

Acknowledgment of Cultural Context

As the authors of the SPEAK Vocal Empowerment Curriculum, we acknowledge your expertise as facilitators and trust that you know the community of students you work with. We maximize the opportunities for choice within the curriculum and encourage mentors, teachers, and community leaders to make necessary adjustments and changes to be responsive to varying cultural and societal values, beliefs, customs, and practices. We acknowledge in advance the expertise of facilitators in guiding participants to negotiate the costs and benefits of using their voices in new ways. We strongly believe that adults within a community can work with young women to “understand and invest in the conditions that support and enable them to connect with one another, voice strong feelings and opinions, think critically, oppose injustice, and grapple with the culture of power” (Brown, 2016, p. 10).

If any part of this curriculum is not a good match for your culture, style, or community, please feel free to make adjustments. We trust you to know what is important, and let the rest go. For example, when an earlier version of this curriculum was facilitated with groups of young women in Alexandria and Aswan, Egypt, both groups decided that they did not like the song provided in the curriculum and, instead, made up their own. In fact, that’s why we incorporated having participants create their own songs. If you think a given daily meditation will not resonate with your participants, feel free to make up a new one. As a group, you may even want to rewrite or revise the ten characteristics of an empowered voice to reflect your experience. Wherever you feel the inclination to make adjustments, do so. If you create something you think may inspire others, share it with us via Contact@Speak.World so your experience can benefit the larger community.



Photo by Sarah Fahmy