

THE ROAD AHEAD

A DOMESTIC CULTURAL ORIENTATION CURRICULUM

CULTURAL ORIENTATION RESOURCE EXCHANGE

Curriculum Overview

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Introduction

Welcome to *The Road Ahead*, a curriculum that serves as a foundational resource for the delivery of domestic Cultural Orientation (CO). The Road Ahead was created by the Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange (CORE), a technical assistance project supporting effective CO delivery.

This curriculum centers on the required domestic Cultural Orientation Objectives and Indicators (CO O&Is), approved by the Cultural Orientation Working Group, which includes the Bureau of Populations, Refugees, and Migration (PRM). In this curriculum, the domestic CO O&Is are grouped around the overarching themes of partnership, well-being, growth, & self-sufficiency.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of *The Road Ahead* is to support domestic CO providers in facilitating effective and engaging learning experiences. To achieve this, the curriculum presents an organized, interactive, and participant-centered framework that covers all domestic CO O&Is while allowing room for customization and adaptation. This enables seamless implementation by individuals providing CO programming.

Curriculum materials are ready-to-use resources, including presentation materials and planning guides. To ensure that domestic CO can be tailored to local contexts, there are placeholders and designated areas throughout the curriculum that prompt CO providers to incorporate relevant, community-specific information.

AUDIENCE:

The Road Ahead is designed for use by any individual or group that provides some or all of the content in CO programming. CO providers include, but are not limited to, Resettlement Agency (RA) staff, volunteers, interns, and community sponsors and partners.

What is Cultural Orientation (CO)?

Refugees resettled in the United States receive Cultural Orientation to acquire vital knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to adapt to their new lives and achieve self-sufficiency. Overseas, CO is conducted at Resettlement Support Centers. In the U.S., CO continues with a local Resettlement Agency or receiving community.

What are the Cultural Orientation Objectives and Indicators (CO O&Is)?

The Cultural Orientation Objectives and Indicators (O&Is) outline what is required in Cultural Orientation programming.

- Objectives describe the information refugees are expected to learn about each CO topic.
- Indicators outline what refugees are expected to do or demonstrate about a specific topic. Indicators also help assess if refugees understand and can apply the objectives.

Learn More: [CO O &Is](#)

Curriculum Components

The Road Ahead includes three components:

1. CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

The Curriculum Overview is the document you are currently reading. It provides:

- A description of curriculum components and features
- An appendix of supporting resources and tools

2. SESSION PLANNING GUIDES:

The curriculum content is divided into four sessions, and each session is organized around an overarching theme.

	Session Title/Theme	CO Topics Addressed
1	<u>Welcome to Our Community</u> Theme: Partnership	Role of the Resettlement Agency, Housing, and Your New Community
2	<u>Health and Safety</u> Theme: Well-being	Health and Hygiene, Safety, and U.S. Laws
3	<u>Employment and Education</u> Theme: Growth	Employment, Education, Learning English, and Transportation
4	<u>Self-Sufficiency</u> Theme: From Support to Self-Sufficiency	Public Assistance, Budgeting and Personal Finance, Digital Technology and Literacy, Newcomer Rights and Responsibilities, Cultural Adjustment

The Session Planning Guide for each session (linked above) provides planning recommendations, CO topics addressed, suggested times for each topic, key messages, links to related resources and activities, and reflection questions.

CO providers should review the Session Planning Guide prior to each session to become familiar with the topics, identify materials needed, consider modifications to presentation materials or activities, and explore related resources.

While the curriculum content is organized into four sessions, CO providers are encouraged to schedule and group the sessions in ways that best support the local context. For a detailed reference of the specific CO O&Is that are addressed in each session, see [The Road Ahead CO O&Is Map](#).

3. PRESENTATION MATERIALS

During all four sessions, topics based on the CO O &Is are introduced to participants through interactive slides and provider input. Additionally, engaging videos from [Settle In](#) and lessons from the [Settle In app](#) enhance the learning experience. To further solidify understanding, participants have the opportunity to participate in a variety of learning activities. Presentation materials incorporate comprehensive content, recommended provider language, detailed activity instructions, and links to relevant media. This cohesive approach ensures that participants receive a well-rounded learning experience.

Slide Deck Features



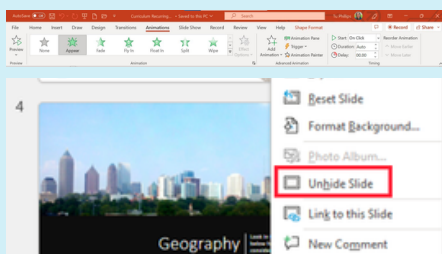
Visual Design:

- Content is limited to one big idea per slide.
- Key messages are presented through visuals and headings.
- Suggested provider language aligns with visuals.
- Materials can be projected, printed, and edited to include local images and content.
- Slide notes include suggested language, notes for providers, modification tips, and a reference to the specific CO O&Is.



Media Links:

- Links for videos from [Settle In](#) and lessons from the [Settle In app](#) are included in the slide deck.
- Settle In resources are available in multiple languages. Providers can select the appropriate language(s) for each session.
- If media resources are not available in the participants' home language, providers can assist participants in accessing the content using the modification tips offered in the slide notes.



Technical Scaffolds:

- Slide decks include animated slides so that related information can be presented a little at a time.
- Some slides are hidden. Hidden slides are used to convey information to the provider, to offer an alternative activity, or to share optional templates. Providers can unhide hidden slides to make the content visible to participants.

Consistent Formats and Recurring Routines

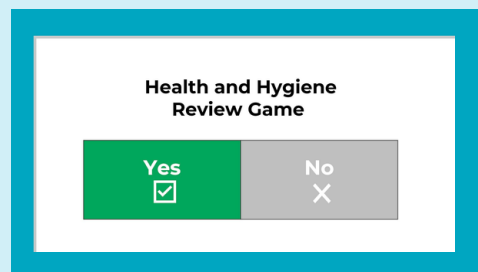
To help providers and participants focus more on content and less on procedures, the presentation materials include consistent formats and recurring learning routines across all the sessions. Below are some examples.



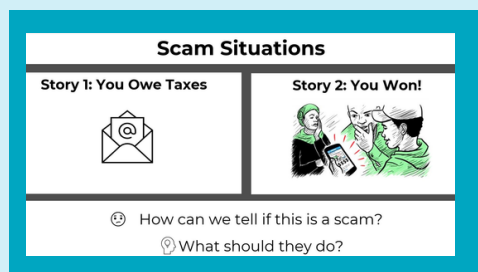
Session opening and transition slides in all four sessions use the same format.



Participants have opportunities to engage in small-group and whole-group conversations in each session.



Review games to assess understanding and foster dialogue appear in multiple sessions.



Problem-solving scenarios that help participants apply content appear in multiple sessions.

Slide Notes Content

The slide notes provide suggested language, facilitation notes, modification tips, and references to the CO O&Is.

Say: Suggested provider language and suggested provider actions in () and italics



Say: Let's review safety at home. In your home, there are ways to reduce your risk. Here are some images showing habits that help people remain safe at home. What do you think they are reminding you to do? (Give participants some time to look at all the images. Then pick 1 image at a time and ask participants to share what home safety practice the image suggests if they are comfortable. Offer the explanations below.)

Explanations:

1. Keep batteries in your fire alarms; if the fire alarm is beeping, the battery must be replaced to escape if there is a fire.
2. Learn how to use appliances such as the stove and oven. For example, please do not leave the stove on when you are not cooking to prevent fires. If you have questions, please ask your provider.
3. Lock your door and do not let strangers into your home. You should also keep windows locked.
4. Call 9-1-1 for life-threatening emergencies. We will learn more about 9-1-1 services in another Cultural Orientation session.

Notes: Information that might be helpful to providers

Notes: This slide is included in the Housing section of session 1. This is an opportunity to review.

Modifications: Instead of having participants think about the images, you can have them talk with a partner.

CO Topics: *Housing*

Objective(s)/Indicator(s):

Participants can explain that basic safety considerations and use of appliances/ facilities will promote safety in the home

- *Participants can list at least two ways to maintain basic fire safety in the home (e.g., check fire alarms, draft a fire escape plan)*
- *Participants can explain one reason why they should keep their doors and windows locked and not to allow strangers into their home*

Modifications: Tips for modifying activity based on participants' needs and preferences, or time constraints

CO Topics: Reference to the specific CO O&Is addressed

Preparing for CO Sessions

As you prepare for each CO session, consider the following recommended steps. Suggestions for achieving each step are provided. To learn more about applying the principles of effective CO, see [Appendix A](#).

1. LEARN ABOUT PARTICIPANTS

- Learn general information about specific refugee populations using [CORE's Backgrounder documents](#).
 - Communicate with case managers to learn more about participants' backgrounds, strengths, needs, and interests. Review biographies and case notes of participating individuals.
 - Conduct a needs assessment through dialogues or informal surveys to identify what participants already know and can do, and what they want to learn and be able to do.
 - Informally assess participants' comfort level with using digital technology.
-

2. PLAN THE SESSION, STARTING WITH THE SESSION PLANNING GUIDE

- Use the Session Planning Guide to review steps, gain an overview of the session topics and key messages, access session materials, and explore related resources.
 - Review and modify the session slide deck and learning activities with the participant's interests, strengths, and needs in mind. Also consider the designated learning space and available technology as you plan.
 - Plan for a variety of grouping configurations for dialogue and activities: individual reflection, pairs, small groups, or the whole group.
 - Prepare and print materials for activities as needed.
 - Note that the initial review and adaptation of session materials for the local context may take a few hours. As you become more familiar with the content and learning activities, planning for each session will require less time. With each new group of participants, consider modifications to meet the needs of the participants.
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3. DESIGN THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Design the CO learning environment to help participants feel welcomed and comfortable.
 - Consider seating arrangements that support small-group and whole-group conversations.
 - Check the availability of devices, projectors, speakers, internet access, and Wi-Fi access. Test equipment functionality prior to the session.
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4. PLAN FOR PARTICIPANTS' QUESTIONS

- Prior to the session, anticipate questions that participants may have about specific session topics. Use the [Planning for Participants' Questions Tool](#) (Appendix B) to record anticipated questions and possible responses.
 - During the session, use the [Planning for Participants' Questions Tool](#) to capture additional questions from participants to follow up on.
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5. REFLECT.

- After each session, reflect individually or with co-facilitators on how the session went.
- Use the [Cultural Orientation Provider Reflection Tool](#) (Appendix C) to guide and record your reflections. Apply the insights gained as you plan the next CO session.

Resources

REFERENCED RESOURCES

- [Cultural Orientation Objectives and Indicators](#) (CO O&Is)
 - [The Road Ahead CO O&Is Map](#)
 - [Settle In website](#) and [Settle In app](#)
 - [Principles of Effective CO Resources](#) (Referenced in Appendix A)
 - [Creating a Positive Learning Environment poster](#)
 - [Cognitive Load and Memory poster](#)
 - [Strengths-Based Approach poster](#)
 - [Student-Centered Learning poster](#)
 - [Principles of Adult Learning poster](#)
 - [About Refugee Populations](#)
 - [Integrate Digital Technology](#)
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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FROM CORE

- [CORE's Activity Bank](#): Explore a variety of activities, lesson plans, and access additional resources for different CO topics.
 - [CORE's Research and Evidence Page](#): Access information and links to resources that support CO programming grounded in research and evidence-based approaches.
 - [CORE's Online Courses and Webinars](#): CORE offers free self-paced online courses and webinars to help resettlement staff around the world deliver effective CO. Explore the full list of offerings and descriptions of courses that providers can access through CORE's Learning Platform.
 - [Self-Evaluation Tool](#): This observation rubric can be used for planning or for self-assessment.
 - [Working with Interpreters](#): This webpage provides guidance for effectively collaborating with interpreters. Use this page to access CORE's Multilingual CO Glossary.
 - [Cultural Orientation Assessments](#): These resources support providers in assessing the degree to which learners achieved the CO O&Is.
 - [Cultural Orientation Toolkit for Community Partners and Sponsors](#): This toolkit teaches community partners and sponsors how to incorporate and reiterate key CO messages while providing direct resettlement services to newcomers during their first 90 days.
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Appendices

- [Appendix A](#): Applying the Principles of Effective CO
- [Appendix B](#): Planning for Participants' Questions Tool
- [Appendix C](#): Cultural Orientation Provider Reflection Tool

Applying the Principles of Effective CO

The curriculum materials in *The Road Ahead* were thoughtfully developed with a focus on CORE's key principles of effective CO. These principles served as essential guidelines throughout the curriculum design process, ensuring that the materials and learning activities based on the CO O&Is are impactful and beneficial for the intended audience.

The principles of effective CO are valuable resources for CO providers. Consider applying these principles in the planning and delivery of each session to create a dynamic and inclusive learning environment that foster meaningful interactions among participants. These principles can also support providers in proactively addressing some common challenges that may arise in CO Delivery.

Learn more about each principle on [CORE's Learning Platform](#). Create a free account to access a variety of interactive self-paced courses designed to strengthen CO delivery.

Principle	In Practice
<p>Create a Positive Learning Environment: Participants feel more invested in learning in a positive learning environment. Some interconnected practices that contribute to creating a positive learning environment are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish clear expectations • Promote participation • Empower learners • Establish trust <p>Learn More:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Creating a Positive Learning Environment poster • Complete the Creating a Positive Learning Environment self-paced course on CORE's Learning Platform. 	<p>Notice: Throughout each session, there are multiple opportunities for participants to make personal connections to the content, interact with one another, and engage in group dialogue.</p> <p>Do:</p> <p><i>Before the session:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about the participants so that you can make connections and share relevant examples to support the learning. • Arrange the learning space to foster small group dialogue as well as whole group conversations. <p><i>During the session:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greet participants as they enter. • At the beginning of the session, take time to share the purpose of CO, establish expectations. highlight key topics, and invite active participation. • As you introduce yourself, invite participants to introduce themselves. Inviting participants to talk in the first 10 minutes sets the tone for an interactive session.

Principle	In Practice
<p>Use Student-Centered Learning Techniques: In student-centered learning environments, CO providers serve as facilitators who create the conditions where participants can take active roles in their own learning.</p> <p>Learn More:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Student-Centered Learning poster • Complete the Student-Centered Learning vs. Teacher-Centered Learning self-paced course on CORE's Learning Platform. 	<p>Notice: In each session, participants are invited to draw on existing knowledge, pose questions, and share connections. Presentation materials can be easily modified to be responsive to a group's needs and interests.</p> <p>Do: <i>Before the session:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about participants' backgrounds and cultures. • Use what you know about the participants to modify session content or supplement with additional activities. CORE's Activity Bank offers a variety of options. • Use CORE's Cultural Backgrounders to gain general historical, political, and cultural information about specific refugee populations. • Recognize that participants may have experienced trauma in their past, during the evacuation or displacement from their home country, or during their resettlement journey. Be mindful of participants' social and emotional well-being. <p><i>During the session:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be mindful of the balance between how much participants are listening to the CO provider and how much they are talking and interacting. • When participants are engaging in an activity or a dialogue, step back and observe. Let participants work or talk with minimal intervention.
<p>Take a Strengths-Based Approach: A strengths-based approach identifies and draws upon the strengths and capacities of individuals and communities. This is in contrast to "deficit thinking," which centers on shortcomings and challenges.</p> <p>Learn More:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Strengths-Based Approach poster. • Complete the Taking a Strengths-Based Approach self-paced course on CORE's Learning Platform. 	<p>Notice: <i>The Road Ahead</i> was designed with the assumption that all newcomers have valuable knowledge, skills, life experiences, and strengths. Most CO topics address universal concepts familiar to many participants; CO is the setting to engage with these concepts in a U.S. context. Opportunities for participants to share their experiences, knowledge, and perspectives are included in all the sessions.</p> <p>Do: <i>Before the session:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about Cultural Humility, Awareness, and Competency. Consider ways to apply these concepts to CO planning and delivery. <p><i>During the session:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite participants to share their experiences, knowledge, and perspectives in small-group and whole-group dialogues. • Practice cultural humility, awareness, and competency when addressing misperceptions.

Principle	In Practice
<p>Consider Cognitive Load: Cognitive load is the amount of information that working or short-term memory can hold at any given time. In CO, providers have a large amount of important information to convey. However, it is good practice to break up content into manageable chunks and provide participants time to connect new learning to prior knowledge and experience.</p> <p>Learn More:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Cognitive Load and Memory poster. • Complete the Cognitive Load and How to Manage It self-paced course on CORE's Learning Platform. 	<p>Notice: In each session, the content is organized into three sections that are organized around a connecting theme. CO topics are presented through visuals, key concept labels, and media in the participants' home language (when available). The provider's language suggested in session materials uses simplified explanations. Participants have multiple opportunities to engage with the content through dialogue or activities.</p> <p>Do:</p> <p><i>Before the session:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review session materials and plan your remarks so that explanations are clear and concise. <p><i>During the session:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As you present the content, monitor the engagement of participants. As needed, pause to let participants process the information individually, in group dialogue, or with a learning activity. • Provide breaks as needed.
<p>Apply Adult Learning Principles: Research has identified some key principles that engage adults in learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults are internally motivated and self-directed • Adults bring life experiences and knowledge to learning, • Adult learners like to be respected • Adults are goal-oriented, relevancy-oriented, and practical. <p>Learn More:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Principles of Adult Learning poster. • Complete the Adult Learning Principles in Cultural Orientation self-paced course on CORE's Learning Platform. 	<p>Notice: Learning activities in each session invite participants to share prior knowledge, experiences, interests, and questions. Participants have multiple opportunities to connect CO topics to their everyday lives and their goals.</p> <p>Do:</p> <p><i>Before the session:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get to know participants so that you can make meaningful connections to lived experiences, short-term goals, and future aspirations. • Work with RA colleagues and community members to anticipate questions that participants may have related to session topics. Use the Planning for Participants' Questions Tool (Appendix B) to anticipate participants' questions and plan responses. <p><i>During the session:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite participants to share their experiences and perspectives throughout the session and acknowledge responses. • Make explicit connections to participants' lives and goals for the future. • Make connections to each session's theme.

Principle	In Practice
<p>Integrate Digital Technology: The integration of digital technology benefits both CO providers and newcomers. For CO providers, digital technology can be used to customize and enhance participant learning, and reinforce key messages. For newcomers, content presented through digital media can improve understanding of and increase engagement in CO topics.</p> <p>Learn More: Read the Integrate Digital Technology in Cultural Orientation webpage.</p>	<p>Notice: <i>The Road Ahead</i> utilizes content from the Settle In website and the Settle In app. These CO resources are available in multiple languages.</p> <p>Do: <i>Before the session:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preview the Settle In videos or lessons embedded in each session. • Select the appropriate language(s) for your groups. • Share relevant fact sheets that accompany videos with interpreters prior to the session. See each session guide for links to fact sheets about specific CO topics. <p><i>During the session:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open links to the session-specific Settle In videos or lessons a few minutes prior to the session to test video and the volume. Leave the video open in your browser so that it is ready for viewing. • Support participants in downloading, accessing, or navigating the Settle In app or other relevant applications as needed.

Planning for Participants' Questions

BEFORE THE SESSION

Draw on your experience and the input of fellow staff members, partner agencies, and community members to anticipate questions that participants may raise as you present each Cultural Orientation (CO) topic in the session. Generate possible responses so that the messages communicated in the CO session are consistent across services. While it may not be possible to address all questions during the session, anticipating common questions can help to proactively think about the most appropriate response. Continue to add to this list as other frequently asked questions arise.

Topic	Anticipated/Frequently Asked Questions
	<p>Question:</p> <p>Possible Response:</p>
	<p>Question:</p> <p>Possible Response:</p>
	<p>Question:</p> <p>Possible Response:</p>
	<p>Question:</p> <p>Possible Response:</p>
	<p>Question:</p> <p>Possible Response:</p>

Topic	Anticipated/Frequently Asked Questions
	<p>Question:</p> <p>Possible Response:</p>
	<p>Question:</p> <p>Possible Response:</p>
	<p>Question:</p> <p>Possible Response:</p>
	<p>Question:</p> <p>Possible Response:</p>
	<p>Question:</p> <p>Possible Response:</p>
	<p>Question:</p> <p>Possible Response:</p>
	<p>Question:</p> <p>Possible Response:</p>

DURING AND AFTER THE SESSION

If a participant asks questions or makes requests that are best answered in a personal follow-up, record the questions and notes on the follow-up steps. If a participant poses a question that you were not able to address in the session, also record the questions and notes on the follow-up steps. As needed, share the questions and responses with RA colleagues, partner agencies, and community members.

Topic	Question or Request	Follow-up Steps
		<div>Participant(s) to contact:</div> <div>Person who follows up:</div> <div>Date:</div> <div>Response:</div>
		<div>Participant(s) to contact:</div> <div>Person who follows up:</div> <div>Date:</div> <div>Response:</div>
		<div>Participant(s) to contact:</div> <div>Person who follows up:</div> <div>Date:</div> <div>Response:</div>
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		<div>Participant(s) to contact:</div> <div>Person who follows up:</div> <div>Date:</div> <div>Response:</div>
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		<div>Participant(s) to contact:</div> <div>Person who follows up:</div> <div>Date:</div> <div>Response:</div>
		<div>Participant(s) to contact:</div> <div>Person who follows up:</div> <div>Date:</div> <div>Response:</div>

Cultural Orientation Provider Reflection

Reflection is practice that supports learning and continuous improvement. After delivering Cultural Orientation (CO), take some time to reflect individually or with your co-facilitators. You can use the session-specific reflection questions offered below or the whole-series reflection questions ([page 18](#)) to support your thinking.

Session 1

Session date:

- What topics/activities went well? Why?
- What topics/activities were challenging? Why? What modifications could I make?
- What questions arose from participants that I need to follow up on? Follow-up as needed.
- What topics/activities should I revisit in future CO sessions?
- What do I want to pay attention to in the next session?

Session 2

Session date:

- What topics/activities went well? Why?
- What topics/activities were challenging? Why? What modifications could I make?
- What questions arose from participants that I need to follow up on? Follow-up as needed.
- What topics/activities should I revisit in future CO sessions?
- What do I want to pay attention to in the next session?

Session 3**Session date:**

- What topics/activities went well? Why?
- What topics/activities were challenging? Why? What modifications could I make?
- What questions arose from participants that I need to follow up on? Follow-up as needed.
- What topics/activities should I revisit in future CO sessions?
- What do I want to pay attention to in the next session?

Session 4**Session date:**

- What topics/activities went well? Why?
- What topics/activities were challenging? Why? What modifications could I make?
- What questions arose from participants that I need to follow up on? Follow-up as needed.
- What topics/activities should I revisit in follow-up with participants?
- What do I want to pay attention to in future CO sessions?

After completing all the sessions of a CO series, you can reflect on the overall experience and apply the insights gained to plan the next round of CO sessions. Use reflection questions offered on the next page to support your thinking.

1. Share your Overall Impression:

- How did it go?
- How do you know? (Consider what you observed or heard.)

2. Consider Areas of Success:

- What went well?
- How did you contribute to this success?
- What else may have contributed to this success?
- As you reflect on your actions before, during, and after the CO series, what do you want to continue doing?

3. Focus on Continuous Improvement:

- What is an area that you want to improve for the next round of CO?
- What steps might you take to make this improvement? What additional resources or support might you need?

4. Focus on Learning:

- What are you learning about the strengths, needs, and interests of the participants?
- What are you learning about yourself as a CO provider?