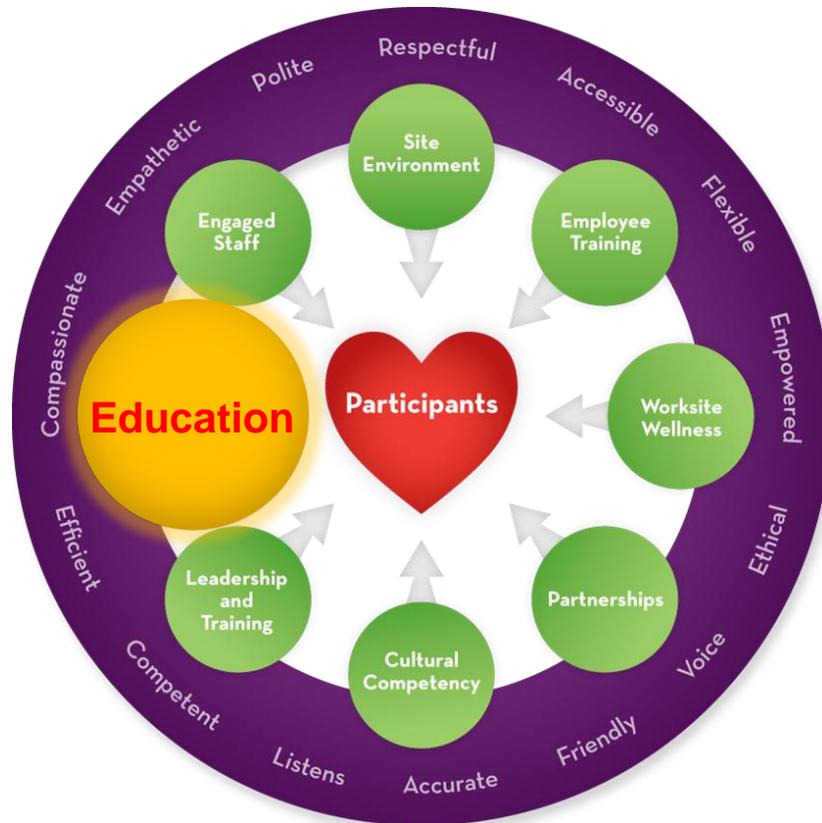


# Silence

## Participant Centered Education

### Facilitator's Guide



This module is one in a series focusing on Participant-Centered Education (PCE). PCE is a key component of California WIC's effort to offer *Platinum WIC – Participant Centered Services (PCS)*. The California WIC PCS approach puts the WIC family at the center of everything we do and focuses on the strengths of participants, employees and community.

PCE places the participant at the center of the education process. PCE focuses on the participant's capabilities, strengths, and their nutrition, health, and referral needs, not just problems, risks, or unhealthy behaviors. PCE includes working collaboratively, eliciting and supporting motivation to change, and respecting participants as the ones who decide if and when they will learn and/or make a change.

# SILENCE

Silence is perhaps one of the most powerful nonverbal forms of communication we can use. Although it sometimes makes us uncomfortable, being silent and listening shows respect and allows time to think. Silence is a technique that can be used throughout the entire education session. It is related to the PCE principle of voice, and the techniques of listening and open-ended questions. Training on these additional topics will reinforce the learning from this module.

## Trainer's Notes

### **Purpose:**

To introduce the concept of silence and to practice this technique.

### **Objectives:** By the end of the session, staff will have:

- Reviewed key components of silence
- Practiced silence and listening through pair-share

### **Materials:**

- "Silence" Trainee Workbooks

### **Room Set Up:**

- Staff seated at tables or in small groups



## 1. The Importance of Silence

**Say:** *Studies show that spoken words account for only a small part of communication. The majority is non-verbal. Silence is perhaps one of the most powerful nonverbal forms of communication we can use.*

- In order to really hear what someone is saying, you can pause and be silent
- Because talking is a thinking activity, you must be silent in order to be totally present
- Silence helps you get out of your head and into your heart

*When speaking, it is easy to talk faster without pauses, perhaps because you do not want others to interrupt, or maybe because you just want to get out what you have to say. But if it means that people stop listening or do not really understand, you may miss opportunities to guide, clarify, or to get more information.*

**Ask:** *What could it mean when a participant is silent?*

### **Possible answers may include:**

- She may be confused
- She has nothing to add
- She is shy or afraid you will judge her

*Whatever the reason, your silence gives the participant a few moments to gather her thoughts. You can pick up the conversation whenever needed.*

### Activity 1 Silence

A. Saying nothing is saying a lot. Silence says that you are 100% present, and open to learn and understand the other person's ideas, thoughts, and feelings. It shows you respect them.

- How does silence in a conversation make you feel? Jot down your ideas.

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B. When a participant pauses after talking, don't jump in right away. Take a few seconds and pause to give her an opportunity to finish her thoughts, finish talking, or ask questions. When she talks more, you will likely get more information.

1. Choose a partner. One person will be the speaker, the other the listener. Speakers will share one of the happiest times in their lives and why it made them so happy. Listeners will listen, not interrupt, and only use non-verbal communication. This is a two-minute activity.

## 2. What participant silence might mean: Activity 1

**Refer** trainees to the worksheet and have them complete part A.

**Debrief** by hearing from a few people.

### Possible answers may include:

- Silence can intimidate us
- We become uncomfortable and anxious
- We rush in and say anything to avoid it

**Say:** *Practicing silence does not need to be taken to an extreme. Talking is an important and necessary part of life and relationships.*

## 3. Practicing listening and silence

**Explain** that next, the group will practice being silent after the **participant** finishes speaking; for example:

- Pause 3-5 seconds after an **individual** finishes speaking. This shows respect indicating you are really listening to her ideas and thoughts. It provides her with an opportunity to continue, go deep within herself, and share more.

**Instruct** trainees to review and practice part B.1. on their worksheet.

**Debrief:** Ask the speakers what it felt like to have their partner really listen to them. Hear from a few people.

2. Switch partners, and allow your partner to share one of the happiest times in their lives. After they have finished speaking, you will give them your feedback or ask questions using the following techniques:

- a. Pause 3-5 seconds before speaking
- b. Pause 3-5 seconds between thoughts to emphasize an important point

## Practicing listening and silence (continued)

**Explain** that next, the group will practice being silent after **you** (as the educator) finishes speaking, or in between thoughts; for example:

- Pause 3-5 seconds after **you** finish speaking or want to emphasize an important thought before moving on to your next thought. This gives the individual an opportunity to really think and feel what you have said, and helps them be present.

**Instruct** trainees to practice part B.2. on their worksheet.

**Debrief:** Ask listeners how they think it may be beneficial to pause before giving feedback, and to pause between thoughts.