

2010

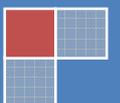
Module 6: Sexual Orientation

Sample



In association with
Equality and Diversity UK Ltd

2010



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Module 6: Sexual Orientation

The objectives for this session are to:

- examine what is meant by the term sexual orientation
- consider stereotypes and think about your own values, attitudes and prejudices
- consider how regulations protect workers from discrimination because of sexual orientation
- challenge inequality with regard to sexual orientation
- identify how we can promote and support equality and diversity and create individual or team Action Plans, as appropriate.

Preparation Checklist

Use this checklist to make sure you have gone through the necessary preparations for the session. Tick each action when it is completed.

You will need to:

- book a suitable venue
- send course details to the participants, reminding them to read the self-study materials, in particular *Sexual Orientation*, in preparation for this module
- incorporate a set of ground rules for the session in the course details
- familiarise yourself with the Delivery Plan for this module and associated self-study materials
- if appropriate, develop some extended resources to meet the diverse needs of participants and for differentiation
- obtain resources such as a projector, OHP, flipchart/whiteboard and markers, and sufficient copies of handouts, Action Plans and Review Sheets for the participants
- ensure that you are familiar with the resources in this toolkit and have a set to show the participants

You may also find it helpful to discuss the modules with another facilitator or your manager.

Delivery Plan

Welcome people to the session and explain any 'housekeeping' issues, e.g. timings, breaks, security.

Optional Activity *Icebreaker*

If appropriate to the participants, include an icebreaker that will help people to get to know each other and create an energetic, enthusiastic atmosphere (see *Icebreakers* in the *About This Guide* section for some suggestions).

Explain the objectives for the session.

At the end of the session participants will be able to:

- define what we mean by sexual orientation
- recognise how people are affected by stereotypes
- identify their own values, attitudes and prejudices and how they can affect others
- describe the legislation in place to protect people from discrimination
- challenge inequality
- explore how to develop Action Plans to promote equality and diversity

MODULE 6 SLIDE 3

Explain that as the facilitator you will be leading the session, but it is an important part of the training for participants to share experiences and good practice so that we can learn from each other.

What do we mean by sexual orientation?

Explain that the group is going to begin the session by defining what we mean by sexual orientation.

Ask the participants to get into groups of 2 or 3 or split the group randomly (see *Random Splits* in the *About This Guide* section for ideas on how to do this). Encourage them to come up with a definition.

You may choose to show either or both of the definitions below.

Sexual Orientation

- Orientation towards persons of the same sex (lesbians and gay men)
- Orientation towards persons of the opposite sex (heterosexual)
- Orientation towards persons of the same sex and the opposite sex (bisexual)

MODULE 6 SLIDE 4

Sexual orientation is an emotional, sexual or affectionate attraction to another person.

Sexual orientation exists along a continuum that ranges from exclusive homosexuality to exclusive heterosexuality and includes bisexuality.

MODULE 6 SLIDE 5

Stress that a gay or lesbian relationship is often defined solely by sexual behaviour, but can be much more than this. As with all types of relationships, gay and lesbian relationships are as much to do with love, friendship, sharing and mutual interest as they are to do with sex.

MYTHS AND REALITY

Explain that there are myths and misconceptions about people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual, and such beliefs can affect the attitude and behaviour of people towards them.

Ask the participants to remain in the same groups and think of examples of such myths and misconceptions.

Discuss the groups' ideas, including the examples below:

- Homosexual or bisexual orientation is a form of illness.

There is no scientific evidence to support this and the reality is that it is not an illness and does not require treatment. In 1973 the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from the official manual that lists mental and emotional disorders. For more than 25 years the Association has urged all mental health professionals to help dispel the stigma of mental illness that some people still associate with homosexual orientation.

- All gay and bisexual men are infected with HIV.

This is a commonly held myth. In reality, the risk of exposure to HIV is related to a person's behaviour, not their sexual orientation.

- Gay men have a greater tendency than heterosexual men to sexually molest children.

There is no evidence to suggest that homosexuals are more likely than heterosexuals to molest children.

- Homosexual relationships are more likely to be short-term and promiscuous than heterosexual relationships.

Again there is no evidence to support this.

- If a gay man is friendly towards another man it must mean that he is interested in him sexually and the same would apply if a lesbian is friendly towards another woman.

The truth is that gay people have preferences as heterosexual people do.

Alternatively

Provide each pair with a copy of Handout 1 *Myths and Reality* and ask them to complete the questionnaire, giving brief reasons for their responses.

Bring the group back together and chart their responses. Facilitate a discussion of how these myths can influence the attitude of other people towards bisexual or gay and lesbian people.

Discuss the following points with the participants:

- It is important to recognise that there are probably many reasons for a person's sexual orientation and the reasons may be different for different people.
- There are numerous theories about the reasons for a person's sexual orientation. Most scientists agree that sexual orientation is most likely the result of a complex interaction of environmental, cognitive and biological factors. There is also considerable recent evidence to suggest that biology, including genetic or inborn hormonal factors, plays a significant role in a person's sexuality. In most people, sexual orientation is shaped at an early age with sexual orientation emerging for most people in early adolescence without any prior sexual experience.
- Psychologists do not consider sexual orientation to be a conscious choice that can be voluntarily changed. People cannot choose to be either gay or straight, although we can choose whether or not to act on our feelings.

Here is a list of the rest of the contents of this pack

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To view the remainder of this pack, you will need to purchase it