

Trainers' Notes

# TRIGGERS

Disability Equality Training

London  
Borough  
Disability  
Resource  
Team

Training 'Triggers' has been prepared for the LBDRT by

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The London Boroughs Disability Resource Team is funded by the London Boroughs of *Camden*, *Ealing*, *Greenwich*, *Hackney*, *Haringey*, *Islington*, *Lambeth*, *Lewisham*, *Newham*, and *Southwark* to provide a full range of specialist services in policy preparation and service delivery to disabled people.

These services are available to *any* organisation on a consultancy or contract basis.

As well as publications covering good practice and current issues in the field of disability the Team operates a specialist information and advice service and can provide taping and braille, training packages and Sign Language interpretation.

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## Introduction

This Training Manual has been designed to accompany the Disability Awareness Training video entitled "Triggers", produced by The London Boroughs Disability Resource Team (LBDRT). It has three functions: -

1. To provide the trainer with a number of questions and ideas to use in exercises and role plays that relate to each of the fifteen scenes in the video. These ideas will help tutors to develop their own materials for the video scenes they use in challenging discriminatory attitudes and work practices.
2. To guide the trainer who is using Triggers in ways of illustrating the various topics that are addressed on LBDRT Disability Awareness Training (DAT) courses.
3. To present the trainer with a compendium of training techniques which may be used when delivering DAT courses.

## Using Triggers

The video is easy to use and provides the trainer with a dynamic way of stimulating group discussion. There are fourteen scenarios, each one illustrating the common attitudes, assumptions and beliefs that directly or indirectly discriminate against disabled people. The aim of the video is to help students identify this form of attitudinal and behavioural discrimination and challenge it in an effective and constructive way. Each scene or set of scenes is designed to show the forms of discrimination typical in particular areas of local authority service provision. You would NOT therefore show the video in its entirety, but use the scenes one at a time to trigger debate around the course participants' own area of work. For example, there are scenarios appertaining to recruitment and selection suitable for personnel officers, and three scenes deal with the Home Help Service and are suitable for Social Services officers and front-line staff.

To begin with, it is important to use the training pack alongside the video, or the scenes may be under utilised or misinterpreted, resulting in negative training. However, once you have experienced using the triggers in the recommended way, you will begin to feel confident to pilot your own ideas.

*Scene One*  
Reception Area

*This scene shows a receptionist attempting to direct a disabled person to an interview.*

Questions

- 1 What caused the receptionist's impatience?
- 2 What was oppressive about her attitude and in her tone of voice?
- 3 What assumptions did she make about where he was going? Why do you think she made these assumptions?
- 4 Was she patronising towards him? If so, how did she show this?
- 5 Did he become impatient? Why?
- 6 How do you think he felt about her attitude?
- 7 By the end of the conversation the disabled person was getting impatient. Do you think the receptionist would know the real reason for this? If not what reasons do you think she would give for his impatience?

*Note! Here you may want to lead the group into a discussion around the myth that disabled people have chips on their shoulder if they display any form of anger or gloom and how oppressive that myth is. You can raise the same issue in Scene 11, when the home help states that April is being "difficult" because she is asserting her right to decide how she wants her food cooked.*

- 8 "It's Mr. Smith who deals with the disabled." What did the receptionist mean by this?

*Note! This part of the scene could be used for a debate about language. Ask why the phrase "the disabled" is so insensitive and oppressive.*

- 9 Do you think the visitor's speech difficulty was the only reason why the receptionist thought he did not stand much of a chance of getting the job. If your answer is "no", what other reasons may she have?

*Note! The fact that the visitor is black may be part of her prejudice. You could explore the effect of double disadvantage here.*

### Roleplay Exercise

There are notes on how to do roleplays at the end of this manual. Study them before you begin this exercise.

Roleplay the scene making sure the receptionist is positive and non-discriminatory towards the disabled person. Get different members of the group to practise this and then discuss, as a group, whether their role was a better one and how it could further be improved. Give people plenty of time to talk. Don't rush the exercise- allow about 20-30 minutes.

## Scene Two Car Park

*The scene shows a disabled person driving into a car park and being told to move their car.*

### Questions

- 1 "No-one told me you were coming ... You should have rung administration and told them you was coming." Do you think it reasonable to expect or require a disabled motorist to inform people, such as security staff or administrators before they visit? Give reasons with your answers.

*Note! You may like to give some statistics describing the large numbers of disabled drivers and orange badge holders around. Then show that suitable parking provision in no way reflects the actual need. (You can get up-to-date statistics from the Department of Transport which conducts a survey every three years.)*

- 2 How do expressions such as "sorry dear" and "you people" offend disabled people?

*Note! You can mention other oppressions here e. g. sexism. Also the stereotyping of disabled people into different groups and how people use this language to oppress. Examples are: "Let me help you, you poor love"; "It must have been a black day when you were crippled."; "Isn't that little girl over there in the wheelchair brave, shopping with all of us?" (said of a 30-year-old woman).*

- 3 Have disabled people "got problems" just because they need to park nearby? What does the attendant mean by "problems" ?

*Note! Here you can talk about how disabled people are always seen as having "problems" when in fact they are often only asking for minor considerations or alterations in people's attitudes. Does the attendant think able-bodied drivers have "problems" when they want to park in his car park?*

## Scene Three

### Car Park

*This scene continues from Scene Two but now the car park attendant is joined by a person from the Personnel Department.*

### Questions

- 1 How does the Personnel Officer treat the disabled motorist?

*Note! Does she ask if the motorist needs a hand or does she assume there is a "problem"?*

- 2 Does she make assumptions about the disabled motorist by saying "she can't walk"? Are all wheelchair users unable to walk?
- 3 Is the Personnel Officer a 'know all' when she says "I know all about these. My aunt's got one", or is she being sympathetic?

*Note! Get the group to explore the difference between being helpful and taking over. Try to get the group to think of other ways in which her helpfulness could have been used more effectively, such as for example ASKING the motorist if he needed help. Give people plenty of time to comment on their reactions to contact with a disabled person who 'appears' to need help. (Allow 20 minutes.)*

- 4 Is there any moment in this scene when the Personnel Officer is really listening to the disabled person? Does this sort of thing often happen? Why?

*Note! This is a similar question to 3 above, but you could explore in more depth the reasons why people rush up and take over in similar situations, such as "helping" a blind person across a road when they may not want to cross. Explore people's feelings about what it is like to watch someone lost or uncertain in the street. Do they rush up to help a tourist who looks lost? Ask for reasons for their answers.*

- 5 Identify three things the Personnel Officer does within 20 seconds of taking over that disabled people would say are inappropriate.

*Note! Discussion should lead the group to an awareness of the following 'DON'TS' for able-bodied people.*

- i. DON'T assume you know how to assist a disabled person physically. Check with them that what you want to do is appropriate.
  - ii. DON'T talk about a disabled person to another person as if the disabled person were not there and DON'T speak on behalf of a disabled person unless requested to do so.
  - iii. DON'T assume that because you know someone with what looks to be a similar disability that you know all about how to deal with the situation. Some people think all wheelchair users have the same needs and abilities.
- 6 Why can some people who on the surface appear to be very helpful be so disempowering to disabled people?

*Note! This may lead you into a debate around the oppression of paternalism, summed up in the expression 'just leave this to me'.*

### Roleplay Exercises

There are notes on how to do roleplays at the end of this manual. Study them before you begin this exercise.

- 1 Questions 4 and 6 make good roleplay situations. Get your group ready, remembering that the camera is the disabled person. Try the scene a few times getting various members of the group to take different parts. Allow 10-15 minutes for each session. Afterwards, ask each player what it felt like to play the role and what was most difficult about it. Ask them to give their reasons and see if others felt the same. Give people plenty of time to talk.
- 2 Ask the group to think of a similar situation they have been involved in or have witnessed. Ask them to describe the scene and then plan it and act it out with other members of the group. Take 10 minutes. Ask the person who suggested the roleplay to report back to you regarding what was difficult or embarrassing about the scenario. Next, devise ways to prevent such a situation occurring. Now replay the scene with the person who suggested the roleplay taking the part of the over-helpful person. Finally discuss how it felt for them and ask whether other members of the group thought there was an improvement and why. Remember to give people plenty of time to talk. Allow 20-30 minutes.

## Scene Four

### Telephone Call

*A receptionist is talking to a telephone caller who is enquiring about access to and parking at a building.*

### Questions

- 1 The receptionist does not link the word 'access' with disability. In what ways could her response have serious consequences?

*Note! You may want to stress the importance of good public relations for frontliners such as receptionists, security staff and telephonists.*

- 2 "Where do the disabled go?" What does this question suggest?

*Note! You may wish to explore the idea that disabled people, by being called "the disabled", are often considered as 'special' and 'separate' beings. You might ask whether ANY separate provision is necessary for disabled people. Could facilities for disabled people be totally integrated. Questions such as these can stimulate very interesting debates and are a good tool to get your group discussing the main issues.*

- 3 How would you challenge the receptionist?

*Note! Remember that the camera is YOU observing and hearing this conversation.*

### Roleplay Exercise

There are notes on how to do roleplays at the end of this book. Study them before you begin this exercise.

First get your group to discuss ways of challenging the receptionist. Then rerun the scene with a member of the group playing the part of the receptionist and another challenging her after the telephone call. Make sure most members of the group have a chance to take part in the roleplay. Remember to give people plenty of time to talk. Don't rush the exercise. Allow 30-40 minutes.

## Scene Five

### Telephoning the Training Agency

*A prospective employer is telephoning the Training Agency to find out about obtaining equipment for a partially sighted employee.*

#### Questions

- 1 It is generally believed by employers who have considered employing a disabled person that the Training Agency will provide all necessary aids and equipment immediately. Is this your understanding and experience?
- 2 As the MSC can be slow to provide aids, equipment and adaptations, what do you think Mr. Williams should have done in Ms. Biggs' case?

*Note! Give the group time to explore different ideas as this may be a new topic for them and one they are not used to dealing with.*

- 3 Do you think that disabled people should hold a 'green card'? Why?

*Note! Some people may not know what a 'green card' is, so check that out first. Once they have discussed this, ask them if they would carry one if they became disabled and whether, and in what way, it would help them to get a job.*

- 4 What would you do if you wanted to employ a disabled person and the Training Agency could not provide all the necessary aids and equipment your disabled employee needed? Where could you go for assistance?
- 5 Do you think disabled people should tell you about all the aids that they need to do a job before they have the job interview? Why?

*Note! If people answer 'yes' ask if they expect able-bodied employees to give all their 'special needs'. although these may not be obvious. Ask the group to think about any 'special' needs that their colleagues may have. Make a list of these on a flip chart. Examples are: a smoking room, creche facilities, tea/coffee area, rest area, quiet room for writing reports. Some of these areas will be regarded as luxuries and others, such as non-smoking areas, as essential. What is a luxury for some people may in fact be essential for others, e. g. someone with asthma, may have to work in a non-smoking area.*

## Scene Six

### Discussion of Job Applicant

*A Personnel Officer comments on an interview she has just conducted with a deaf applicant.*

### Questions

- 1 Do you think her remarks could be typical of someone who has just interviewed a deaf person? Why?
- 2 Do you think Personnel Officers hold this degree of power - over recruitment? Why?
- 3 Do you think that her reasons for considering rejecting the applicant are valid? Why? List the reasons on a flip chart.
- 4 Have you ever worked with a deaf colleague? If so, describe the experience to the rest of the group. Go to a roleplay exercise.
- 5 Is using the telephone really out of the question or are there communication devices that can assist?

*Note! You should be equipped with up-to-date information on aids to assist disabled people to work, (obtainable through DAS, RADAR, DLF, LBDRT - can supply).*

- 6 The Personnel Officer says, "You've got to be realistic haven't you?" Do you think that disabled people are never / very occasionally /sometimes /often / very often, realistic about their employment capabilities?

*Note! You can use flip chart paper here to record answers and discuss what people feel about the responses. Go on to ask if they think able-bodied employees are realistic about their job capabilities and how often jobs are not exactly as described at the interview.*

- 7 Do you think employers should make decisions about whether a person's disability should preclude them from a particular job?

*Note! This scene ties in very well with Recruitment and Selection exercises. You may want to give participants some job descriptions and ask them if there are any people*

*with disabilities that could not undertake the work. Then put them right! Job descriptions are available from Central Personnel Departments in most local authorities.*

## Flip Chart Exercise

There are notes on how to work with flip charts at the end of this book. Study them before you begin this exercise.

Ask people to think how working with a deaf colleague can: -

- i. make your office function differently;
- ii. make your office work more effectively.

Ask your group to divide into twos or threes and take some flip chart paper to work on this exercise. Pens needed. Give plenty of time for the exercise and reporting-back from the groups. The complete exercise should take approximately 45 minutes.

## Scene Seven

### Architects and Planners Part 1

*This is a conversation between local authority officers, meeting to consult on the building of a public community centre.*

#### Questions

- 1 Do you think Joan is being 'realistic' considering the need to keep within the budget? Is that the main consideration?
- 2 Is Brian being unrealistic?
- 3 Do you think Joan's suggestion of a few stairs is acceptable?

*Note! You may want to work with flip chart paper here. If so, read notes on flip chart exercises.*

- 4 If there are serious architectural reasons why the coffee bar has to be located in an inaccessible place, what course of action should be taken?
- 5 Who makes sure that disabled people are taken into consideration when planning applications are made to the council?

*Note! You may wish to discuss the importance of having access officers whose job it is to oversee the planning process and give guidance to officers like Joan and Brian.*

#### Flip Chart Exercise

There are notes on how to work with flip charts at the end of this book. Study them before you begin this exercise.

- 1 Question 5 - You may wish to do an exercise around writing guidelines for planning departments, or drawing up a Local Plan. See notes on flip chart work at the end of this manual. Try to stress the importance of corporate responsibility and the involvement of all relevant council departments. Take 20-30 minutes for this exercise.
- 2 Question 3 - Divide participants into two or three groups and ask each group to list the positive and negative aspects of putting a flight of steps

into a building plan. Present one situation where the need for steps cannot be overcome and get them to suggest ways of overcoming the barrier. Now present another situation where steps are optional but are part of the design of the coffee bar and there is little time in which to consider major and costly alternatives. Take 20-30 minutes or longer for this exercise.

## *Scene Eight*

### Architects and Planners Part 2

*This is a consultation meeting between officers of the Planning and Architects Departments and a representative of disabled people.*

#### Questions

- 1 This scene is about priorities. Why are the priorities of the architects and planners wrong?

*Note! You may wish to work on flip charts here. If so, read notes on flip chart exercises.*

- 2 Do you think it helped to have a disabled person involved in the meeting? Do you think her assertiveness was helpful or not? Why?
- 3 What are the current building regulations governing access for disabled people?

*Note! There are now more specific regulations that go beyond the previous "where reasonable" requirements. The journal of the Centre on Environment for the Handicapped (CEH) holds all the necessary information.*

- 4 What do you think was meant by the expression "extras can be dropped"? Are considerations for disabled people to be regarded as "extras"?

*Note! This can be used as a flip chart exercise.*

#### Flip Chart Exercise

There are notes on how to work with flip charts at the end of this book. Study them before you begin this exercise.

- 1 Question 1 - Working in groups of three or four, ask participants to make a list of the priorities they would consider when planning a project. Ask them on what basis one criterion was given a higher priority than others. You could then go on to a roleplay exercise, (see notes at end of book). Get the groups to argue for a different set of priorities, such as proceeding to repaint the Mayor's Parlour and laying a new floor in the Chief Executive's office, as opposed to delaying these projects and installing a disabled persons' toilet next to the Council Chamber.

- 2 Question 4 - Ask the whole group to plan an outline of a new town hall, including all 'extras'. Then split your group into two asking one group to list things which are commonly recognised as 'extras', and the other, who are acting as the local disabled organisation, to make a list of all the town hall access requirements which they regard as essential. This exercise should take 45 minutes. Re-group people and ask them to read out their lists. See whether what is regarded by one group as 'extras' become the 'essentials' of the other group. Ask people to comment on the lists. Give another 10-15 minutes for this exercise. Complete time for full exercise, 55-60 minutes.

## *Scene Nine*

### Architects and Planners Part 19

*The scenario is the same as for Part 2.*

#### Questions

- 1 Consider the statement "... but the fact remains, we have a limited budget, and we have to allocate that money for the benefit of all." Is the money being allocated for the benefit of all?

*Note! Draw attention to other equalities areas where similar statements are made, e. g. the outrage of some men at classes for women only, the racism that can arise in the objections to building a Muslim temple; and, until vegetarianism became popular, the arguments that were put forward against the inclusion of vegetarian meals on canteen menus.*

- 2 Should the number of disabled people using the building determine the extent of access and special facilities provided? Why?
- 3 Are there any buildings where you think it is not worth providing a full range of access facilities ? What distinguishes these buildings from other buildings? Give reasons why you think this? Does everyone in the group agree?
- 4 What does the disabled woman in the scene mean by "proper consultation"? Make a list of the ways in which you would carry out "proper consultation".

*Note! This question would make a good basis for flip chart work (see exercise at end).*

Here you may be able to talk about the differences between organisations of and organisations for disabled people. Also the dangers of consulting just one wheelchair user and not a variety of people with differing disabilities. Scene 10 follows up this point, so you may want to continue onto that now.

#### Flip Chart Exercise

There are notes on how to work with flip charts at the end of this book. Study them before you begin this exercise.

Following up Question 4, ask the group to suggest how they would carry out effective consultation with disabled people. Divide the group up and ask participants to write their suggestions and bring them back to the main group. (Allow 20-25 minutes for this exercise. ) Reassemble and ask each small group to report back on their suggestions. Ask the large group to notice if there is any agreement among them and if there are areas of disagreement. Discuss the agreements and disagreements with the group. (Allow 10-15 minutes).

## Scene Ten

### Monologue by Disabled Man

*A disabled man gives his opinion of the 'consultation' process which may take place with disabled individuals.*

### Questions

- 1 Why is the disabled man worried?
- 2 What are the implications for him if he does give advice in any detail?
- 3 Why does he attempt to offer the advice the planner wants? Do you think this is a common experience for people with disabilities?

*Note! It is a common experience for disabled people to be called in to advise because they may be the only visibly disabled person in the office. Departments should conduct proper consultation with disability organisations. You could suggest that the group makes a list of people who could be consulted for advice, both inside and outside the organisation.*

- 4 To what extent do you think we should use our knowledge of individual colleagues with disabilities when seeking access advice?
- 5 In what ways could we undermine a disabled person by acting in the same manner as the planners in the scene?
- 6 Would you expect disabled people to be paid for the advice they give, whether as an individual or as a disability group?

*Note! Often disabled people are not paid for their advice, yet if consultants were brought in to explain the workings of a computer or to say where to place certain machinery, they would frequently be paid for their services. This attitude feeds the notion that disabled people's expertise and advice is non-professional and therefore requires no payment.*

### Roleplay Exercise

There are notes on how to do roleplays at the end of this book. Study them before you begin this exercise.

Ask your group to set the criteria for a Planning Department Consultation Working Party.

*Note! It may be useful to draw the participants into a discussion about why individual disabled people should not be expected to have expertise in all areas of access and planning. You may wish to address the difficulties that arise when there is only one Disability Adviser to a local authority when each department wants a definitive answer to its particular problems.*

*Note! It is important to end on a positive note after this roleplay, so a quick brainstorm on measures to prevent oppressive attitudes emerging is a useful discharging process. This brainstorm will also provide a good basis for a positive action programme.*

## *Scene Eleven*

### Home Help

#### Part 1

*Monologue by a home help who is prejudiced about a disabled client.*

- 1 What does the home help mean when she says "I've heard about him". Is this a positive statement or does it imply something else?
- 2 What does she mean when she says "... there's something funny going on"?

*Note! In this comment she is referring to the sexuality of the disabled person, i.e. the client is a gay man. This scene gives the opportunity to discuss disability and sexuality, particularly the right to choose one's own sexuality.*

- 3 Do you know of any disabled lesbians or gay men? Do you think disabled people should have a right to their own sexuality? Why?
- 4 Is the phrase "... I know what's the matter with him" common when referring to disabled people?

*Note! People frequently use the term 'matter' when they mean 'disability' but can't bring themselves to say the word. You could discuss with your group words other than 'disabled' which are used to describe disabled people and what meanings are attached to them, e. g. "cripple", "spastic", "retarded".*

- 5 Have home helps the right to decide what they will or will not do for disabled people?

*Note! Very often home helps do make the decisions in a disabled person's home as to what the person will or will not do. Get the group to discuss this issue, bearing in mind that the home help service is not free. It is paid for out of the rates or community charge. Disabled people pay these and should therefore have a say in how the service is delivered to them.*

- 6 How would you challenge the attitude of the home help? (Remember that she is speaking to you.) Do you agree or disagree?
- 7 Should you report her attitude to someone at the office? Why?

Get the group to imagine what it is like to be a disabled lesbian or gay man and how they would feel if remarks were made about their personal relationships.

## Scene Twelve

### Home Help

#### Part 2

*A disabled person is with her two home helps*

#### Questions

It is common for those who provide a service, like domestic help or nursing care to someone with a severe disability, to be present with another colleague. On such occasions, it is common practice for the two assistants to discuss the client's situation, mood, needs, demands, etc. either in front of the person or out of earshot.

1 Are there any occasions when this kind of practice is:

i. necessary;

ii. acceptable;

either in front of the client, or out of earshot?

2 What are the difficulties faced by the home help if April were given a say in the choice of her food and its preparation? Are these real difficulties? How would you deal with them?

3 How would you feel if you were April?

4 What would you want to say to the home helps if you were April? What do you think their reaction would be?

#### Roleplay Exercise

There are notes on how to do roleplays at the end of this book. Study them before you begin this exercise.

Ask three of your group to take the roles of the home helps and April. Choose an observer for each character. Then get the remainder of the group to observe the scene in its entirety, picking up the mood of the event in general terms. Then

ask the participants given character roles to re-enact the same situation using their own words.

It is important that, in their role, they mirror as closely as possible the video actors so that they experience what it is like to be empowered or disempowered. Allow the roleplay to go on longer than the trigger.

After the roleplay:

- i. Ask each observer what they perceived to be going on with their character. How did they act or react? Ask the observer to give reasons.
- ii. Ask each actor how they felt playing their particular role.
- iii. Ask the group observers about the dynamics of the scene, and the interrelationships and how they worked.

*Scene Thirteen*  
Home Help

Part 3

*Two home helps are having a chat about their clients over a cup of coffee.*

At first this scene seems quite ordinary and every day, yet there are issues revealed by the behaviour of the home helps which are complex and demonstrate many forms of discrimination. Use of this trigger can reward you with an interesting discussion on a variety of topics.

Questions

- 1 Does this sort of conversation take place in real life?
- 2 Do they refer to their clients by name and is this protecting confidentiality, or is something else going on?
- 3 What sort of language do they use? Does it devalue the disabled person?
- 4 Do they moralise about their clients?
- 5 How can you prevent this sort of conversation taking place when you are there, and also when you are = there to overhear it?
- 6 Why do some able-bodied people have such attitudes towards disabled people?
- 7 Has anyone in the group ever overheard such a conversation or taken part in one?
- 8 How can you challenge people who talk in this way?

Roleplay Exercise

There are notes on how to do roleplays at the end of this book. Study them before you begin this exercise.

- 1 Following on from question 8, ask the group to roleplay their challenge to this conversation: -

- i. if they overheard it;
- ii. if someone tried to talk to them in such a way.

Try short scenes with people in groups of two or three. Move people around so that they can change roles - being both challenged and challenger. Allow 15-20 minutes for the roleplay. After everyone has had their turn, bring the group back together and begin to discuss the difficulties of challenging and how people felt in the different roles. Find out what was easy and what was not. Allow 10-15 minutes for discussion. Complete exercise should take 30-40 minutes.

- 2 Using material gained in Home Help Part 1, discuss disability and sexuality, cross-linking oppressions. For example, you can explore how disabled people are discriminated against and draw parallels with the discrimination faced by lesbians and gay men. In this last part of the scene, the home help obviously thinks that the man is gay and may have AIDS, and that they may become infected through handling his sheets. Ask people in the group if they think this is possible. The theme of a roleplay could encompass how such attitudes can be challenged and corrected.

*Note: You may find particular points that the group has made can be followed up in a roleplay. Do not try to take on more than one or two points per roleplay, otherwise participants become confused and then they are difficult to discuss later.*

## *Scene Fourteen*

### Staff Meeting

*Two managers are discussing the new work station of a disabled member of staff.*

### Questions

- 1 Why do you think John wants Joan to be moved from the front desk?
- 2 Do you think John's colleague has a better attitude on the issue?
- 3 Do you think many employers use disabled people to keep up the company's image?
- 4 Do you think employers avoid employing disabled people in jobs that involve public relations work?
- 5 Can you give any examples from your own experience of disabled people being hidden from front desk or PR jobs because it is considered off-putting?

*Note! This could lead into a debate about the images of disability - the fully functioning, perfect mind and body ideal that society prefers.*

You may wish to mention things like the following: Until 1985, Marks and Spencers had a policy of not allowing staff with disabilities to work on the shop floor.

In January 1988, a Channel 4 producer terminated a disabled actor's contract to appear on a children's programme because he decided the man was frightening to look at. (This actor was Nabil Shaban. )

### Exercise

Assign to each member of the group one disability from a list of disabilities (blind, deaf, wheelchair user, sickle cell, learning disability, cerebral palsy and so on). Then ask what jobs they would/ would not be able to carry out. Then challenge the myth that there are certain disabilities suited to certain kinds of job, e. g. blind telephone operator, people with learning disabilities working in low status jobs, etc.

## *Scene Fifteen*

### Office Situation

*An interaction between a hearing and a deaf member of staff.*

### Questions

- 1 Do you think deaf people should learn to speak?
- 2 Is the first speaker being handicapped? If so, how?
- 3 Is it possible always to include a deaf person in the conversation?
- 4 Would it help to hire an interpreter to assist communication in the office?  
If so, when?
- 5 How can you include your deaf colleagues in everyday office communication?
- 6 Does it help to shout at a deaf person?
- 7 Does shouting make the hearing person feel in communication with the other person? Think of conversations with elderly people and partially deaf people.
- 8 Have you ever learned Sign Language and should people working with deaf colleagues learn to use it?
- 9 Why does the hearing woman think the deaf woman is "marvellous"?
- 10 How could this form of admiration be harmful?
- 11 Do you think there is any truth in her comment "you just don't have the time do you?"
- 12 Does it take longer to communicate with deaf people?

13 What kind of jobs, if any, do you think are out of the question for deaf people?

## Appendix

### Guidance for Training and Techniques for Use in Disability Awareness Training.

Adapted with permission from Weil “Focus on Adolescence – Trainers’ Guide”

### Some Principles of Adult Learning

Below are a few tried and tested principles of adult learning. We offer them as

a refresher and a checklist for your current practice as a trainer:

- a Adults must want to learn
- b Adults will only learn when they feel they need to learn
- c Learning is most effective when it is relevant to the needs of the participants and when it centres on realistic situations.
- d The experience of adults affects the way they learn.
- e The most informal environment is best for adult learning
- f Use a variety of methods as the most effective way of maintaining involvement and exploring experience
- g Adults need the chance to reflect on, and ‘digest’, new information in a way that makes sense to them as individuals – a chance, if you like, to explore new theories and ‘facts’ in terms of their own emotions and personal experience.
- h Adults want to be guided, not judged

### The roles of the Facilitator, Trainer and Convener

Depending on the nature and aims of a particular training event, the trainer can adopt various roles. One way of looking at the trainer's role is in terms of three broadly different styles of leadership. They describe not so much the amount of time or energy you expend, but rather the way you as a group leader might spend it:

The 'director' directs. Simply put he or she controls, fashions and takes overall responsibility for achieving results and conclusions. More concerned with the product than with the means of attaining it, he/she will lead from the front with suggestions, advice and instructions about the best (most efficient) ways of dealing with the issue at hand, and of 'getting on with things'. A predominant concern with managing time, getting tasks done and designing 'tight' structures, often identifies a directive trainer.

The 'facilitator', on the other hand, tries to lead from within. Far more concerned with the process of learning than getting a correct answer, they place value on the participants' experience and the extent to which the group increasingly takes over responsibility for the direction and management of its own learning. In networks and informal groups, the facilitator would aim to make their own role as marginal as possible. Support, respect for group experience and trust in the group process would be the key notions for the facilitative trainer.

The 'convener' is concerned with simply providing the right environment within which the group can learn, work and feel supported. They are committed to letting the group establish its own way of working and the direction it wishes to take. Alternatively, the convener may plan a programme or conference, drawing upon resource people to offer interrelated 'chunks' of input on a theme. The convener will be very concerned about the environment and the preparedness of the participants, but less interested in the outcome.

We take the view that the approach of the director or facilitator or, indeed, the convener, is not something which is simply determined by the needs of the group. They have valuable experience and thinking to share with the group. Equally, however, adults in learning groups are not empty vessels all of the same mould, lacking in feelings, experiences, opinions and ideas.

### Co-leadership

Co-leadership is an important issue in group learning, but it requires preparation. Co-leaders need to set aside time to get to know each other and to explore similar and differing values about learning and training (i.e. about working with adults in groups, about the role of the trainer/facilitator, about group feedback, etc.).

Plan for ways in which differences can be managed effectively and used to good effect, in facilitating group learning;

Provide clear and explicit guidelines so that each knows and trusts what the other is doing. This enables you to feel more relaxed and to 'dovetail' neatly with each other's contribution;

Divide responsibility as much as possible according to each leader's preference for various types of activities, topics and methods;

Share strengths and weaknesses and use these constructively as a basis for planning;

Negotiate responsibilities, e. g. time, planning of different sections, distribution of materials, etc.

After the session, effective co-leadership would also involve allocating some time to:

- a Review the event and explore what each felt went well and why;
- b Explore what each would like to do differently 'next time', and why;
- c Examine what each found difficult, easy and valuable about working with the other person.

This type of review session builds most effectively on some form of feedback from the group, either in written or spoken form.

To facilitate effective learning about co-leadership, it is helpful to give each other space to reflect at length on the process and design of the session, and the experience of co-leadership. In this way, co-leaders are more likely to be able to listen and understand what the other is saying and to become more effective in learning positively from each other's different perspectives, without reacting defensively.

## Warm-Ups

These are short, often lively, activities that are used at the beginning of a course, a day or a particular activity or theme. Warm-ups serve a double function. They can be used to 'break the ice' - in the case of new groups - while, at the same time, they can be used to warm the group up to particular skills that will come into play when the main activity is explored. For example, a lively brainstorm could well serve to warm people up who are expected to fully participate in a group discussion.

It is, however, important to use 'lighter' activities with care. Game playing carried to an extreme is likely to make the group feel that the whole exercise is rather frivolous and, perhaps, even alienating. In the same way, if the warm-up is not seen to be linked to the main activity in some way (a shared aim or skill, for example), then the exercise can be self-defeating.

#### *POINTS TO CONSIDER:*

Will the warm-up activity that you are planning: -

- Identify the purpose of the particular work that is to follow?
- Relate to the needs, interests and concerns of the group?
- Stimulate interest in the activity that is to follow?
- Motivate the group to participate?
- Encourage spontaneity?

#### Pacing

Pacing describes the way the trainer can respond to the balance, complexity and nature of the course content. It is also quite an abstract and complex skill to identify.

In order to get the most from a course - and indeed, offer the most to participants - it is important to encourage and sustain motivation. It has been found that while many factors can inhibit learning, quite a few barriers can be removed if a certain amount of thought goes into the structure and pacing of a particular day or session.

One important way of doing this is to vary both the type and length of the particular activities that comprise the various sessions of the course. By establishing that activities involve different communication skills (i.e. reading, writing, speaking, listening, etc.) demand different degrees of involvement (e. g. roleplay and brainstorming compared with listening to a lecture) and require different levels of concentration (e. g. a lively warm-up compared with a serious piece of written work), it is possible to shed new light on the problem of designing and pacing the day.

Try to carve up the day into manageable blocks of time (1-2 hours, depending on energy levels) with short breaks and activity changes within each block. Breaks for refreshment are essential. Be aware of individuals', and the group's, concentration span - it is better to change the type and pace of activities regularly than to dwell on one method or topic for prolonged periods. Try to work on the basis of a change of group format (small groups, pairs, individual work, etc.), topic, method or activity every half an hour.

Lastly, don't be too quick to curtail discussion or enthusiastic project work simply for the sake of 'getting through' all that you had planned to do. If the group has been allowed to participate in the overall aims of the course they will understand that concessions to time, and to the rest of the content will have to be made elsewhere.

#### *POINTS TO CONSIDER:*

- Are the skills required to do the particular activity balanced in terms of the rest of the course (e.g. not too much listening)?
- Is the format varied (e.g. small and large groups, pairs, etc. )?
- Are there too many passive activities (e.g. reading, listening)?
- Is flexibility built in (e.g. is there room to over run)?
- Have you considered when the group is likely to be at its most attentive, most lethargic, most active?

#### Buzz Groups

Participants are asked to work in groups of two or three discussing something of relevance to the content or process of the course. An example might be:

"Spend 5-10 minutes discussing, with the person next to you, how the last activity relates to the work you do in the organisation." or;

"Spend a few minutes discussing one aspect of this session that you have found helpful. Discuss in groups of two or three."

This method of group work often offers a welcome change of pace and format from large group discussion.

## Snowballing

A variation on the buzz group that makes a very useful link between individual reflection and small or large group discussion.

The method begins with a question or statement that is considered by the participants individually. They spend five minutes thinking about and maybe writing about it. For example, the problems they face working as managers in their organisations.

The next stage is for participants to share the results of their thoughts in pairs for a further five minutes, with the help of an additional question around which further exploration can take place (e. g. how are your experiences similar or different? Why? How have you dealt with them?).

Then, two pairs merge to form a small group of four. This group then spends fifteen minutes taking the discussion further, drawing conclusions and identifying particular issues. This stage is often task focused, or built around a brief problem solving activity. (In the above example, the group of four might begin to explore wider issues facing managers with the aim of beginning to develop strategies for coping). The group of four would then feed their conclusions or 'tips' back to the main group, prior to a wider ranging discussion.

## Large Group Discussion

Successful whole or large group discussion provides opportunities for people with different experiences to learn from each other, and to practise using one another as resources in the consideration of problems. However, discussions all too often consist of simply asking people to respond to particular questions. This latter type of activity is extremely limited, as communication tends to bounce back and forth between the discussion leader and particularly interested participants.

A good discussion - as opposed to a one-to-one exchange - occurs when a group of people share experiences, debate ideas and theories, discuss personal memories and work together on common problems. It is characterised by interest and active participation on the part of all members of the group.

### *POINTS TO CONSIDER:*

- Determine and clarify the goal of the discussion;

- Encourage participants to talk to one another;
- Look at other people in the group - not just the speaker;
- Don't be afraid of silence. Avoid 'filling in' the silence;
- Participate as a learner, not just a leader or chair;
- Encourage others to request clarification;
- Point out alternatives, suggest new approaches;
- Point out inconsistencies or contradictions;
- If necessary, remind participants of the task at hand;
- Review the discussion or summarise the progress made.

When it is necessary to end a discussion, it is important to do so with respect for the group and with an eye to the next phase of the activity or session. If you must curtail discussion, it is usually best to step in firmly and clearly.

Apologise, if necessary, and point to other opportunities (including breaks or lunch) when the issues can be raised and discussed again.

## Flipcharts

A flipchart is a useful tool to focus a group's attention on the written word. The spoken word is transitory and easily forgotten; whereas the semi-permanent form of the written word, presented on a large piece of paper in front of a group, can serve to keep a group of related, but separate, ideas together for consideration and comment.

A useful procedure is for the trainer, at an appropriate moment in the learning process, to invite ideas from the group which are then written on the paper (see section on brainstorming).

It is normal for flipchart paper to come in large pads of 18" x 36" which can be attached to an easel. As each sheet is used it is turned back to expose a fresh unused sheet. It can be an advantage to have the pad perforated at the top so a sheet can be torn off and handed out to small groups to use. It goes without saying that the writing should be legible and boldly written with marker pens.

You should have a supply of these.

Flip chart work is useful for making lists and presenting diagrams to illustrate points. When used by small groups of three or four it helps to give the group the feeling that all are contributing to a single result. They also serve as a record which can be examined later by the group or by the plenary group. To this end it is an idea to place these 'results' around the walls of the training room as they are produced during a training session.

Triggers

A Trigger

- is a 30-45 second video portrayal of a situation or action, directed at the viewer;
- involves the viewer as an active, or potentially active, participant;
- simulates experience that is relevant to the development of the understanding and skills needed to respond effectively in similar (real) situations;
- provokes a response which is the basis for varied activities in groups and sustained learning.

Examples of basic trigger questions:

How might you feel?

What do you think each of the people in the scene might be expecting of you?

What would you ideally say or do?

What would you probably say or do?

Does it remind you of similar situations? What did you do then?

Before a large group discussion, you might ask:

What organisational factors might influence your responses to this situation?

Brainstorming

The aim is to generate as many ideas as possible without evaluation or discussion. It serves as a way of relaxing a group (or warming them up) and encouraging quieter members to contribute. It also heightens creativity within a group, and actively values group experience, ideas, etc.

Procedure:

Head a piece of flip chart paper (or an overhead acetate) with the key word, phrase or question that is the focus for the brainstorm. Invite the participants to call out - or pass on to you - as many suggestions, answers or thoughts as they can in response.

It is often useful to have someone recording these brainstormed ideas for you.

Do's and Don'ts:

DO collect as many ideas as possible;

DO use people's own words (or check out any paraphrases);

DO keep your contributions brief;

DO say whatever comes to mind;

DO accept everyone's contribution - whatever it is;

DO 'bounce off' other people's ideas;

DON'T worry about repetition;

DON'T stop and discuss - save it until later;

DON'T evaluate people's contributions either by words or facial expressions;

DON'T worry about silences - people need time to think;

DON'T assume similar ideas are the same.

Follow-up:

- a Begin by asking participants to clarify any brainstormed contributions that are unclear to the group. Ensure that comments are kept to clarification only

- not evaluation.

- b In large or small groups, participants can group ideas which are similar - under key headings.
- c In large or small groups, participants can evaluate or prioritise contributions through discussion and/or voting.
- d Prioritised or particularly interesting contributions can be roleplayed or elaborated in small groups.
- e Link some of the brainstormed ideas to the subsequent activities planned, or, identify areas that may need to be explored in more depth later.

## Roleplay

One of the most effective methods of exploring alternative responses to a particular case study is roleplay. Role playing is a participative method for exploring a situation as if it were really happening at that moment. The object is for the participants to respond and behave in ways that they consider appropriate, given the issues involved and the experience they bring to them. However, it requires adequate time and full attention to the stages described below.

The method enables participants to:

- Build confidence in applying understanding and skills to difficult situations;
- Explore new ways of behaving;
- Practise different ways of responding to situations; and
- Put themselves in other people's shoes.

The use of observers, throughout the roleplay, has the added benefit of providing additional 'pairs of eyes' to observe and evaluate the effectiveness of different scenarios. Observers, once a scene has been played out, can offer constructive feedback to the players, suggest alternative ways of resolving conflict and focus participants' attention on issues that might have been overlooked or dismissed.

It is very important to ensure that while roles and situations are clearly outlined, they are not made so complex that spontaneity is smothered

The stages for an effective roleplay are described below. Assume that the debriefing and reflecting stage will need to take double the time you allow for the action.

### Warming up

Set the scene by referring to the case study and making sure that the context is clear; you may wish to involve participants in creating the details of roles.

- Ask for volunteers to take various roles;
- Review each role player's respective briefings;

- Brief observers;
- Ensure that the chairs/room/props are in place;
- Help to create spontaneity by involving the group in suggesting a time, a place and a mood for the situation.

## Action

Begin the action, stopping it when enough has happened for discussion to take place, or, when the players do not seem to be getting any further;

You may also wish to stop and start the action at various times, inviting group members for non-evaluative observations of the situation and ideas for responding. You can also ask roleplayers to share their feelings, observations and ideas for various courses of action. If members of the group have ideas, suggest that they double up behind the roleplayers enabling them to work together, supporting each other and trying out ways of dealing with the situation.

## De-briefing and reflection

Thank the participants and ensure that each has the opportunity to share the feelings they experienced in the role they played (including those who 'doubled' for another role player).

After they have discussed feelings and observations, ask them to talk about one way in which they could identify with the role they played, and one way in which they could not. If they continue to use words such as 'I' to refer to themselves in role, you might say, 'You mean the role you played', to break the identification process.

This stage (incorporating these various processes, as well as those described below) is often referred to as 'de-briefing' or 'de-roling'. This is essential if you are to ensure that positive and constructive learning can take place. It is important that those who kindly volunteered to explore a situation in role are able to reaffirm who they are in the group. Failure to attend to the de-briefing stage can result in a carry over of negative and confused feelings. These can breed unconscious resentments, which are not conducive to effective individual and group learning.

Further 'de-roling' might Involve:

Asking the observers to share observations and to identify wider issues arising for them, in relation to their work.

Continuing with a plenary discussion which focuses on the wider issues arising from the roleplay. If the discussion returns to the roleplay, de-briefing has not been sufficient. You will need to spend time helping the group and roleplayers to move from focusing on specific feelings and actions arising from the role/roleplay to a discussion in which all group members relate to the experience from the perspective of their OWN professional roles.

It is also possible to role play in smaller groups or in threes - with observers prompting the exploration of further scenarios - prior to all the groups coming back together to discuss their findings. This can also enable each participant to experience playing the same role.

Some de-briefing can begin in small groups, assisted by observer's notes, but this process needs to continue within the large group to ensure that wider issues are explored and effective learning is facilitated.

Extending Roleplay: The Use of Life Drama

Sometimes trainers would like to extend the boundaries of traditional roleplay, as a vehicle for learning.

This can entail the use of various techniques which enhance the effectiveness of roleplay through the use of further techniques:

*The Aside:* Through the use of an agreed sign (i.e. talking to the side of the hand), roleplay participants convey their inner thoughts and feelings, as these surface, during the scenario. This makes it clear to others that an inner voice is at work. It is particularly useful when players want to indicate to their partner (or the observers) that they are feeling one thing but saying another.

*Doubling:* This allows participants, including observers, to put themselves in the place of particular players, at any time during the roleplay. Doubling involves a person temporarily taking the role of the player, to assist them in expressing their thoughts and feelings or in trying out alternative responses. The person being doubled should not worry about whether the other person's statement is 'right or wrong', but accept the input as a way of further exploring dimensions of the roleplay.

*Role Reversal:* At any time during the roleplay (i.e. when players reach entrenched positions), players can be invited to exchange roles. Spontaneity can be maintained if the observer or facilitator repeats the last couple of statements prior to restarting the roleplay. Players can then carry on with the action, exploring the situation from their new perspectives.

For participants new to dramatic techniques, it is often useful for the trainer to demonstrate the techniques clearly and to provide written guidelines. As participants become more experienced, they may wish to try these techniques in smaller groups, thus allowing for more participation and practice. As with all such dramatic activities, it is vital that trainers set aside enough time for participants to "de-role" (i.e. through a discussion about the roleplay).

### Tips for Dealing with 'Talkers' in Discussions

Sometimes discussions are monopolised by participants intent on controlling the debate, who over-enthusiastically share their experiences or (occasionally) challenge the role of the trainer.

The 'talker' usually either overwhelms the group or bores them to tears. In some cases, 'talkers' have valuable insights to add to the work of the whole group, while at other times they add little. The more the aim is to involve ALL participants in the group discussion, the more 'talkers' become a focus for irritation and frustration.

To prevent one participant from monopolising the group's time, several techniques might be tried:

At the beginning of the course, set clear guidelines about how long - and on what subject or subjects - participants may talk. As leader, reserve the right to interrupt the discussion, or involve others;

Don't make eye contact with the 'talker'. Instead look to a different participant when you ask a question or seek a response;

Use very small groups to limit the 'talker's' audience. Smaller groups make it easier for others to participate on more equal terms;

Tell the 'talker' directly, but privately, that you are uncomfortable about the extent to which they are monopolising the discussion. Explain that you want to give others the opportunity to speak and elicit their support;

Ask the 'talker' to lead a specific discussion or be responsible for one specific aspect of the topic with which they are familiar.

## Closing

As with any practical learning experience, the end of a course is really only a beginning. It is therefore essential that the participants are given every opportunity to consider exactly what the next steps will be, once the course is over.

It is important to close any activity (or session) by linking it directly to:

- a The aims and objectives of the course;
- b The previous and subsequent sessions or activities; and
- c Participants' 'real life' situations, both present and future.

### *POINTS TO CONSIDER:*

- Have you put the conclusions reached, and the skills learned, into perspective?
- Has the course been relevant to specific individuals? Have their needs, concerns and interests been incorporated?
- Have you considered the short- and long-term goals of the participants? Has the course been relevant to these?
- Does everyone know what they can do next, in terms of applying the things they have learned?
- Have you built in opportunities to discuss the outcomes of the course, and for participants to 'feed back' their thoughts and feelings?