

Summary Version: Embedding Context, Identity, and EDI in Training: *Guidance for Provision, Design and Delivery*

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Prerequisite knowledge: *Understanding of the Wholeness solution models and taxonomy (see Learning resources section).*

Introduction

Mainstream training often treats access, accessibility, and context (like social context, culture, intersecting identities, power, disability, and EDI) as optional extras rather than core parts of learning. This can lead to incomplete training and increase the risk of exclusion or harm, especially for vulnerability, different and marginalised groups.

The guidance is based on the whole embedded solution (see Learning resources for primer video resource) where these factors should be embedded throughout all training, not added in separate modules, because everyone exists within multiple social and cultural contexts.

Core message

All training should consistently include:

- Social and cultural context
- Accessibility and inclusion needs
- Multiple perspectives (dominant and marginalised) across Worldviews, Identities, Context (Lived Cultures), Knowledge, Embodiment, and Time (WICKET).

This embedded approach supports more ethical, fair, and complete training, while recognising that not all organisations or tutor can meet every recommendation in the same way.

Positionality and self-development guidance for trainers

Trainers should actively develop self-awareness and reflective practice to improve how they teach, design learning, and work with groups.

Key guidance

Ongoing self-reflection

Trainers should regularly reflect on their own contextual position, identity, experiences, and position in relation to others. This includes noticing:

- Personal biases, assumptions, and blind spots
- Gaps in knowledge or lived experience
- How contexts, identity, culture, and power influence their teaching and relationships
- What perspectives may be missing or overlooked, especially from marginalised or less visible groups

This helps ensure teaching is more inclusive and reduces the risk of unintentionally excluding or misrepresenting learners.

Awareness of context (WICKET) and power

Trainers should understand how social factors (such as identity, inequality, trauma, and power differences) shape learning environments and group interactions. This includes recognising that people experience and communicate the world differently depending on their self and lived-in context.

Facilitating inclusive group learning

Trainers should be able to manage group dynamics in a way that is trauma-informed, anti-oppressive, and context-aware. This includes:

- Paying attention to power imbalances within groups
- Avoiding placing responsibility on individuals to represent or explain their identity or experience
- Recognising different communication and learning styles without judging them against a single “norm”
- Supporting respectful repair when misunderstandings or harm occur

Overall message

Trainers are expected to continually reflect on themselves and actively consider context (WICKET), power, and difference so that learning environments are safer, fairer, and more inclusive.

Training provision and organisational guidance

Training provision is how training is organised and delivered. Training providers are responsible for the full training experience, including access, delivery, and evaluation.

Key guidance:

- **Build an inclusive organisational culture:** Make sure inclusion, identity, and social context are embedded in all training processes and staff development, not treated as optional extras.
- **Reduce barriers to access:** Consider who may be excluded due to cost, location, disability, timing, or digital access, and take steps to address this.
- **Improve affordability and funding:** Use fair pricing models (e.g. bursaries, sliding scale fees, funded placements, partnerships) to support access for people from lower-income backgrounds.
- **Prevent bias in recruitment:** Actively reduce discrimination and unconscious bias in hiring and selection processes.
- **Improve representation:** Ensure trainers, speakers, and outreach reflect diverse and underrepresented groups across identities and backgrounds.
- **Make accessibility standard:** Accessibility and adjustments should be built in from the start, not added only when requested.
- **Identify support needs early:** Ask learners about support needs during onboarding and provide reasonable adjustments where possible.
- **Use inclusive communication:** Ensure all communication is clear, respectful, accessible, and transparent from first contact onwards.
- **Create welcoming environments:** Make physical, digital, and social spaces inclusive and culturally welcoming.

Training design guidance

Training should be created and designed to include context, identity, and diversity from the start.

Key guidance:

- **Define scope clearly and inclusively:** Identify who the training is for and consider who might be excluded or disadvantaged. Embed them into learning outcomes and objectives.

- **Reflect on trainer positionality:** Acknowledge how the trainer's identity and experience may shape what is included or missed.
- **Include diverse perspectives:** Use research, case studies, and lived experiences from a wide range of groups, not just dominant or familiar viewpoints.
- **Avoid single-perspective teaching:** Include both normative (mainstream) and marginalised experiences to give a fuller picture.
- **Assess content for gaps:** Check materials for missing perspectives using structured reflection on context, identity, culture, power, embodiment, and lived experience.
- **Set inclusive learning aims:** Write objectives that explicitly include diversity and context.
- **Embed accessibility in design:** Use varied teaching methods, formats, and assessment approaches to support different learning needs.
- **Co-design where needed:** Work with underrepresented groups to improve content and fill knowledge gaps, ensuring their contributions are respected and fairly recognised.

Overall message

Training should be designed and delivered as an inclusive system from the start, removing barriers, reflecting diverse lived experiences, and embedding accessibility, representation, and context throughout rather than treating them as add-ons.

Training delivery guidance

Training delivery is about how sessions are run so that learning is achieved in a safe, supportive, and relational way, while still maintaining appropriate challenge.

Key guidance

- **Facilitate in a relational and inclusive way:** Trainers should manage group dynamics with awareness of context, power, identity, culture, and communication differences. This includes recognising how people's different contexts (e.g. social identity, mindbody difference, experience) affect participation and interaction.
- **Be aware of positionality and difference:** Trainers should avoid assumptions, notice their own perspective (insider/outsider position), and adapt how they communicate and respond to different learners.

- **Create a clear group contract:** At the start, establish shared agreements about how the group will work (e.g. safety, confidentiality, participation, respect, breakout work, and support). This helps set expectations and tone.
- **Ongoing accessibility and adjustment:** Accessibility is continuous, not a one-time setup. Trainers should regularly check in with learners about needs such as pace, breaks, participation style, or comfort, and adapt during the session.
- **Invite diverse participation safely:** Trainers should encourage input from a wide range of perspectives and lived experiences, ensuring people feel included without being pressured to speak for their identity or educate others.
- **Value all perspectives equally:** Different worldviews, experiences, and forms of knowledge (including marginalised or non-normative experiences) should be treated as central to learning, not as separate or secondary topics.
- **Support respectful dialogue and safety:** Trainers should create conditions where all voices are welcomed, stereotypes are challenged, and participants feel safe to contribute without being put on the spot or exposed. Dialogue must be considerate of context and power dynamics rather than assumed to be a neutral dialogue or debate (e.g., consideration of topic of debate being marginalised social positions).

Overall message

Training should be delivered as a safe, adaptive, and relational space where diverse perspectives are actively included, accessibility is continuously supported, and all learners can participate meaningfully without pressure or exclusion.

Training assessment guidance

Assessment flexibility must be without compromising proficiency and the development of competencies and safe ethical practice in alignment with the course stated aims and learning outcomes.

Key guidance

- **Check for exclusion in assessment design:** Review whether current or planned assessments unintentionally disadvantage certain learners (e.g. due to academic style, literacy level, disability, anxiety, or observation pressure). Where possible, offer fair alternatives without lowering professional standards.
- **Make assessments accessible and flexible:** Use clear criteria and allow different ways to demonstrate learning, such as written, oral, recorded, or practical formats. Adjust timing, environment, and structure (e.g. reducing high-pressure conditions where appropriate).

- **Embed context in assessment:** Assessment tasks should include social, cultural, and accessibility perspectives rather than treating them as separate topics. Learners should be expected to apply contextual awareness (e.g. identity, power, and lived experience) within their answers and practice.
- **Support different learning pathways:** Recognise that people learn and demonstrate competence in different ways. Consider non-traditional or more experiential routes where appropriate, as long as professional standards are still met. Focus on outcomes rather than rigid methods.
- **Prioritise fairness and access:** Regularly review whether assessment methods are unnecessarily restrictive and whether they limit participation or representation. Aim to reduce barriers while maintaining safety, ethics, and competence.

Overall message

Assessment should be fair, flexible, and inclusive, allowing different ways to demonstrate competence, embedding context and accessibility throughout, and ensuring standards are maintained without unnecessary barriers.

Continuous improvement

Training feedback guidance. Training providers should actively collect, review, and act on feedback to improve inclusion, accessibility, and safety.

Key guidance

- Collect broad and accessible feedback. Use different methods so all participants can share their experiences, including those with different communication or accessibility needs.
- Ask about key areas of experience:
Feedback should cover whether participants felt:
 - Respected and represented in content and discussion
 - Comfortable, safe, and included in the learning environment
 - Able to access materials and participate fully
 - That any power imbalances affected their experience
- Include improvement suggestions: Invite ideas on how to improve accessibility, representation, and overall inclusion in future sessions.
- Act on feedback: Review feedback carefully and make meaningful changes where needed, ensuring input from a wide range of participants is considered.

Overall message

Feedback should be inclusive, easy to give, and actively used to improve training so it becomes more accessible, representative, and safe over time.

Learning Resources

Use these resources as starting point for exploring the Wholeness solution as basis for this guidance.

Overview of wholeness solution: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s41VoQsWO28>

Primer and orientation lesson (demand) <https://tadf.co.uk/orientation-lesson/>.

Wholeness image artefacts: <https://tadf.co.uk/the-wholeness-solution-images/>

Book: Ahmad, M. (2025) *A New Introduction to Counselling and Psychotherapy: Embedding Context, Diversity and Equity Into Practice*. Abingdon: Taylor & Francis Ltd.

WICKET-BOND embedded Experiencing model below:

