

At SLS 360, we believe that language is more than just words — it's a powerful tool that shapes culture, connection, and community. This visual resource is a gentle reminder that *words have power* — to build trust, foster inclusion, and create spaces where people feel seen, valued, and respected.

Whether you're facilitating a meeting, designing a policy, or simply engaging in everyday conversation, the words you choose can either close the distance between people or widen the gap. Authentic communication requires care, courage, and curiosity.

Use this resource as a starting point in your team discussions or training sessions to reflect on how language shows up in your workplace — and how it can be used more intentionally to support equity, belonging, and trust.



Language & Authentic Communication





Showing Interest in Cultural Background

- I'd love to learn more about what inspires you musically. Are there any styles or artists that resonate with you or your family's culture?
- I want to make sure our work together respects what's important to you and your family. Are there any cultural practices or values we should keep in mind?
- Are there ways you like to connect music to your culture or heritage? I'd love to hear about them!
- Are there musical traditions or genres that are particularly meaningful to your family?
- Do you have any preferences or expectations for how we can work with [YP's name] to support their musical growth?



Using Inclusive and Open-Ended Questions

- Can you tell me more about what makes you feel most comfortable and supported in music spaces?
- What's important to you in music? Are there parts of your cultural background that you'd like to bring into our sessions?
- How does your family feel about music? Is there anything I should know to make sure we're all aligned?
- Can you share any special ways music is used in your culture—like celebrations, storytelling, or family gatherings?



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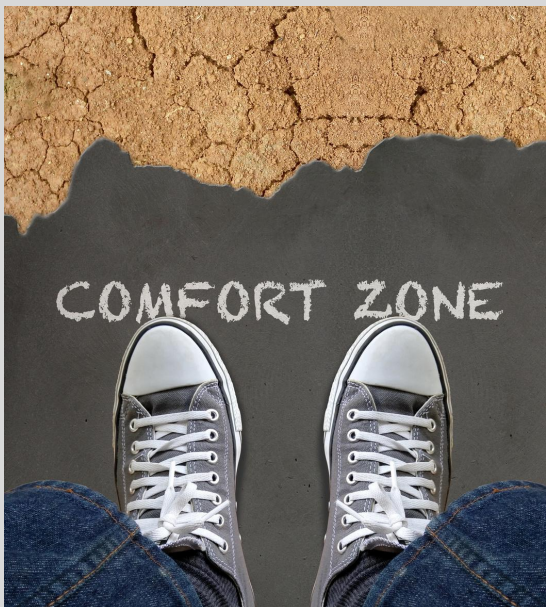
Building Trust

Through

Affirmation

and Empathy

- **Your perspective and experiences are important to me/us, and I'm/we're here to listen if there's ever something on your mind.**
- **There may be times when our conversations touch on cultural aspects. If anything ever feels uncomfortable, just let me know.**
- **How are you feeling about your music journey so far? Is there anything we could change to make you feel more at ease?**
- **Is there anything you'd like to share that would help me understand how I can be the best support for you?**



Checking in for **Understanding** **and Comfort**

- **Discussing cultural background can feel personal, so please only share what you're comfortable with.**
- **How are you feeling about what we're discussing?**
- **I want to make sure this space feels safe for you to be yourself, so if there's anything we need to adjust, just let me know.**
- **Would you like to learn or explore instruments, songs, or styles from your cultural background?**
- **How do you feel discussing your musical /cultural preferences with your teacher(s) or peers?**