

IDENTIFYING OUR CULTURE COMPONENTS



Age Group: Youth (Elementary, Middle, or High School age), other key stakeholders

Learning Goals:

- Define “college and career readiness culture”
- Identify components of our program’s college & career readiness culture
- Establish our shared values, expectations, and support structures for CCR work

Materials: Copies of the **Identifying Our Culture Components worksheet** found at the end of this guide (one for each youth or stakeholder)

Estimated Time: 25 minutes

Any type of culture, even one with a focus on college-going, consists of “underlying values, beliefs, and meanings which are deeply held, static, and enduring” (MacDonald & Dorr) and a great starting point for building college and career readiness culture with your elementary-aged youth is for you - the organization, program, and practitioners - to **identify the core components of your culture**, or what you’d like them to be.

PART ONE - Practitioners

Respond to the following prompts to begin the process of identifying the core components of not only your CCR culture, but your overall program culture:

1. All youth who participate in our program are expected to _____?
2. All practitioners who work at this organization or program are expected to _____?
3. A person cannot walk through our program space without seeing _____?

You may also want to consider including prompts from [Unit 1, Section 2: Raising the Bar on Expectations](#), in addition to those found in the activity instructions:

- See more [Guiding Questions for Raising the Bar](#) (Unit 1, pp. 7-8)

If you don’t have established responses to these prompts, use this activity as an opportunity to begin shaping what your CCR culture will look like. If you do already have some established focus or core components of your overall program or organization, you should definitely aim to incorporate those values and beliefs into your CCR culture.

PART TWO - Youth and/or Key Stakeholders

This extension activity invites your youth and families to participate in the process of establishing and understanding your CCR culture. Giving these key stakeholders a voice in this process will

create a positive experience for those who will benefit most from the implementation of CCR in your program and help them to feel more invested in the success of the initiative.

Use these guiding questions with families and student participants:

1. What is our program's culture?
 - What do we **believe**? What do we **say**? What do we **see**? What do we **do**?
2. What are the expectations for all youth and staff?
3. What are the conversations taking place in all areas of our environment / space?
4. What do you see when you walk through rooms or hallways?
5. What are the traditions of our program?
6. What is celebrated?

For additional questions for stakeholders, you may choose to include any of the following prompts about expectations from [Unit 1, Section 2: Raising the Bar on Expectations](#) (Unit 1, pp. 7-8):

1. What are the hopes and dreams of the youth in our program? How do they plan to achieve them?
2. What do our youth expect of themselves? What do their families expect of them?
3. Are we clear about the expectations we have for our youth? Have we clearly and consistently communicated to youth, families, and other stakeholders about our expectations?
4. Do we have a specific plan for what support looks like in our program? How will staff know what to do when a youth is frustrated or fails to meet expectations? How should staff respond?



Activity Instructions

1. Consider the prompt(s) below about the College and Career Readiness Culture and expectations of our program.
2. Document your response in the space provided.
3. Be prepared to share your response with the group.



Document Your Responses

Use this section to document your thoughts and responses to the following prompts.

1) What is our program's culture?

What do we **believe**? What do we **say**? What do we **see**? What do we **do**?

2) What are the expectations for all youth and staff?

3) What are the conversations taking place in all areas of our environment / space?

4) What do you see when you walk through rooms or hallways?

5) What are the traditions of our program?

6) What is celebrated?