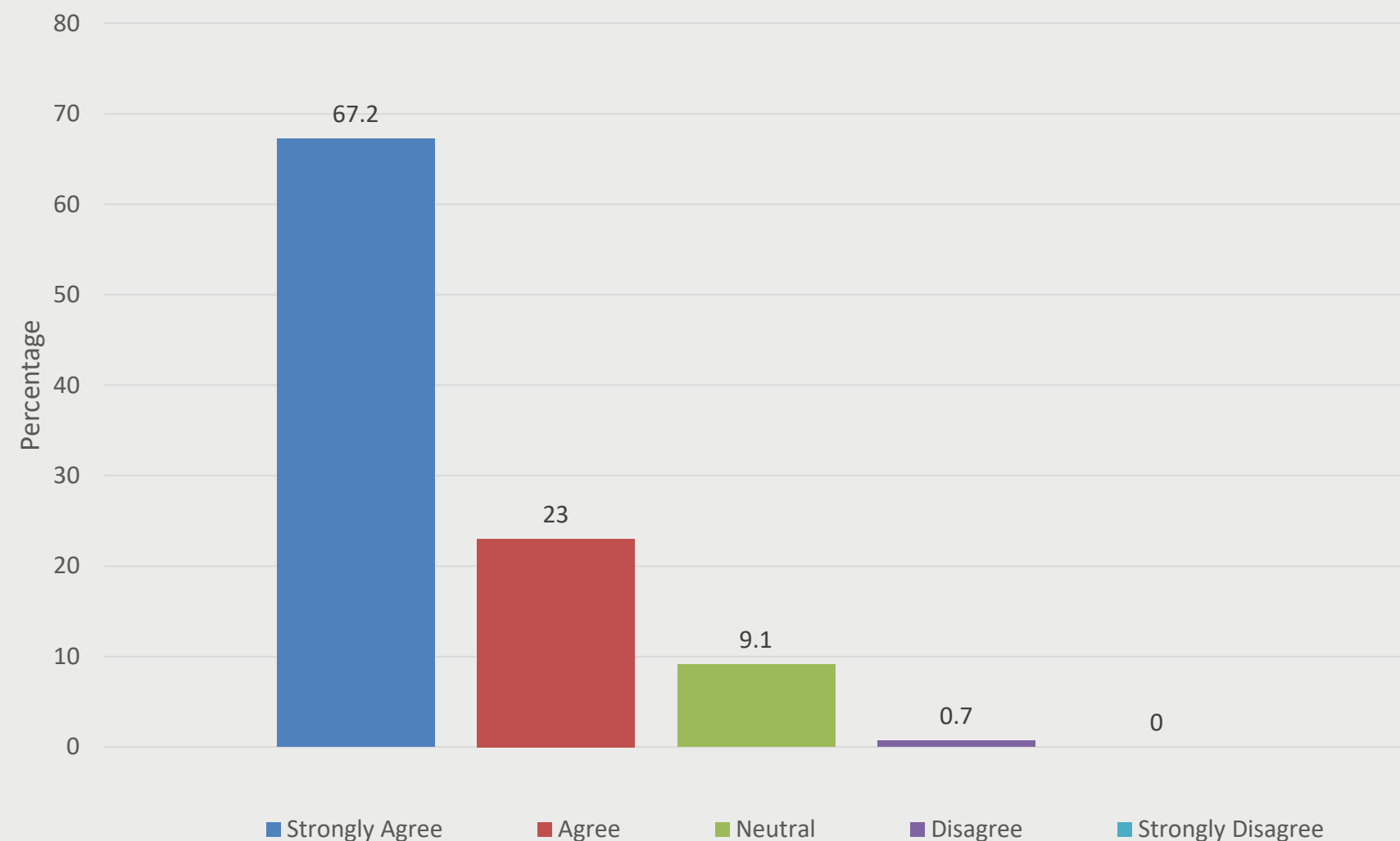
I can recognize how my identities (e.g. race, gender, class, ability, etc.) connect to larger systems and structures (e.g. laws, policies, social norms, etc.)



Feedback 292 survey responses



Rate your satisfaction (1-5)



This training is important for me in my role at State Parks.



What worked well?

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"i liked talking with my teammates and hearing their perspectives and experiences"

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an overview. DEI professionals assume we all know
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Other feedback:

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State Parks Foundation contributed \$5000 to the program :)



2024 PEAR Workplan / EIR (Equity Impact Review)

Date	EIR Topic	EIR Priority Category
Jan 17	Volunteer program	Visitor Experience / Community Engagement
Feb 7	HR Staff recruitment	Workforce Development
March 27	Interpretation	Visitor Experience / Community Engagement
April 24	Interpretation continued & DEI Roadshow Data	Workforce Development
May 15	Parks Planning public input process	Community Engagement
June 5	Partnerships program	Community Engagement
July	NO MEETING	
Aug 21	TBD	
Sept 18	Conversation with Commissioner Danenberg	Community Engagement
Oct 16	Reservations program	Visitor Experience
Nov 20	TBD	
Dec 18	2025 work planning	

Ongoing: DEI Learning, PEAR team feedback, reflection on PEAR team "roles in social change ecosystem"

Future Possibilities: PEAR team community building, participating in Parks events



Closing

