

Session 3

values, discrimination and empowerment

the fostering network
helping children to thrive



Session 3: values, discrimination and empowerment

Introduction

The existence of prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination places barriers in the way of people achieving their potential. The purpose of this session is to focus attention on examples of prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination and to begin the process of recognising the various ways in which these can be manifest, some subtly, some overtly, some individually, some institutionally. We then aim to heighten awareness of the impact discrimination can have on individuals and groups, not just at the time but also the longer term consequences.

This session focuses on raising awareness of personal and societal prejudices and how these impact on individuals while also addressing the issue of power and powerlessness in the mentoring relationship. The exercises are experiential to allow people to examine their own attitudes and feelings.

Purpose

To give people awareness of their own attitudes and values, to highlight how discrimination operates and to promote respect for diversity and difference

Application

Awareness of equality and diversity issues must underpin and inform the whole mentor induction course and form a corner stone of the mentoring relationship. Throughout the course trainers need to be able to identify and constructively challenge discriminatory behaviour and attitudes in themselves and others.

Overview

time

Total session running time: **3 hours**

objectives

By the end of this session you will:

- Have discussed and explored your own values and attitudes
- Have considered the values that underpin mentoring relationships
- Know the difference between prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination
- Have reflected on and discussed the effects of discrimination, groups affected by discrimination and your own experience of discrimination
- Have considered how you might counter the effects of discrimination and empower the young person you are mentoring.

key issues

Trainers need to be aware that they are role models and must therefore be mindful of their own language, attitudes and behaviour.

Prior to delivering the course trainers should have identified their own value base and be aware of any hidden discrimination they might have.

You need to be aware that participants may feel anxious at revealing their own prejudices for fear of being judged. Also people might have started the course believing that they knew all about equality issues and may feel thrown off balance to realise that there are gaps in their knowledge and understanding which the course throws up.

For these reasons it is important to reassure people that it is OK not to know everything and to explain that like it or not we all stereotype others and have prejudices.

materials

Flipchart stand, pad and marker pens, Blu-Tack

Paper and pens for note taking

1 pack of Post-it's

OHP slides:

1. Session objectives
2. 3 Levels of discrimination
3. Identity
4. 3 Levels of disempowerment
5. Valuing diversity
6. Values and mentoring

handouts:

1. Session objectives
2. 3 Levels of discrimination
3. Identity
4. 3 Levels of disempowerment
5. Valuing diversity
6. Values and mentoring
7. What is discrimination?
8. Promoting equality
9. Hometask and Hometask discussion sheet
10. Evaluation sheet

Training session

1. Session objectives

5 minutes

Welcome and session objectives: This exercise is designed to let everyone know what is going to be covered in this session.

What to do

- Show slide ① .
- Reveal and talk about each objective, one at a time.
- Ask if anyone has any questions or is unclear about anything.

2. Ice breaker

10 minutes

This exercise is designed to encourage people to share a bit more about themselves with the whole group and links in with the focus of the training session on diversity and identity.

What to do

- Ask each person to take a minute to think about their name, where it comes from and what it means to them.
- When people are ready, ask them to share the information with the large group
- Start with yourself and continue round the group.
- At the end of the round explain that this exercise has been chosen to highlight the diversity within the training group and to set the scene for the coming input on identity

3. Prejudice, Stereotyping, Discrimination and Identity

30 minutes

Explain to the group that we are now going to look at these terms, their relationship to our identity (i.e. our sense of who we are) and to look at our own experience of and involvement in prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination.

Explain that people might find this exercise challenging as it can be uncomfortable to expose our vulnerabilities and prejudices to another person

Emphasise that the nature of what is discussed in the pairs exercise does not have to be shared with the whole group.

What to do

- In small groups/pairs have people discuss their understanding of the terms 'Prejudice', 'Stereotyping' and 'Discrimination'. Note feedback from the groups on a flipsheet, then explain the terms.

- Show slide ② and talk through the three levels of discrimination – personal, cultural and structural and the fact that discrimination can be direct or indirect.
- Emphasise the importance of mentors being willing to critically examine and own any prejudices or stereotypes they hold and to be willing to revise their attitudes and assumptions
- Link discrimination to group membership or identity and show slide ③.
- Ask the group to quickly list examples of prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination in our society.

4. Assessing the effects of discrimination: case studies

45 minutes

- Divide the group up into pairs/small groups. Give them materials and ask them to create a tabloid front page with newspaper articles on a particular group affected by discrimination e.g. asylum seekers, young people.

Ask people to discuss: where the discriminatory views originate, what perpetuates them, what the impact/consequences might be on the people affected and others who receive/need the information. What factors might influence the impact? Is there a link between discrimination and "power"?

Show slide ④ and talk through the different levels

- Have groups feed their thoughts back to the whole group.
- Ask people to reflect on their own lives and experience of being discriminated against on the basis of a "label or membership of a group"
- Refer to the concepts of 'self fulfilling prophecies' and 'internalised oppression' and discuss how they apply in terms of how discrimination perpetuates itself.
- Make sure that people are fully debriefed after this exercise and that they are not left carrying any feelings of guilt or inadequacy.

Coffee Break

15 minutes

5. Values and attitudes

(a) This exercise is designed to help participants critically examine their personal value base.

20 minutes

What to do

Explain that mentors, like all people, will have their own values and beliefs and that to be an effective mentor it is necessary to know what your own values and beliefs are and to avoid imposing them on mentees

- Split the group into pairs.
- Explain that each person has 5 minutes in turn to ask their partner about the values by which they live their lives as well as the specific values that they will bring to the mentoring role.

After 10 minutes bring people back into the large group and get feedback from the pairs

It is likely that within the training group differing values will be expressed. Highlight the importance of respecting diversity and difference both within the training group and within the mentoring relationship and emphasise the potential pitfall of trying to impose your own values and beliefs on mentees.

(b) Mentoring value base

15 minutes

Set the group the task of coming up with a list of mentoring values which are shared by everyone in the group

What to do

- Ask people to come up with suggestions for mentoring values, which they feel, are important to and shared by this training group
- List the suggestions on the flipchart
- Check that there is agreement on all points listed
- If any suggestions are disputed make sure that discussion allows for a consensus to be reached
- Show slides ⑤ & ⑥ and make the point that having thought through our value base is not enough. We need to put our values into action. Slide ⑥ shows how our values need to interact with the context of mentees lives, their opportunities for learning and development and a process that will enable them to achieve their goals.

6. Challenging discrimination

20 minutes

This exercise gives people the opportunity to think about ways that they can implement non-discriminatory practice in the mentoring relationship and asks people to identify how they can empower their mentee.

What to do

- Divide the group into 3 smaller groups.
- Give each group a flipsheet
- Ask each group to consider and list ways of implementing non-discriminatory practice in the mentoring relationship and to identify ways of empowering mentees
- Allow 10-15 minutes for this. Bring people back into the large group.
- Ask someone from each group to read out what their group has written.
- Expand on issues raised, as appropriate.

Issues you would want to see raised include:

- Power/disempowerment....how to equalise power in the mentoring relationship
- The role of policies and procedures
- Self awareness
- Promoting equal opportunities and valuing diversity
- Responding to behaviour/language which is discriminatory..... countering discriminatory views

7. Recap of session

5 minutes

This helps people reflect on what they have learned and recaps on the session objectives.

What to do

- Show slide ① again.
- Check that everyone is happy that each objective has been met.

8. Hometask: Personal Shield

5 minutes

Explain that this session's hometask will involve the completion of a personal shield outlining the individual's values, attitudes, hopes and aspirations. Ask people to take a few minutes at home to complete the task on the worksheet provided.

9. Looking ahead

Link forward to next session.

What to do

- Tell everyone what the next training session will be about.

10. Evaluation of session

10 minutes

What to do

- Give out evaluation sheets and allow time for everyone to fill them in. Make sure you get them all back before everyone leaves!

11. Handouts

Give out session handouts.

Objectives

Slide 1

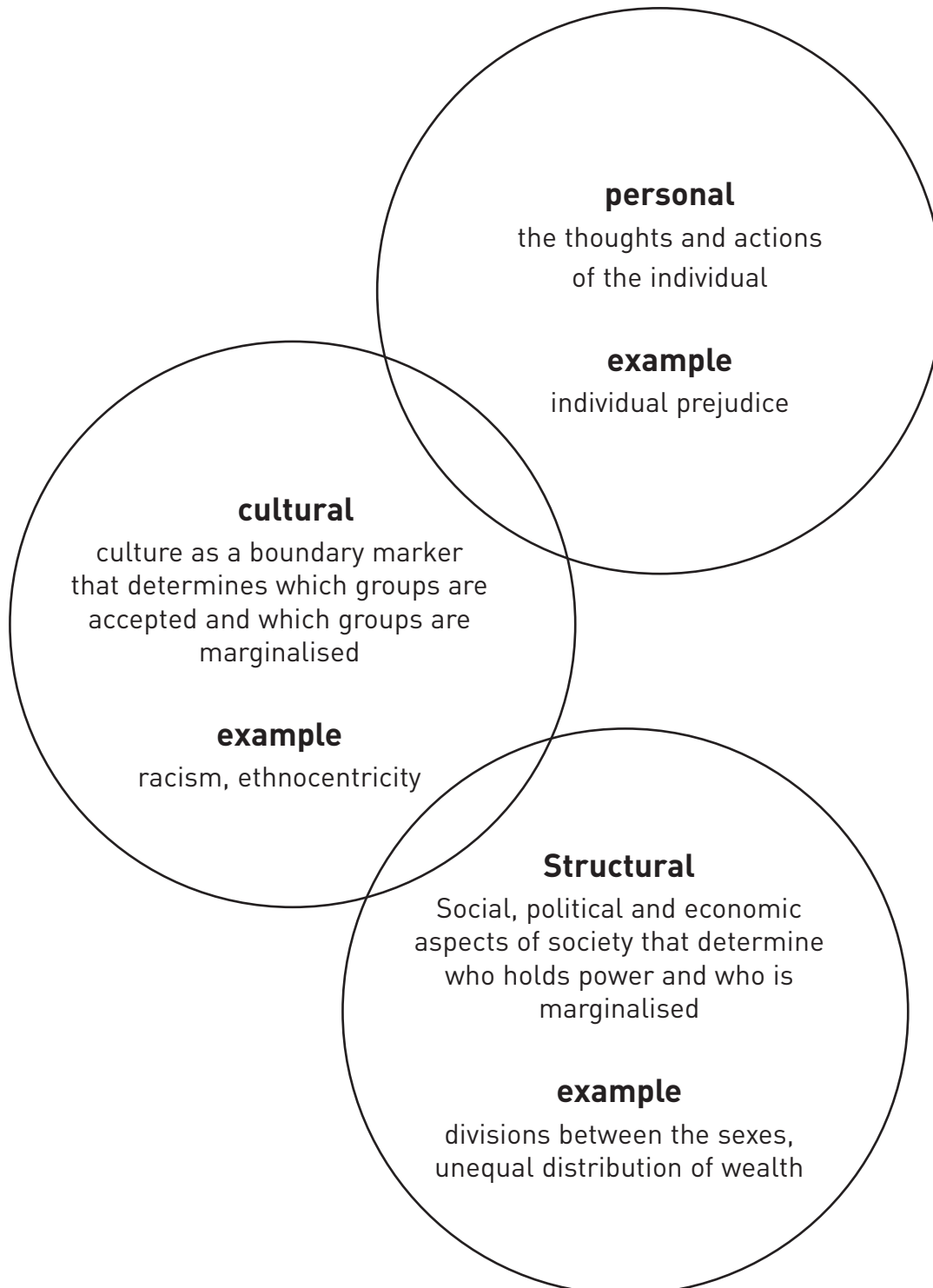
By the end of this session you will:

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- Have considered the values that underpin mentoring relationships
- Know the difference between prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination
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The 3 levels of discrimination

Slide 2

The diagram summarises the ideas about discrimination discussed in this section



Adapted from Thompson, N. (1998) "Promoting Equality - Challenging discrimination and oppression in the human services". London, Macmillan

IDENTITY

**"Who we believe ourselves to be.
The sense we make of our experiences and the influences on
our lives."**

Telfer (2004)

THE THREE LEVELS OF DISEMPOWERMENT

Slide 4

PERSONAL	Concerned with people's feelings, ideas and the power and resources they possess in order to make connections between their lived experience and the wider social world	May be characterised by self-limiting perceptions about what possibilities and opportunities exist
SOCIAL GROUP	The sphere in which people are positioned within social, family and community contexts	The limiting perceptions will be ones shared by peers within the group
STRUCTURAL LEVEL	The sphere in which people are positioned within wider social, cultural and political contexts and within which they may feel trapped	This is the level that equal opps policies address people cannot resolve this level individually people can often only challenge such limitations by involving themselves in group activities

Adapted from : Depaul Trust "Working Out! Mentoring homeless, unemployed people. A Training and Good Practice Guide".

Valuing Diversity

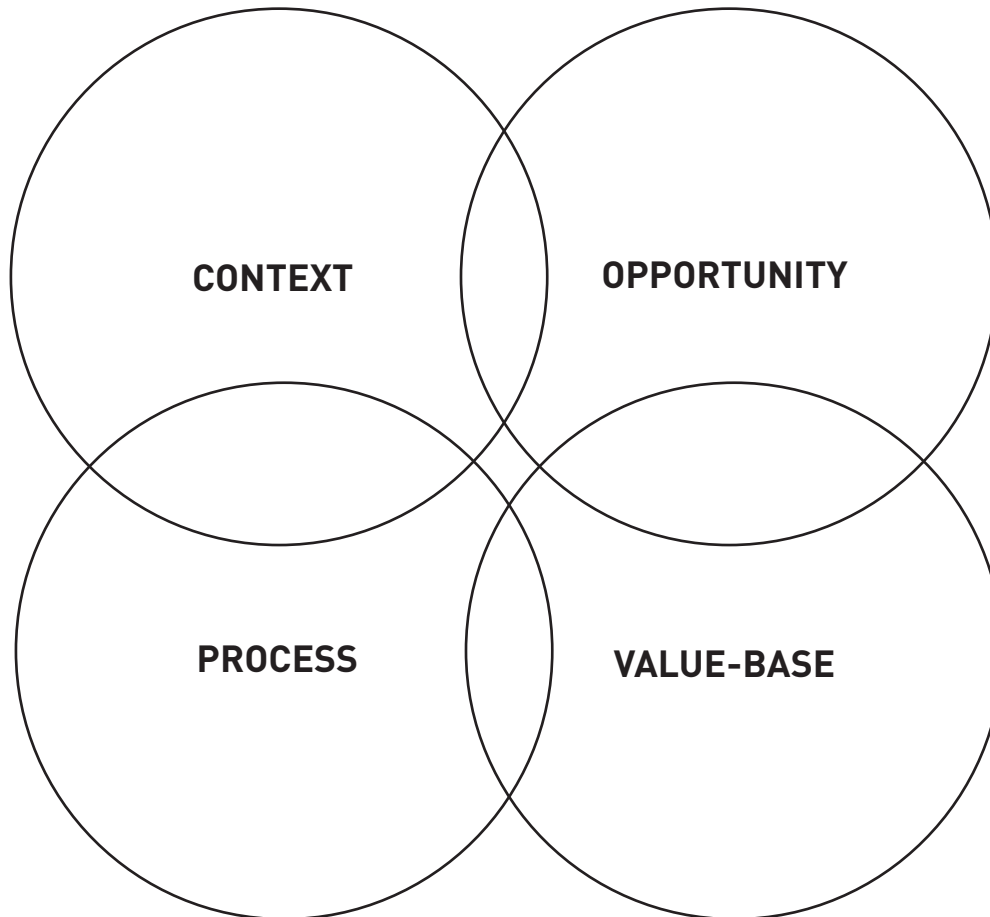
Slide 5

We are not all the same, nor should we be treated as such.

We should :

- Recognise people's differences
- Consider them as equal
- Behave in ways which demonstrate that diversity is valued

Anti-discriminatory practice is underpinned by the basic principle that people, simply because they are people, have the right to be treated fairly, equally and justly.



The mentoring value-base needs to connect with :

- The context of the mentee's life
- The mentee's opportunities for learning and development
- A process that will enable the mentee to achieve his or her goals

Adapted from: Depaul Trust "Working Out! Mentoring homeless, unemployed people. A Training and Good Practice Guide".

Understanding the issues

What is discrimination?

Discrimination is felt and experienced by individuals but happens as the result of their group membership or identity. People are discriminated against because they are identified as a member of the group 'gay people' or 'old people' or 'women' or 'disabled people'. In this sense, discrimination is not personal - and we can be prejudiced against gay people in general but at the same time have a friendship with a person who we know is gay.

Discrimination is carried out or 'enacted' at many different levels of social organisation :

- It is enacted by individuals - for example, a father telling his son not to invite his black friends home, or a brother telling his sister not to go out with a boy from a different religion, or an adult crossing the road to avoid meeting a group of young people.
- It is enacted by groups - for example, a group of young white men harassing a black man, or a group of schoolchildren picking on a disabled classmate.
- It is carried out by private and public organisations of all shapes and sizes - clubs that operate 'men only' membership, pubs refusing access to a blind person, employers discriminating between job applicants on the basis of postcode, gender, name or age.
- It is carried out by the State in laws that treat a whole group less favourably - for example laws on the age of consent for same-sex relationships; laws on the age at which a disabled foetus can be aborted; laws that deny civil rights to ethnic groups within a country, such as black Africans in South Africa during apartheid.

It is carried out in different ways :

- Official or unofficial - discrimination can be legitimised and condoned by the State; it can be seen as a private matter and not the business of the State; or it can be outlawed by the State but still be widespread in practice.
- Overt or covert - discrimination can be overt, "we don't want you here" or it can be covert, people consciously discriminating behind the scenes but denying that they are doing it.
- Direct or indirect - it can be direct, "you can only work here if you are white" or indirect, where rules which initially appear neutral have the effect of discriminating unfairly against certain groups.

For example a rule which says, "you can only work here if you have a degree" will disadvantage disabled people and a rule which says, "you can only work here if you can work full-time" is likely to disadvantage people with family responsibilities and

in our society this still means mainly women. These rules may be convenient for employers but not at all necessary for the effective running of the business.

What creates and maintains discrimination ?

When we do equality training, we come face to face with our own and other people's beliefs, attitudes, assumptions and prejudices - both the conscious ones that people are easily able to articulate and the unconscious ones that people have to 'dig' a little bit to find.

These individual attitudes actively create discrimination : they influence which laws are made (for example, the repeal of anti-gay legislation in Scotland and the UK was the subject of intense public debate); and they allow us to collude in or even not notice the discrimination that goes on around us.

These attitudes are not accidental or indiscriminate. The way we understand and engage in the world is not a fixed or passive 'state of mind' but a continuous process of 'reading and writing' the world. We develop our own 'story line' about ourselves and about other groups such as 'young people' or 'asylum seekers' and tend to pick out information that continues rather than changes this story line.

The world we live in is not neutral, but is organised in ways which reinforce discrimination.

We belong to organisations whose rules, policies, procedures, custom and practice reflect discrimination - but we see these organisations as 'normal' - we don't see in-built discrimination simply because it is 'there', part of the wallpaper.

We live in a society where physical space is organised to keep groups separate - for example, disabled and non-disabled people; separate housing for older people; housing schemes segregated on the basis of ethnicity or religion; schools where only young people go; shops for poor people and shops for rich people.

Our films, newspapers, books and news are enormously powerful carriers of culture. Again, we pick out from these the messages that fit our existing story-line - but we also learn from these media a great deal of what we know about the world beyond our immediate face to face experience. We can believe that our city is overrun with illegal immigrants even if we have never met one, because this is what the papers tell us.

We also use language and concepts that have discrimination built in. Language structures the world - so for example, when we use the term 'ethnic minorities' we create a world where the minority is defined in relation to this central majority.

Structure or culture

Many books have been written about whether culture leads to inequality or if economic structure determines culture, and it is easy to get into a 'chicken and egg' debate. Clearly the two reinforce each other : dominant groups shape society in their own image - they control the cultural means of production as well as the economic means of production. This means that patterns of inequality - because they are so pervasive - appear 'natural'.

How does discrimination perpetuate itself?

Self-fulfilling prophecies

The views that we hold about the world shape the actions that we take; if they did not our lives would be very chaotic. Our views about other people, and the actions that we take on account of these views, impact on the world that we experience. For example, if we think that our neighbour is unfriendly we are less likely to invite her in, less likely to ask her to look out for a postal delivery, less likely to knock on her door if we get her mail delivered to us by mistake. In fact we are more likely to behave in an unfriendly way towards her, making it increasingly difficult for her to be friendly and so confirming our original belief.

Instead of testing our theory about her, we simply act as though it is true and the actions that we take because of this belief make it look as though our theory is true. This 'closed loop' can continue for ever unless it is 'interrupted' in some way - maybe there is a flood or a power cut and she offers to help us, or we meet someone who knows our neighbour in another context and gives us a new perspective on her. These 'interruptions' allow us to change our 'theory in use' about the neighbour.

It is not possible - and probably not desirable - to go through life with no 'self-fulfilling prophecies' about people or situations. Our theories about the world and the way that we see the world has to stand still some of the time. If we were always 'revising our opinions' we would struggle to do anything.

But self-fulfilling prophecies can be highly damaging when they are not about two individuals with equal power, but about two individuals with unequal power or about a powerful social group and a less powerful social group. For example, if a teacher thinks that a child is unable and unwilling to learn because he is from a travelling family, then he is likely to treat that child in a way that makes her unable and unwilling to work. If the military establishment promotes the view that gay soldiers will not be trusted by their colleagues and will let sexual orientation disrupt effective working, they will spread mistrust and make sexual orientation a disruptive issue. The self-fulfilling prophecy undergoes a process of confirmation and becomes 'true'.

This process of confirmation is even more damaging when the powerful group has complete control over the less powerful group. In concentration camps, prisons, children's homes and workhouses, uniforms were used as a way of de-individualising people and confirming the powerful groups' view that 'these people' are all the same. The same patterns still exist in today's welfare services and institutions, for example older people are often treated as children and given childish things to do. If they join in, the belief that they enjoy childish things is confirmed, if they don't they are seen as difficult.

The cycle of self-fulfilling prophecies and confirmation occurs across society as a whole. For example, many groups who face discrimination have very negative stereotypes attached to them, which supply a whole host of damaging 'prophecies' about members of this group. Behaviour that appears to confirm these prophecies is used as 'evidence' that all people who belong to this group are the same.

Internalised oppression

Internalised oppression occurs when people from an oppressed group believe the negative and discriminatory representations of themselves. At one level an individual may believe what he is being told at an individual level - a disabled man may say "I could never do an ordinary job" or "I could never live in my own house" because of what has been said to him at an individual level. At another level an individual or group may start to see the world in the same way as the dominant groups in society - young people may say "Young people these days just aren't interested" or a gay person may say "Only heterosexual couples should have children." The internalisation of oppression is often an unconscious process that is very powerful because it means that oppressed groups adopt the same categories of reality and the same definitions of worth as the dominant group. This further empowers dominant groups whilst further disempowering oppressed groups.

Adapted from : Scottish Human Services Trust publication.

Promoting equality

Prejudice, Stereotype, Discrimination

What is discrimination?

To discriminate can be defined as "to make or constitute a difference in or between" (Shorter Oxford English Dictionary).

Discrimination also has a legal definition, which is given in the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Race Relations Act 1976. This centres around treating an individual differently (favourably or unfavourably) from others on the grounds of gender or race. For example, discrimination at work would involve treating some people less favourably than others on the basis of characteristics that are irrelevant to their ability to do the job in question. These characteristics frequently are that the person is a woman or is from an ethnic minority group.

To be aware of the process by which discrimination can arise the inter-relationship between stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination needs to be examined.

Stereotypes

Stereotyping can occur as part of a process which labels people as having the same characteristics, often occurring on the basis of a superficial generality e.g.

- Arranged marriages occur in Pakistan
- Swedish people have blonde hair

A stereotype often occurs through experience of one person from a particular group, through hearsay or through lack of knowledge. Stereotypes can be positive or negative and often contain assumptions about a person or group of persons, which are incorrect.

When a negative label is attached to a person or group, or an assumption is made that is regarded as negative, it can result in an unfavourable opinion or prejudice formed as a result of a stereotype.

Prejudice

Prejudice is defined as an opinion formed without taking time and care to judge fairly. It is applied especially to an opinion or judgement, usually unfavourable, formed beforehand because of personal feelings or a fixed idea. A prejudice does not have to be an unfavourable opinion, as indeed not all stereotypes are seen as negative labels. A stereotype can form the basis of a prejudice e.g.

- Irish people are stupid. Therefore they are only good at manual work.
- Men have more commitment to do well in their employment than women. Therefore it would be better to employ a man.
- Homosexuals have effeminate mannerisms. Therefore they cannot be responsible/forceful like men. (Any characteristics generally associated with men could be denied them.)

Stereotypes and prejudices are often hard to distinguish as stereotypes themselves often contain assumptions or opinions within the labelling process. The stereotype "all Scottish people are mean" does contain an assumption or an opinion. However, the value you attach to that assumption can affect the type of prejudice and indeed the degree of prejudice you form. If you consider being mean is a negative characteristic you would form an unfavourable opinion (prejudice) of Scottish people. If you considered being mean was a positive characteristic you would form a favourable opinion (prejudice) of Scottish people. The problem with forming a prejudice (an opinion formed without taking time and care to judge fairly) is that you would be prejudiced for or against all Scottish people, no matter what they were like as individuals. When someone acts in response to a prejudice, which results in treating individuals or groups unequally, discrimination occurs.

Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination, which occurs as a result of stereotypes and prejudices, can be defined as unequal treatment as a result of these assumptions.

An individual starts with a stereotype or assumption that men have more commitment than women to do well in their employment and forms the opinion that therefore it would be better to employ a man. This is a prejudice/opinion in favour of men but against women. If this prejudice results in a job being given to a man rather than a woman, even though they are equally qualified for the job in question, it would be discrimination.

The action you take as a result of the prejudice is discrimination. For example not giving a person a job because he/she is black, homosexual, lesbian, Scottish, Irish etc. would be discrimination; or not taking account of someone's opinions because the person is old, young or disabled would be discrimination.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination can be experienced when a requirement or condition applicable to all members of the community serves to disadvantage a smaller proportion of people. For example indirect discrimination can be seen in the design and building of premises where access is by stair only or through narrow doorways. People in wheelchairs or parents with prams cannot get into these premises easily and are therefore subject to indirect discrimination. Inadequate disabled toilet

facilities in social or leisure centres can be seen as a form of indirect discrimination preventing equal use of the premises by all groups.

These conditions or requirements are sometimes historical elements of the structure or organisation of our society and as such, their discriminatory character may be hidden.

Again this term has a legal definition. According to the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Race Relations Act 1976 indirect discrimination occurs when a requirement or condition is set which applies to all members of society but which is such that the proportion of people of a different sex or racial group, who can fit these requirements is smaller. An example would be the condition that only full time employees are eligible for redundancy. This applies equally to men or women but as the proportion of women who are full time employees is considerably less than the proportion of men, the measure is of less benefit to women and this results in indirect discrimination. On this basis, it would also be unlawful to restrict access to promotion or training programmes to full time workers. A requirement that all staff wear uniforms can be seen as indirect discrimination against people from ethnic groups whose form of dress has a religious or spiritual significance.

Discrimination is often direct and forceful as in the case of racial attacks and harassment. Often, however, the experience of discrimination is not something that you can pin down in a concrete way, but it comes across as a feeling that somehow makes you feel inferior. When the idea that one group is superior to another is enforced by those in more powerful positions, oppression can occur. There are several historical examples of oppression such as apartheid in South Africa and slavery and colonisation in Africa and America.

Although for simplicity, the notion of stereotype - prejudice - discrimination has been explored as a casual relationship, in fact this can occur in any order. The fact that black people have been discriminated against through segregation can result in the stereotype and prejudice that black people are in some way unfit to mix with the white population. Often discrimination is perpetuated by events in history and indeed by the portrayal of these events by a powerful group.

The relationship between power and discrimination is very strong. Individuals can internalise prejudice because of the way certain groups are treated by society in general. This is through institutionalised discrimination. Women being denied the vote is an example of discriminatory behaviour institutionalised through legal and parliamentary procedure which enforced the opinion of women as inferior.

If domestic violence, rape within marriage and child abuse are not subject to legal prosecution as criminal acts, discriminatory behaviour (and in these instances, violent and abusive behaviour) is legitimised as acceptable if it occurs in a family

situation. This can then be internalised into other images suggesting that the use of force against women and children is acceptable. The Immigration Laws introduced in the United Kingdom, between 1960 and 1980 are examples of a power structure which institutionalised discrimination as regards individuals' rights to enter and stay in the country. In effect, these laws discriminated against black people.

Discrimination can be specific to particular cultures. Though there are obviously others, the most commonly quoted example is the negative stereotyping of age in Western societies which leads to the exclusion of elderly people from responsible positions in society. Advancing years are often a source of veneration and respect in other societies.

Discrimination is a complex interactive process, which does not have a single cause and may often be manifested indirectly in a manner, which is hidden, subtle and insidious.

Adapted from : North Ayrshire Council "Anti-Discrimatory Practice" Staff Training Course.

Hometask for session 3

Personal Shield.

Create your own coat of arms by writing or drawing your answers to the following questions in the appropriate spaces on the attached shield.

Centre Circle

Something that represents you and your values

Top Right

A goal or a vision you have - something you are striving to become

Top left

Why you exist/what is your purpose

Middle Left

An achievement you are proud of (2 or 3)

Middle Bottom

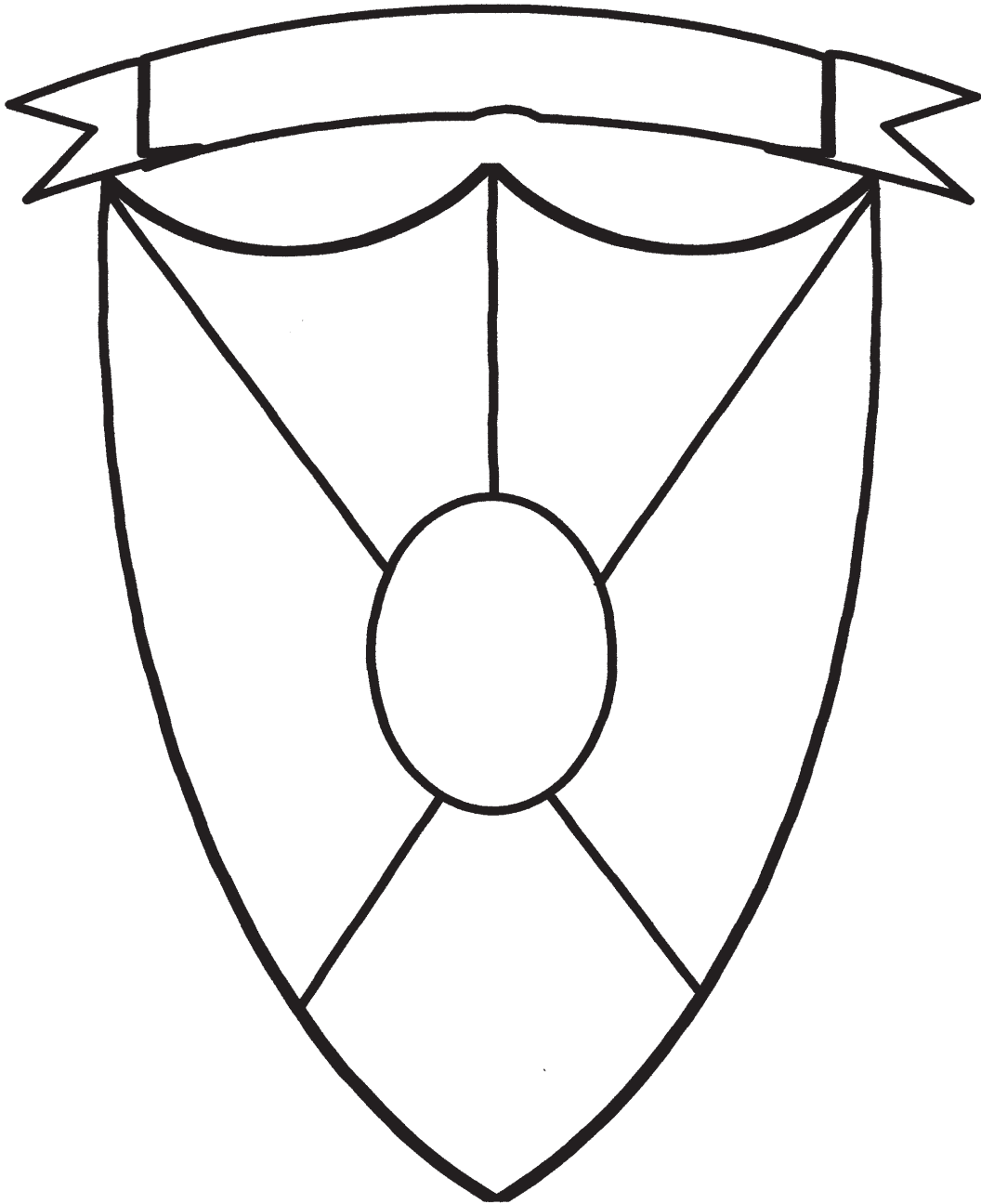
Three things you would most like people/customers/suppliers to say about you

Middle Right

The benefits others gain by dealing with or knowing you

Top Ribbon

What your individual or company motto would be



EVALUATION SHEET

1. Rate today's training session by circling one number

Not interesting

Very interesting

1

2

3

4

5

2. How will today's training session help you carry out your role as a mentor?

3. What did you enjoy most about today's training session?

4. Anything you didn't enjoy or didn't feel was useful?

5. Any suggestions to improve this training session when it is next run?

6. Any other comments?

Thank you for completing this form
