

## **Guidelines for sharing and submitting your personal journey story:**

We want to hear your story if:

- You struggled to understand certain cultural manifestations of others and, ultimately, valued those manifestations that you originally questioned or scrutinized to the extent that you adopted them.
- You recall a specific incident or series of incidents that challenged your beliefs, forced you to examine your biases and in the end, raised your cultural consciousness.

In order to consider your story for publication, the narrative should follow the cultural competency path as presented below. You can also refer to the “spiral metaphor” under step 2 of the link: [http://www.lacrosseconsortium.org/content/c/personal\\_journey](http://www.lacrosseconsortium.org/content/c/personal_journey)

If you need help identifying the steps to write your story, refer to Stephanie’s [story](#).

The personal journey story represents the first few loops around the spiral path, which depicts a person’s development of culture skills while reevaluating his/her beliefs and values. It is important to remember that in order to become sensitive to others, a complete examination and analysis of our own privileges and biases is necessary.

### **Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack:**

[http://www.lacrosseconsortium.org/uploads/content\\_files/Peggy\\_McIntosh\\_Excerpt.pdf](http://www.lacrosseconsortium.org/uploads/content_files/Peggy_McIntosh_Excerpt.pdf)

**Step 1. Awareness** – Think about a moment or several moments of discovery: about a time you experienced something unfamiliar that caused you pause. This experience could be an encounter with a person, an observation of a behavior, or even the absorption of a movie that moved you to tears and to the realization that some things are not the way you initially came to understand them. At the time, the feelings you experienced may have been confusion, impatience, disbelief, helplessness, etc. Instead of rejecting such experiences you were able to work through your initial feelings, ask questions, make friends, find explanations and examine your upbringing and values.

**Step 2. Understanding** – After considering the history and meaning of the discovery, talking to people, and engaging in self-reflection, the discovery begins to make sense. This self-reflection should include a period of listening, questioning, and analysis. Look at your past experiences growing up, biases encountered, values you were taught and privileges you may not even be aware you had. Sometimes it takes research and more exposure to find answers. This is more about you than about “the other.” Your story should talk about your process, feelings, questions you asked, and how you arrived to understanding.

**Step 3. Respect** – After many questions, analysis, retrospection, and guidance from people with different perspectives, you not only understand what is happening but respect the fact that even though your values contradict your experiences, you are able to respect the difference for what it is; a manifestation of another culture with a way to view and deal with the world that is different than yours. Friends and exposure allow individuals to develop this respect.

**Step 4. Value** – If you are able to look back, recognize, and accept the reasoning behind the behavior you have witnessed, you are on your way to *value* what before was confusing. Recognizing that you now view and function in the world differently, you can move forward without the previous biases or judgment. You have changed.

**Step 5. Selective adoption** – If you decide to selectively adopt certain norms, values, or characteristics from another culture, you are immersing yourself in the culture and becoming part of it. These new adopted norms will become part of your new view of the world.

**Step 6. Advocacy** – If you are ready to include, support, promote, defend, participate, campaign, and/or educate others, you have risen in the spiral and are better prepared to confront the next challenge.

Once you have written your story, please submit to [jsandvick@uwlax.edu](mailto:jsandvick@uwlax.edu).

Please note the following disclaimer: The La Crosse Medical Health Science Consortium (LMHSC) has the right to edit submitted stories, with the intent of maintaining the content as expressed. In addition, the story becomes the property of the LMHSC, which in turn may use the story as appropriate to further expand awareness on culture competency. The LMHSC also has the right to not use a submitted story.

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