

LGBTI Intersectional Training

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Session Outline

- What is Intersectionality?
- Key Concepts
- Break
- Terminology
- Exercise in Groups and Top Tips
- Q & A



What is Intersectionality?

Intersectionality is a way of looking at the overlap of various social identities, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, and disability, which allows us to recognise the specific types of systemic oppression and discrimination experienced by people who fall into more than one oppressed group.





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Key Concepts

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Intersectionality and Identity

- Everybody has multiple aspects to their identity: gender, age, race, sexual orientation and more
- Some of those change through our lives (age, marital status), but others are more permanent (ethnicity, birthplace)
- Some aspects of our identities are more important to us than others, often these are the ones where we've been discriminated against the most

Power and Privilege

- Some aspects of our identity are (still) systematically favoured over others: white, male, straight, able-bodied and so on
- Our experience in the world is shaped by how our identities fit into this dynamic of power and privilege within our society
- The more aspects of our identity are marginalised by this dynamic, the more barriers there are to access power and meaningful inclusion
- Privilege: having fewer barriers than someone who is subject to discrimination

We can have privilege in some ways but not others

Discrimination

- Discrimination can be systemic, institutional or interpersonal, all these levels feed into each other and overlap
- Microaggressions: repetitive, small acts of discrimination, often unintentional. Microaggressions add up into patterns and can be overwhelming

Intersectional Discrimination

Intersectional discrimination is the way various aspects of a person's identity can be subject to forms of discrimination that do not affect people that share only one of those identities. It is not the same as when someone is discriminated against on two grounds in a separate way.

We prefer to use the term intersectional, but dual and multiple discrimination are also used in legal contexts.

Why Does the Intersectional Approach Matter?

- Acknowledges the diversity of human experience
- Can create more meaningful inclusion and discourage “tick-box” approach to service provision
- Reduces the risk of people getting lost in the system
- Makes services more welcoming and accessible to service users
- Makes everybody’s life easier, including the service provider’s

Terminology

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Terminology in Practice

- Terminology changes and can have different connotations to dictionary definitions at different times and in different communities
- Don't get hung up or defensive about getting some terminology wrong. Do apologise and be prepared to learn and change
- Allow individuals to use their preferred language about their own identities
- Use the language that people ask you to use about their identities. If you don't know – ask

Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity

- Gender Identity: self-perception of own gender
- Gender Expression: external gendered appearance and behaviour
- Sexual Orientation: who we are emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted to
- Homo/bi/trans -phobia: discrimination against people based on their sexual orientation or gender identity

Natural human diversity means these are each multi-dimensional rather than just two binary possibilities.



Race

- Race: social construct based on physical characteristics, but real impact on everyday life
- Ethnicity: belonging to a social group with common national or cultural traditions, some overlap with race but not the same
- Racism: discrimination against non-white groups because of their race. White privilege is a key component of power imbalance
- Xenophobia: discrimination against people based on their ethnicity or place of birth

Natural human diversity means that racial minority groups are not all the same and should not be considered a monolithic group.



Disability

- Impairment: a person's physical, sensory or cognitive difference
- Disability: consequences of having an impairment
- Social vs. medical model of disability
- Neurodiversity: variations in cognitive function e.g. autism or ADHD
- Invisible disabilities: include chronic illness, mental health issues
- Ableism: discrimination based on disability

Natural human diversity means that even people with similar conditions are not the same so don't assume you know all about a person's disability

Other Forms of Discrimination

- Sexism: discrimination on the basis of gender
- Ageism: discrimination due to age
- Religious discrimination: discrimination against a person's religion/religious background. This can overlap with racism, e.g. Islamophobia
- Some characteristics are not protected in law but still overlap, e.g. class, rurality, body size

Break

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Top tips for including intersectional identities

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Group Exercise

In your groups think of two to three ways you could improve intersectional inclusion in your services.

If you don't work for a service think of how you could improve a service you use.

Time: 15 Minutes



Use a Person-Centred Approach

- Avoid assumptions about someone's identity (e.g. gender, sexual orientation)
- Avoid assumptions about someone's experiences/beliefs because of their identity (e.g. thinking a black man is probably homophobic)
- Avoid intrusive or inappropriate questions
- Maintain confidentiality and don't out people without their consent
- Respect all self-identification – no one's identity is up for discussion
- Be aware of language (e.g. gendered or insensitive language)

Increase Knowledge and Understanding

- Make sure that your diversity training includes all protected characteristics and pays specific attention to intersectionality
- Ask questions patiently and be honest about gaps in your knowledge, but don't rely on your service users to be your teachers

Consult and Collaborate

- Build support for the intersectional approach within your organisation
- Develop and maintain diverse relationships across a range of organisations
- Be prepared to pay for expertise



Increase Accessibility

- Have a disability access audit and act on it
- Remember good access includes having accurate information readily available
- Communicate any access barriers so that service users can make their own decisions about using your service
- Allow service users to ask for additional assistance where needed
- Access is not just about disability: try to have information available in multiple languages and formats



Tackle Discrimination

- Make bold and proactive statements tackling discrimination
- Implement policies to discourage and deal with discrimination
- Ensure consistent inclusion of ALL protected characteristics
- Have a visible complaints procedure and take complaints seriously



Positive Representation and Messages

- Allow and encourage people from different groups to speak for themselves and/or use their own words
- Make your inclusive practice visible with specific examples
- Don't misrepresent organisational diversity



Integrate Intersectionality into your Systems

- Attract and **support** diverse people to work and volunteer for your organisation
- Ensure that your referral systems include specialist services across all of the protected characteristics
- Publicise your respect for people's privacy
- Respect people's wishes and comfort levels regarding language and labelling



Questions?

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