

The background features a light gray gradient with several overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes. These shapes are defined by a series of closely spaced, parallel lines that create a wavy, textured effect. The lines are arranged in a way that suggests depth and movement, with some shapes appearing to recede into the background while others come forward.

Handouts

Handout 1:

Equality and diversity: key terms

Equality

In its literal sense, equality means 'sameness' (as in $2 + 2 = 4$: 2, when added to 2, is the same as 4). However, being too literal can be misleading. When used in a legal, policy or political sense, equality is shorthand for equality of opportunity or equality of rights. It is therefore best interpreted as meaning equal fairness rather than uniformity. It does not mean that we should necessarily treat everybody the same way. This is for two reasons:

1. If we treat everybody the same, then we reinforce existing inequalities – we maintain the status quo.
2. If we focus on sameness, then difference becomes a problem and, as we shall see in a moment, this is a big mistake to make.

In view of this, we should therefore be wary of the idea that: 'We believe in equality, we believe in treating everybody the same'. Treating everybody the same is not what equality is about – it is about treating everybody with equal fairness. Sometimes this means treating everybody the same, but at other times it would be unfair to treat everybody the same.

Diversity

Diversity literally means 'variety'. The basis of what has come to be known as 'the diversity approach' is that we must recognise not only that we live and work in a diverse society (that is, a society with people from varied backgrounds in terms of culture, outlook, experience, interests, needs and so on), but also that it is a good thing that we do. This is based on the idea that diversity enriches all of us. It introduces us to new ideas and approaches, discourages us from being narrow minded and dogmatic in our thinking and opens up new vistas and opportunities for us. It is from this idea that we get the concept of valuing diversity, or even celebrating it.

Valuing diversity means avoiding falling into the trap of seeing difference as a problem to be solved. Diversity is an asset to be celebrated, rather than something to be worried about.

Discrimination

In its literal sense, to discriminate means to identify a difference. This is not necessarily a bad thing. Indeed, it is a very useful capacity to have. We would experience major difficulties in our lives if we were unable to distinguish between, for example, safety and danger or friendship and hostility. However, despite its literal meaning, which clearly has positive connotations, it has come to be used in a significantly different way when used in a legal or moral context. So, when we talk of discrimination in relation

to equality, we are using it in a way that is linked to its literal meaning but also goes beyond it. In this latter sense, discrimination refers to identifying a difference between individuals or groups of people and then treating one party unfairly on the basis of that difference.

Detriment

To 'suffer a detriment' means to experience a disadvantage. Unfair discrimination involves a particular individual or group of people suffering a detriment – that is, losing out in some way because they are perceived as 'different', as 'other'.

Oppression

Oppression has been defined as:

'Inhuman or degrading treatment of individuals or groups; hardship and injustice brought about by the dominance of one group over another; the negative and demeaning use of power. Oppression often involves disregarding the rights of an individual or group and is thus a denial of citizenship.'

(Thompson, N., 2016, *Anti-discriminatory Practice: Equality, diversity and social justice*, 6th edn, London, Palgrave, p. 50)

Oppression arises as a result of discrimination. Discrimination (identifying a difference and treating people unfairly because of that difference) is the process, oppression is the outcome.

Handout 2: The diversity approach

Valuing diversity

Diversity as an asset to be thankful for, not a problem to be solved. It is important to avoid narrow approaches that see differences between people – for example, in terms of ethnicity, disability or sexuality – as problems. A less prejudicial and more sensible approach helps us to realise that diversity enriches our lives through the variety and breadth that it brings.

Positive approach

An emphasis on valuing and celebrating differences – not negative and defensive. Over the years, equality issues have become associated with a very negative approach which at times seems more concerned with avoiding criticism than with genuinely promoting equal fairness. It has become characterised by such notions as: ‘Don’t break the law’; ‘Don’t get into trouble’; ‘Don’t say the wrong thing’ and so on. There is a widely held and negative perception of the traditional ‘equal ops’ approach that leads to defensiveness. The diversity approach, by contrast, is one that is intrinsically positive because of its emphasis on valuing diversity. This change of emphasis from a negative approach to a positive one is a subtle but very significant change.

Broad approach

Diversity is concerned with preventing all forms of unfair discrimination, not only those that are illegal or well documented. Traditional equal ops approaches have largely tended to have a legalistic emphasis. That is, if a particular form of discrimination is illegal, then it is likely that an organisation’s equal opportunities policy will include reference to it. However, where a form of discrimination may be regarded as unacceptable but is not actually illegal (for example, discrimination based on the language a particular person speaks) then relatively few equal opportunities policies will make reference to it. The diversity approach, by contrast, with its emphasis on valuing diversity and difference, involves seeking to avoid any form of unfair discrimination – whether it is illegal or not. Any form of unfair discrimination will stand in the way of valuing diversity and is therefore an issue to be addressed. The diversity approach does not allow organisations to hide behind gaps in the law.

Handout 3: PCS analysis

PCS analysis is a theoretical model introduced and developed in the work of Neil Thompson. It is based on the idea that discrimination is often oversimplified and misunderstood because it is seen predominantly or even exclusively as a matter of personal prejudice. Thompson's approach makes it clear that the reality is far more complex than this. He describes how discrimination can be understood as operating at three levels: personal, cultural and structural:

'These three levels (P, C and S) are closely interlinked and constantly interact with one another. ... P refers to the personal or psychological; it is the level of thoughts, feelings, attitudes and actions. It also refers to practice, individual workers interacting with individual clients, and prejudice, the inflexibility of mind which stands in the way of fair and non-judgemental practice ... C refers to the cultural level of shared ways of seeing, thinking and doing. It relates to the commonalities – values and patterns of thought and behaviour, an assumed consensus about what is right and what is normal; it produces conformity to social norms, and comic humour acts as a vehicle for transmitting and reinforcing this culture. It is therefore primarily a matter of shared meanings ... S refers to the structural level, the network of social divisions and the power relations that are so closely associated with them; it also refers to the ways in which oppression and discrimination are institutionalised and thus 'sewn in' to the fabric of society. It denotes the wider level of social forces, the sociopolitical dimension of interlocking patterns of power and influence.'

(Thompson, N, 2016 *Anti-Discriminatory Practice: Equality, Diversity and Social Justice*, 6th edn, London, Palgrave, pp. 35-6)

In order to understand discrimination adequately, we must therefore take account of not only all three levels, but also how they interact and reinforce one another.

Handout 4: Pitfalls to avoid: A culture of fear and blame

It is unfortunately the case that a heavy-handed, confrontational approach to issues of equality and diversity was once quite commonplace and, although far less evident these days, its legacy is still very much with us. What it has created is a culture of fear and blame which tends to make many people quite defensive – anxious about saying or doing the wrong thing and thus being labelled as sexist or racist and so on.

A culture of fear and blame can be very counterproductive as it can lead to a number of things:

- ▶ **Tokenism:** Defensively minded people doing the bare minimum to avoid criticism, rather than engaging with the very important issues of promoting equality and valuing diversity.
- ▶ **Avoidance behaviour:** A 'let's not go there' mentality can be seen to have developed in many places, and this is not surprising given the confrontational methods commonly used in the past and still being used today by some people.
- ▶ **Terror and tension:** Many people have reported that they were humiliated on courses they had previously attended or at meetings where these issues were being discussed. They were made to feel 'guilty until proven innocent'.
- ▶ **Departure:** Some people have even left their jobs in search of calmer surroundings when they have felt that the oppressive atmosphere of a hard-line approach has become unbearable.
- ▶ **Failure to learn:** Equality and diversity issues are very complex, and so there is a need for all of us to continue learning about them – defensiveness acts as an obstacle to such learning, as it means that people will be reluctant to address the issues in general and their learning needs in particular.

The diversity approach, with its emphasis on a positive approach to difference, can help us move away from this legacy of fear, blame and defensiveness.

Handout 5: Pitfalls to avoid: Complacency

For many years, issues of equality and the problems of discrimination were given a very low profile. It was assumed that decent people would not engage in such degrading behaviour as to treat fellow human beings in such unfair and prejudicial ways.

This has since been shown to be a naive and complacent approach. This is for the following reasons:

- ▶ It is now recognised that we can discriminate against people without even realising that we are doing so. For example, a non-disabled individual may exclude disabled people by simply not taking their needs into consideration – by not looking at the situation from a disabled person's point of view. This may not be intentional, but it is none the less discriminatory (disabled people suffer a detriment because they are different from the non-disabled person who is making the decision or taking the action).
- ▶ Discrimination can arise at a cultural as well as a personal level – that is, the problems may arise because of discriminatory stereotypes that we have grown up with as part of our cultural upbringing – for example, the idea that it is 'natural' for women to stay at home and bring up children.
- ▶ Discrimination can arise as a result of the inequalities built into the structure of our society in terms of class (health inequalities are closely linked to issues relating to financial resources); gender – for example, the 'glass ceiling' relating to promotion for women, and so on.

Discrimination is not simply a matter of personal prejudice – it is far more complex than that. You may not be the slightest bit prejudiced against certain people, but you may nonetheless still be discriminating against them unwittingly, working for an organisation that discriminates against them and so on. To disregard the importance of discrimination because 'decent people wouldn't do that sort of thing' is very complacent and is therefore dangerous.

We need to work together to appreciate the complexities and find constructive ways of meeting the challenge of promoting equality and valuing diversity.

Handout 6: Pitfalls to avoid: Minimisation

Minimisation refers to the tendency to 'play things down' when it comes to discrimination. This can happen in a number of ways:

- ▶ **Trivialisation:** Important matters are ignored and replaced by an emphasis on minor, trivial issues. For example, sexism becomes reduced to a debate about whether 'gentlemen' should hold doors open for 'ladies' rather than about real issues relating to sex discrimination that can have a major detrimental effect on people's lives.
- ▶ **Disregarding:** Sometimes people seek to disregard an important aspect of discrimination by denying its relevance or significance. For example, in some areas with relatively low levels of people from ethnic minorities, some people adopt the attitude that, 'There aren't many black people around here, so it's not an issue for us in this area'. This can be a very problematic attitude to adopt because:
 - ▶ The actual number of people from ethnic minorities is often underestimated. Some people may say dismissively: 'Only 2% of the people in this area are from ethnic minorities', but without realising that 2% may well mean thousands of people.
 - ▶ To argue that racism is not an issue because of a (perceived) absence of black people is, in effect, to argue that we are only concerned with the white majority, as the black minority is not sufficiently big for us to sit up and take notice of their needs. This has distinct racist connotations. Can you imagine someone saying, 'There aren't many disabled people around here, so disability equality is not an issue'? How many black or disabled people do there need to be in an area before their experiences of discrimination become an issue for us?
- ▶ **Dumping:** This refers to the process of giving the responsibility for tackling discrimination to the people who are experiencing the discrimination – for example, a man who witnesses sexual harassment against a woman not doing anything about it because, 'It's not my issue, there are plenty of women around to support her'.

Minimisation distorts some very complex issues and distracts attention from important matters.

Handout 7: Pitfalls to avoid: Inelegant challenging

Inelegant challenging is explained in the following passage:

'The notion of 'elegant' challenging ... refers to the type of challenging that succeeds in getting the point across without alienating or antagonizing the person being challenged (based on the premise that alienation and antagonism will not produce positive change). Elegant challenging is proposed as a more effective method of bringing about change in attitudes and behaviours than a more aggressive approach. In short, it amounts to confronting the issues without being confrontational. Inelegant challenging, by contrast, can do much more harm than good. An overzealous and tactless approach can be very problematic in terms of:

- ▶ *producing a hostile response and a tense atmosphere in which change is far less likely to be accomplished;*
- ▶ *producing a defensive response, with the result that equality issues become a difficult subject and one to be avoided;*
- ▶ *providing ammunition for detractors from emancipatory practice to dismiss the person concerned as a 'hothead' or an 'extremist';*
- ▶ *mirroring oppressive relationships in which a powerful person seeks to 'bully' the other party into submission.*

Inelegant challenging is therefore not only likely to be less effective, it may also be counterproductive or even an oppressive action in its own right.'

(Thompson, N., 2018a, *Promoting Equality: Challenging Discrimination and Oppression*, 4th edn, London, Palgrave, p. 194)

Examples of how inelegant challenging can manifest itself include the following:

- ▶ Verbally attacking someone for what they have said or done, even though they may not have been aware of the problematic nature of what they said or did. An opportunity for learning about these complex issues is turned into a situation characterised by defensiveness. And, of course, defensiveness acts as a barrier to learning.
- ▶ Attaching a derogatory label to someone. For example, someone who makes a comment that has racist connotations (whether any racism was intended or not) becomes labelled as 'a racist'. Again, an opportunity for positive learning becomes a situation of attack and defence – with the likely outcome that the subject is avoided in future.

Handout 8: Pitfalls to avoid: Political correctness

The relationship between language and inequality is a very complex one. Unfortunately, it has tended to be oversimplified over the years. For many people, it has become a matter of banning the use of certain words and proposing the use of others instead, often without any explanation or scope for discussion about why a change in language may be necessary or desirable.

This 'political correctness' approach has tended to become a dogmatic, inflexible way of dealing with the complexities of language. This has caused a lot of confusion, anxiety, tension and defensiveness for many people, often leading to an approach based on the idea that: 'I won't say anything, just in case I get shot down in flames for not being PC' – clearly an unsatisfactory situation.

What, then, is the situation regarding language/terminology and discrimination? Language use is very complex and subtle and depends very much on context. A simple, 'say this word, but don't say that word' approach is hopelessly inadequate. A much more flexible approach is called for. We need to develop what is known as 'linguistic sensitivity' (Thompson, N., 2018b, *Effective Communication: A Guide for the People Professions*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan). This means being able to recognise the situations where the language we use may do harm.

This can apply in a number of ways, chiefly the following:

Exclusion

Certain language forms exclude women and contribute to their 'invisibility' in society. Terms such as 'chairman' or 'manpower' not only reflect male dominance but also reinforce that dominance by creating the impression that positions of power are reserved for men.

Dehumanisation

Language can also have the effect of treating people as if they were things by the use of depersonalising terms such as 'the disabled' (rather than disabled people) or 'the elderly' (rather than older people).

Infantilisation

This refers to the tendency to treat adults as if they were children. Women, for example, are often referred to as girls ('the office girls'), and other groups of people, for example older people and people with learning disabilities, are also often referred to in child-like terms – a tendency which has the effect of patronising the people concerned.

Stigmatisation

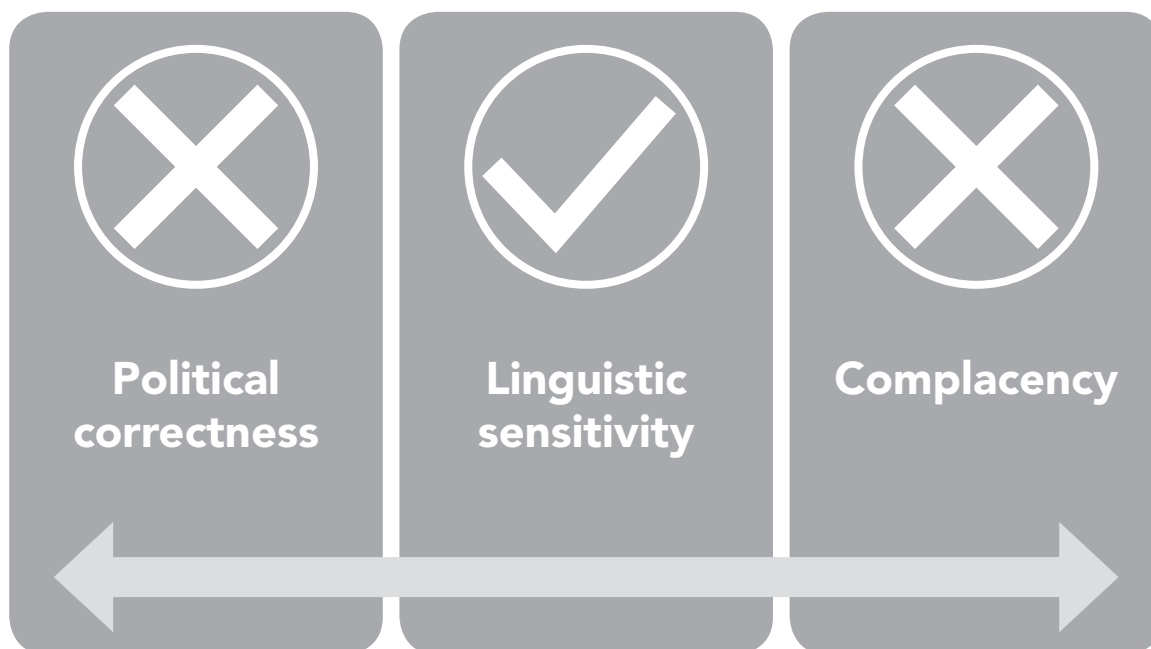
Some language forms create or reinforce negative images and therefore result in some people being stigmatised. For example, the term 'black' is often used in a negative and derogatory way (a 'black' day, a 'black' mark) or in the sense of 'dirty' ('black' knees).

Political correctness is an oversimplified and dogmatic approach to language and in equality issues. However, rejecting a simplistic PC approach does not mean that we should not address language issues. What we need is 'linguistic sensitivity' – that is the ability to recognise when particular forms of language should be avoided.

Handout 9: Statements to challenge

1. This equal opportunities stuff is OK, but I think they take it all too far, don't you?
2. I'm all for people being treated the same, but you can't get away from the fact that it's natural for women to be more gentle and softer – that's why they make good carers.
3. To be honest, I get a bit fed up when I hear these coloureds shouting off about their rights. Why do they stay here if it's so bad?
4. Well, it's common sense, isn't it? Women have always been the carers and men have always been the hunters, so they are bound to succeed more than women – they're more aggressive.
5. I think it's terrible being criticised for calling my old ladies 'old dears'. This place will be a prison camp soon – what do you think?
6. Hey, do you want to hear this joke about the Pakistani who...
7. Do me a favour, ask one of the girls in the office to type this up for me.
8. I understand about treating disabled people with dignity, but did you see that lot demonstrating about their rights recently? They don't have things too bad, do they? It would be nice if they were a bit more grateful sometimes.
9. I'm all for equality, but I wouldn't want to work for a woman, would you?
10. I think all of this equality and diversity stuff is another fad. I've been doing the job for years and no one has complained yet. I expect they'll dream up something else next year.

Handout 10: Linguistic sensitivity



This diagram represents the two problematic extremes and the 'healthy' balance between them:

Political correctness

This refers to the tendency to be dogmatic about language use and to 'outlaw' certain forms of language, often without any explanation of what is wrong with a particular word or turn of phrase. It is based on a very naive and oversimplified understanding of (i) how language works; and (ii) how people learn. It assumes that discrimination through language can be prevented simply by avoiding the use of certain terms: 'Don't say that word, say this one'.

Complacency

This refers to the tendency to play down the importance of language, to assume that language is not a significant issue in relation to discrimination and/or that decent, right-thinking people would not use inappropriate language. As with political correctness, this is a naive and oversimplified approach. It fails to appreciate the subtle ways in which language can both reflect and reinforce inequalities – for example, the many ways in which assumptions about gender roles and power relations are conveyed through language

Linguistic sensitivity

This is a term used to refer to a constructive way forward that avoids the problems of the two extremes. It avoids the rigidity of the PC approach and the narrowness of the complacent approach. It is based on the idea that, to do justice to promoting equality and valuing diversity, we need to look closely at language use – not avoiding the subject altogether (complacency), nor coming up with a rigid, oversimplified approach to it (political correctness). We need to be able to identify the subtle but significant ways in which language use plays a significant role in perpetuating discrimination – for example, in terms of stereotypes, stigma and assumptions of inferiority/superiority, exclusion and inclusion.

Handout 11: Stereotypes

A rigid form of categorisation, unaffected by evidence to the contrary.

Stereotypes are a form of categorisation. However, while the ability to categorise is generally socially useful and an aid to making sense of a complex reality, it can become problematic when it becomes rigid and fixed – that is, when people hold on to their views despite evidence to the contrary (and/or an absence of evidence to support their view).

Partly psychological (cognitive and emotional) and partly sociological (power, ideology, media representation).

Stereotypes are psychological in so far as they relate to (i) cognitive processes (that is, stereotypes affect our patterns of thought, distorting our perceptions to make them fit in with preconceived notions); and (ii) emotions – stereotypes influence how we feel – for example, generating negative feelings towards particular groups of people or feelings of sympathy towards others.

Stereotypes are sociological in so far as they do not occur at random – they follow social patterns and reflect social processes and institutions (power relations, dominant ideologies and media representations).

Reinforce exclusion (in-groups and out-groups).

Stereotypes, more often than not, are applied to excluded, marginalised and stigmatised groups. They reinforce patterns of exclusion, identifying some individuals or groups as outsiders (creating a 'us and them' mentality). This reinforces existing power relations and can therefore be a significant factor in maintaining discrimination.

Handout 12: Race and racism

Race is a social category, not a biological one.

It was once thought that there were distinct biological 'races'. However, this notion has long been discredited, as it is now recognised that biological differences between so-called racial groups are very superficial.

The notion of racial groupings is therefore a social rather than a biological one, and is often based on stereotypes, biased assumptions and inaccurate perceptions.

Racism can be deliberate or unintentional – it is a matter of unfair outcomes, rather than intentions.

Some people are overtly racist – that is, they deliberately discriminate against people on the basis of their skin colour, ethnicity or nationality. However, a lot of racism is unintentional. For example, someone may discriminate against a member of an ethnic minority group on the basis of a stereotype without even realising that they are doing it. Although the discrimination is unintentional, if it produces an unfair outcome then it is an example of racism.

Racism can be 'institutionalised' – that is, part of a system, rather than just personal prejudice.

Racism has been around for so long that it has become part of the fabric of our social systems and institutions. That is, we have certain racist practices and assumptions that have become part of the way some systems work. For example, within the health system, research has shown considerable inequality between ethnic groups, largely because the NHS is not sufficiently well geared up to the needs of ethnic minority groups. (Visit www.equalityhumanrights.com for details of publications relating to various forms of racial discrimination in housing, education, employment and so on.)

Handout 13: Facts and figures

Crime: Inequality increases property crime and violent crime. A reduction of inequality from Spanish levels to Canadian levels would lead to a 20% reduction in homicides and a 23% reduction in robberies.

(<https://www.equalitytrust.org.uk>)

Health: Living in an unequal society causes stress and status anxiety, which may damage your health. In more equal societies people live longer, are less likely to be mentally ill or obese and there are lower rates of infant mortality.

(<https://www.equalitytrust.org.uk>)

Mental health: In general, people from black and minority ethnic groups living in the UK are:

- ▶ more likely to be diagnosed with mental health problems
- ▶ more likely to be diagnosed and admitted to hospital
- ▶ more likely to experience a poor outcome from treatment
- ▶ more likely to disengage from mainstream mental health services, leading to social exclusion and a deterioration in their mental health.

(<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/b/black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-bame-communities>)

Pay: More than three out of four UK companies pay their male staff more than their female staff, and in nine out of 17 sectors in the economy, men earn 10 per cent or more on average than women.

(<https://ig.ft.com/gender-pay-gap-UK/>)

Life expectancy: On average, a boy born in one of the most affluent areas will outlive one born in one of the poorest by 8.4 years.

(<https://ilcuk.org.uk/>)

Unemployment: In 2017, just under 4% of white people were unemployed, compared with 8% of people from all other ethnic groups combined; the Pakistani/Bangladeshi ethnic group had the highest rate of unemployment in 2017 (10%).

(<https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk>)

Handout 14: Gender

'Sex' is biological, 'gender' is social and cultural.

A person's biological sex is relatively fixed. However, gender is not simply a reflection of sex. Men can be more or less masculine and women can be more or less feminine – and what counts as 'masculine' or 'feminine' changes over time and varies across cultures.

Gender roles are learned, not fixed by 'nature'.

It is commonly assumed by many people that gender roles are fixed by nature (or biology). However, a more accurate view recognises that we are taught gender roles as we grow up. This is known as 'socialisation', the process by which each of us learns about our society and what is expected of us as members of it. This means that, while traditional gender roles may be deeply ingrained because they were part of our upbringing, they can be changed (or 'relearned') if they present problems for us.

Rigid gender roles are unfair to women and men.

While having clear role expectations can be a source of security and confidence, if such role expectations are too rigid, this can cause problems in terms of closing off opportunities (women excluded from traditionally masculine roles, men from traditionally feminine roles) and placing undue pressures on people to conform to roles they do not feel comfortable with.

Gender equality is of benefit to employing organisations.

An organisation that promotes gender equality is likely to have fewer problems with discrimination and create a more positive working environment in which people are valued for what they are and what they contribute, not according to gender stereotypes.

Handout 15: The social construction of age

Age is partly a biological matter, but also psychological, social, political and economic.

Although age is partly a matter of biological changes over time, it is also partly psychological (it affects our thoughts, feelings and actions), social (social expectations of particular age groups are very influential), political (there are key political issues – for example, social exclusion, that are age related) and economic, for example pensions and retirement policies.

How people of a particular age are treated has varied throughout history.

Today's attitudes towards older people have not always been around. Consider how older people were treated in previous generations and way back through history.

How people of a particular age are treated varies from culture to culture.

Some cultures have different attitudes towards and expectations of older people – consider, for example, the many cultures that have revered 'elders'.

Age is socially significant.

The above points add up to the fact that age (old age in particular, but age in general) is socially significant. That is, age (like class, race and gender) both influences society and is influenced by it. Our dealings with people will be influenced by how our society perceives their age and the social expectations that go with this. Age, then, is not just a number, it is part of each individual's identity and part of how society works – sometimes to the detriment of certain people – for example, older people, and sometimes younger people.

Handout 16: Sexual orientation: The law says...

The Equality Act 2010 identifies nine 'protected characteristics' – that is, nine possible groups or categories of people who may be discriminated against. The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against people covered by these characteristics:

- ▶ age
- ▶ gender reassignment
- ▶ being married or in a civil partnership
- ▶ being pregnant or on maternity leave
- ▶ disability
- ▶ race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- ▶ religion or belief
- ▶ sex
- ▶ **sexual orientation.**

The Act offers protection from discrimination:

- ▶ at work
- ▶ in education
- ▶ as a consumer
- ▶ when using public services
- ▶ when buying or renting property
- ▶ as a member or guest of a private club or association
- ▶ if you're associated with someone who has a protected characteristic, for example a family member or friend
- ▶ if you've complained about discrimination or supported someone else's claim.

Discrimination can occur in four ways:

- ▶ Direct discrimination – treating someone with a protected characteristic less favourably than others.
- ▶ Indirect discrimination – putting rules or arrangements in place that apply to everyone, but that put someone with a protected characteristic at an unfair disadvantage.
- ▶ Harassment – unwanted behaviour linked to a protected characteristic that violates someone's dignity or creates an offensive environment for them.
- ▶ Victimisation – treating someone unfairly because they've complained about discrimination or harassment.

If you have been discriminated against, you can:

- ▶ Complain directly to the person or organisation.
- ▶ Use someone else to help you sort it out (called 'mediation' or 'alternative dispute resolution').
- ▶ Make a claim in a court or tribunal.

Notes

1. Sexual orientation is understood to refer to orientation towards persons of:
 - ▶ the same sex (lesbians and gay men)
 - ▶ the opposite sex (heterosexual)
 - ▶ the same sex and the opposite sex (bisexual).
2. The law applies where discrimination, harassment or victimisation occur on the basis of *perceived* sexual orientation. For example, if someone is being discriminated against because it is falsely assumed they are gay or lesbian, the law will still apply.
3. Some 'Genuine occupational requirements' may apply. That is, in some very limited circumstances, it may be legal to stipulate a particular sexual orientation for a post.

For further information, visit: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

Handout 17: Religion: The law says...

The Equality Act 2010 identifies nine 'protected characteristics' – that is, nine possible groups or categories of people who may be discriminated against. The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against people covered by these characteristics:

- ▶ age
- ▶ gender reassignment
- ▶ being married or in a civil partnership
- ▶ being pregnant or on maternity leave
- ▶ disability
- ▶ race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- ▶ **religion or belief**
- ▶ sex
- ▶ sexual orientation.

The Act offers protection from discrimination:

- ▶ at work
- ▶ in education
- ▶ as a consumer
- ▶ when using public services
- ▶ when buying or renting property
- ▶ as a member or guest of a private club or association
- ▶ if you're associated with someone who has a protected characteristic, for example a family member or friend
- ▶ if you've complained about discrimination or supported someone else's claim.

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If you have been discriminated against, you can:

- ▶ complain directly to the person or organisation
- ▶ use someone else to help you sort it out (called 'mediation' or 'alternative dispute resolution')
- ▶ make a claim in a court or tribunal.

Notes

1. The law applies to religious beliefs and beliefs similar to religious beliefs – not just any set of beliefs. It will be up to tribunals and courts to decide whether beliefs are 'similar' to religion.
2. Some 'Genuine occupational requirements' may apply. That is, in some very limited circumstances, it may be legal to stipulate a particular religion for a post.

For further information, visit: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>