



Sharing Discrimination

It was awful, it was such an embarrassing situation, I didn't know what to do...

Issues addressed

- The manifestation of prejudice and discrimination in our society
- How to deal with difficult situations assertively

Aims

- To be more aware of discrimination in our daily lives
- To promote empathy with those who are discriminated against
- To help people learn how to be assertive.

Time: 45 minutes

Group size

Any. If the group is very large divide it for discussion into subgroups of 6 - 8.

Preparation

- Flip chart and marker

Instructions

1. Ask each person to think of one occasion when they felt discriminated against or one situation when they saw someone else being discriminated against.
2. Go round and ask each person to describe their situation very briefly to the group.
3. List all the situations on the flip chart and then ask the group to choose one to discuss.
4. Ask the person whose situation was chosen to describe in greater detail what happened.
5. Then talk about:
 - how the situation arose and what actually happened
 - how the person who was discriminated against felt
 - how the person who discriminated felt
 - if the person was justified in feeling discriminated against
 - how they responded and what happened after the incident
6. At the end ask the group to say what they could have done in the same situation and work out other possible ways of responding.

Debriefing and evaluation

Talk about discrimination in general:

- What are the most common reasons people discriminate against you? Because of your age, skin colour or the clothes you wear?
- Why do people discriminate against others who are different?
- Where do they learn this behaviour?
- How important is it to challenge discrimination?

Tips for the facilitator

People should think of real situations which they feel strongly about but you should emphasise that no one should feel under pressure to say anything that would make them feel uncomfortable..

Usually people talk about negative discrimination, but be aware that issues about positive discrimination may be raised.

Variations

1. Use roleplay to explore the situation. Ask a pair or small group to role play the situation while the rest observe. Afterwards ask the observers to suggest possible alternative responses to the situation. Roleplay the suggestions and discuss the issue further.
2. Ask everybody to write down a brief outline of a situation on a slip of paper. Put the papers in a hat. Pass the hat round inviting each person to take out one piece of paper. Go round the circle and ask each person to read out what is written on their note. Ask everyone to try to guess the feelings of those involved.

Suggestions for follow up

Organise some assertiveness training to help you develop skills to deal difficult situations.

People discriminate against others who are different when it is in their interests to do so, but at the same time they like to enjoy many of the things foreigners have brought with them, and which we take for granted such as pizzas, kebabs or jazz and reggae music. If you are interested in discovering the 'foreign footprints' that are all around us, have a go at 'Trailing diversity' (page 170).

Alternatively try the simulation game 'Limit 20' (page 110) for some fun and excitement.