

DVD TRAINING GUIDE

'THESE PEOPLE'



“You often hear the term ‘These people’ – it’s the way service providers view their clients and vice versa. It’s the hostility that can arise when you stop looking at people as individuals and assume you know what their needs are without looking into their specific circumstances. It’s buying into stereotypes and racist attitudes”.

Devon Inclusive Housing Project – staff member

The origins of ‘These People’:

This training aid was a product of a 2 year pilot project run jointly by Plymouth, Exeter and Torbay Local Authorities with close partnership working with our voluntary sector partners. The Department of Communities and Local Government awarded Ethnic Minorities Innovation Funding to this project, to consider ways of improving practice in terms of ethnic minority people accessing advice and support to consider their housing options.

Its real value is as a tool that teams can use in-house to promote discussion and learning around the issues affecting ethnic minority people when they try to access housing services. This way teams can learn together – with these easy-to-use facilitation notes allowing discussions to be facilitated by team managers or a nominated person around the scenarios in the DVD. Ideally these sessions would be attended and co-facilitated by partners from local BME agencies – allowing a broad exchange of views and learning and building partnership links in the process. By using the DVD in this way discussions will always be relevant to a particular team’s functions and issues. However it can also be used as a tool by professional trainers to facilitate training.

This DVD uses actors to depict scenarios which were encountered during the course of the project, and is an ideal resource for team leaders or specialist workers to facilitate the delivery of training within teams – where perhaps some of the more traditional barriers associated with equal opportunities training, and challenging value and belief systems, can be achieved in an environment in which workers already have some trust and confidence. You may find it useful to also make contact with local partners delivering services to the BME community, and asking them to attend/co-facilitate the sessions alongside you. This would promote an open-minded and broad based view of the scenarios and real experiences confronted by BME people every day.

Description of the scenarios:

The scenarios depicted in the DVD are fictitious, but are based on actual casework carried out by project staff in Devon – which combines the large urban areas of Plymouth, Exeter and Torquay – together with large parts of rural Devon. Though some good practice was observed, the scenarios deliberately reflect some of the poor practice uncovered in order to promote discussion and learning.

There are three scenarios, each one dealing with different issues faced by ethnic minority people who are experiencing a range of difficulties.

Notes to the discussion leader:

There are three scenarios, each one dealing with a different aspect of the experiences ethnic minority people have when accessing services.

How to use the DVD: We suggest that you use team meetings as a base to view the films - perhaps one at a time - and appoint an appropriate person to lead discussion (ideally alongside a partner organisation who delivers services to ethnic minority people) using this guide to ensure that all of the issues are covered.

Before viewing the DVD: We'd strongly suggest that you review each scenario before using it with a group, to make sure that you're familiar with the material and the points that might be raised. Try not to discuss your own reaction to the DVD with your group before they've had an opportunity to discuss theirs.

While viewing the DVD: Groups will react differently, depending on the level of experience and expertise of the participants. Issues around racism and discrimination can be sensitive subjects to discuss, and the size of the group will affect how much members participate in terms of disclosing their own thoughts and reactions. Try to make the venue a safe space, assure participants of your mutual interest in learning together, and ensure that any issues raised aren't dealt with critically or insensitively.

After presenting the DVD: It's usual for there to be a silence while people collect their thoughts. This is particularly true if people found the films moving or they are concerned about sharing their views. Allow this to happen - there should be no rush to get people talking. Each group will respond differently, depending on their skills and experience, and how comfortable you make it for them to talk.

Film 1: Bella's Story

Synopsis:

Bella has been referred to Housing Services by another agency. She speaks no English, but is seeking advice and support in relation to a domestic abuse issue.

Key themes explored:

- Translation and interpreting services – and their appropriate use.
- Domestic violence – and the practical and cultural complications that can arise when advising.

NB Discussion in relation to this scenario should be in conjunction with the 'Translating and Interpreting Toolkit' available in Appendix 'A' towards the back of this booklet.

General discussion points:

1. As a group or in pairs, discuss what should Craig have done when it became clear that Bella couldn't understand or communicate with him?

- Does your organisation/local authority have a protocol in place to clarify what action you should take?
- Do you have a customers' charter? And if so, does it deal with the need to provide translated materials/interpreters?
- Do you have a language identification chart – and is it used?
- Are staff members aware of where they can get interpretation support, either by phone or face-to-face?

Consider tasking team members to go off and find out about areas of your organisation's policy/services available if they are not immediately available.

2. In the scenario, Craig was able to access an interpreter for Bella, but the meeting didn't seem to go well. How could Craig have dealt with this situation better?

- When it became clear that the interpreter was known by Bella, he should have considered the potential negative consequences of this – particularly where he suspected Bella may be a victim of domestic violence.
- Craig should have followed guidelines and best practice in relation to working with an interpreter (see translation and interpretation toolkit). This best practice was later demonstrated in the scenario by the professional interpreter, when she laid down some very clear ground rules during Craig's home visit to Bella.
- There are things that Craig should not have done, like allowing the interpreter to see Bella's file, and even asking the interpreter to look at the address where she was staying.

3. In the scenario, Frankie was concerned about the additional cost of interpreting services "I don't see why we should be providing an extra service at additional cost". What do you think her motivation was? Under what circumstances should your organisation provide an interpreter/translated materials?

- Do participants think the motivation was racism or budgetary pressures?
- Interpretation services can be expensive, and there may be a need to follow guidelines about when it should be provided i.e. Where there is face-to-face interaction between the council and a customer; Where there is a need to provide core information about how to access services, and the services provided; Where the organisation is consulting with users to get their views, opinions, comments and complaints.

- There's a strong business case for use of interpreters – to prevent homelessness; wasted advisor time; repeat visits by service users – as well as being a statutory duty.

3. Bella's case was particularly complex because of her, and her husband's, immigration status. Can the group suggest reasons why BME women may find it especially hard to come forward and report abuse?

- Language difficulties – and the fact that translators can come from a very small community who are well known to each-other.
- Dependence on partner's immigration status for leave to remain – and may increase likelihood of abuse by partner (e.g. fear of deportation, having no immigration status/recourse to public funds in their own right).
- Cultural taboos.
- Lack of knowledge about rights.
- Experience of forms of violence that other women in the UK are rarely subjected to – such as 'honor crimes', forced marriage and female genital mutilation.
- Fear of isolation from small cultural communities if it is reported.
- Unwillingness of agencies to get involved for fear of being accused of being racist.
- Unwillingness to report for fear of receiving a racist response.
- Perhaps knowing of people who had tried and failed to get help.
- People may have previous negative experiences of dealing with authority figures in the UK.
- There may be issues of poor mental health and reaction to trauma that make reporting more difficult.

Learning Points	Sources of further information
<p>Victims of domestic abuse are entitled to protection – and their abuser will be subject to the same sanctions as anyone else in the UK, whatever his or her immigration status.</p>	<p><i>www.womensaid.org.uk</i> website and survivor’s handbook contains useful information about the immigration rules, and how they apply to cases of domestic abuse.</p>
<p>Survivors of domestic abuse who can produce clear evidence of it, can apply for indefinite leave to remain in the UK.</p>	<p>http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk contains information about the evidence requirements and how to apply for indefinite leave to remain in cases of domestic violence.</p>
<p>The Race Relations Act 1976 and its amendment Act 2000 and the Children Act 1989 place duties on Local Authorities and others to carry out their functions with due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and to provide racially, culturally and linguistically appropriate services to families and children in need.</p>	<p>http://www.k-international.com/legal_responsibility contains useful information about the statutory background.</p>
<p>A language identification chart can be used to identify what a service user’s first language is.</p>	<p><i>The Refugee Council Online</i> website, practical advice section contains general information in a variety of languages, information for advisors, and a language identification chart.</p>

Film 2: Stefan's Story

Synopsis:

Stefan is a Lithuanian man who has been rough sleeping in the area. He is a migrant worker – but lost his job, and with it the tied accommodation. This story is a short one, but you can also look at issues resulting from Frankie's telephone conversation with a hotel owner about a refugee family who he wants to evict. Stop the DVD after this telephone conversation to look at these issues specifically.

Key themes explored:

- The transition from refugee status to leave to remain.
- Migrant workers with no recourse to public funding – and how to help them.

1. At the beginning of the film, Frankie has a heated discussion with a hotel owner who wants to evict a refugee family because the mother persists in cooking in their room despite being asked not to. What might be some of the issues that a refugee family might face when placed in temporary accommodation?

- Unless there are local arrangements in place to ensure a smooth transition from NASS properties there could be a gap in support and finances available to help the family to move into temporary accommodation and identify their own accommodation.
- A refugee family will almost inevitably face a period where they have no access to income and will be unlikely to have savings to cover this period.
- Traditional options used by homelessness teams such as temporary furnished lets or B&B accommodation require the outlay of some cash by the families.

- Refugee families have been under an entirely different system of support up until this point and are unlikely to have any understanding of all the new systems and benefits that they are required to adopt in a very short time.
- Asylum seekers and refugees often face racism and hostility.
- The conflict about the refugee family cooking in the room (portrayed in this film) may be unavoidable – with a delay before receipt of any income, the family would be unable to buy ready cooked or fast food for her family, and may well choose to risk the anger of the hotel in order to provide meals for the children.

2. Craig informed Stefan that there was nothing he could do. Is there anything that Craig could have done to help Stefan?

- Signpost Craig to established Lithuanian or Eastern European communities – or an agency giving specialist advice to migrant workers.
- Signpost Stefan to alternative homelessness services (e.g. rough sleepers shelter) who may be able to provide somewhere for him to shower and eat.
- Advise regarding options should Stefan find employment – e.g. private rented accommodation, contacting others who may be able to put him up, find someone who is willing to provide accommodation on the understanding that rent will be forthcoming.

Learning Points	Sources of further information
<p>If a migrant worker has left their employment, or is sacked, they may not be allowed to find other employment until they receive Home Office permission.</p>	<p>CAB issue useful guidance regarding rights of migrant workers and these are available on their website. <i>http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/e_migrant_workers.pdf</i></p>
<p>If a migrant worker is provided with accommodation as part of their job, this is known as tied accommodation. Housing advice</p>	<p><i>http://www.myukinfo.com/en/home</i> is a comprehensive information source for migrant workers living and working in the UK – and is available in a number of different languages at the click of a button.</p>
<p>A8 nationals (including Lithuanians) are entitled to seek employment in the UK. Since 1/5/2004, these workers must register with the Home Office within 1 month of starting work, and, if they have been working in this manner regularly for at least 12 months, they come under the usual provisions of homeless legislation.</p>	<p>Shelter’s website contains some useful perspectives – in addition to a policy briefing ‘Migrants in Housing Hell’ which details problematic housing issues faced by migrants. <i>http://england.shelter.org.uk/news/previous_years/2008/june_2008/migrant_workers_in_housing_he</i></p>
<p>Following a positive decision, NASS will typically issue a 28 day notice to quit the property in which they had lived.</p>	<p>The Joseph Rowntree Foundation have published a good practice guide in relation to housing and support services for asylum seekers and refugees. <i>http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/1905018096.pdf</i></p>

Film 3: Mr. Nawzad's Story

Key themes explored:

In Mr. Nawzad's story, the emphasis moves from Craig the Housing Officer, to his manager Frankie. Mr. Nawzad and his family have been allocated a property by the Local Authority, but have suffered sustained racial abuse since they moved in. He seeks support from Housing Services to deal with it.

These story-lines highlight issues including:

- Customer service skills – and how to deal with cases of racial harassment appropriately.
- Communication skills and interviewing distressed people effectively.

1. Frankie and Mr. Nawzad did not manage to communicate effectively in their first meeting. Can you list the factors that might have contributed to this lack of understanding?

- A letter of explanation from the Refugee Centre (as referring agency) explaining why he had been referred, could have saved a lot of misunderstandings.
- Mr. Nawzad was unwilling to accept that Frankie was the manager because she is a woman.
- The offhand approach of the receptionist had engendered a hostile atmosphere.
- Body language of both Frankie and Mr. Nawzad.
- Mr. Nawzad was clearly very angry, and listening properly to his concerns, before taking an empathic approach would've done much to calm the situation.
- Frankie didn't note his concerns and read them back to him to make sure she had the correct information.

- Lack of training and customer service skills on behalf of staff?
- 2. How do you think Frankie and the team could improve their working practices so that they deal more effectively with ethnic minority issues? List the ways, then consider how many of them are in operation in your area.**
- Establish multi-agency meetings with BME agencies to problem-solve issues and develop effective referral mechanisms.
 - Ensure that all staff receive equal opportunities and customer services training to develop their skills.
- 3. Consider the following statements, and ask the group whether they agree or disagree with them, and discuss their reasoning:**

“Mr. Nawzad had grounds for accusing Frankie of racism”

“The local authority is guilty of institutional racism”

“Mr. Nawzad’s attitude has contributed to neighbours responding to him in a negative way”

“The family who were harassing Mr. Nawzad’s family have been rewarded for their racism because the family has been moved”.

“Mr. Nawzad should be grateful for the help he was given”

Learning Points

Institutional racism is “the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin”.

The race, disability and gender duties are known as public sector duties. They are statutory duties, meaning that they are legally enforceable. All public bodies (like councils and hospitals) that are subject to the duties are legally obliged to pay 'due regard' to the need to take action on race, disability and gender equality.

Racism comes in many forms and can include: name calling; threats of violence; graffiti; damage to property; offensive literature; assault. The most important thing to consider is the victim (or any other person's) opinion – the recommendation of the Stephen Lawrence enquiry stated that if a person believes that an incident is racially motivated then authorities should be obliged to treat the incident as racist *regardless of their own views*.

Sources of further information

Useful information about all aspects of racism is available on the Equality and Human Rights Commission website – including the public sector duty and how to implement it.

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-duties/what-are-the-public-sector-duties/>

The Home Office has released a code of practice regarding recognising and tackling racism.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/coderi.pdf>

Further information and statistics regarding hate crime are available on the following website.

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget>

Appendix 'A'

TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING

In this section of the toolkit we will try to offer some simple examples of best practice when working with interpreters.

DEFINITIONS

Translation - The end result of the process of transferring the meaning of a written text from one language into another.

Interpreting - The process of translating spoken language orally, as opposed to translating, which deals with written language.

GUIDANCE ABOUT USING AN INTERPRETER

Do you need an interpreter?

- Interpreters are expensive and there will be pressure to compromise. This is at the expense of the service user and misunderstandings may create more work and may be more expensive as a result.
- Sometimes service users may think that their English is good enough, but bear in mind how technical the language that you will be using is. If you are discussing the terms and conditions of a tenancy, for example, it may well be better to ensure that everybody is absolutely clear by the time the interview is over.
- Just because someone is nodding and smiling and may even say yes, if asked directly if they fully understand, this does not necessarily mean that they do understand. Some people may think it rude to say that they don't understand

what you are talking about; others may simply be embarrassed to admit that they are no longer following what you are saying. Try to get them to paraphrase back to you what you have just said to them, to be sure that they do fully understand.

- If someone presents to you who apparently speaks little or no English, how do you identify what language they speak? The Refugee Council have a useful language chart on their website which can be used. This method relies on the individual being literate in his or her own language. Craig's method in the film was to get out a map and ask Bella to indicate where she was from.

Telephone or face to face?

Features of telephone service

- Quick access to service.
- Unlikely to know client, arrange an appointment. therefore no conflict of interest.
- A relatively expensive option.
- Not ideal when completing long forms.
- Very difficult for the interpreter if there are more than three people involved in the conversation.

Face-to-face interpreters

- Good if there is time to arrange and appointment.
- Higher chance that they will know the client.
- Provides employment for local interpreters.
- Usually a cheaper option.
- Less good if interpreter is required urgently.

What to do when working with a telephone or a face to face interpreter:

- Reassure the service user that the interpreter is a professional, bound by a code of confidentiality.
- Ask if the interpreter and service user understand one another.
- Confirm this by asking the service user to repeat back or paraphrase what they understood what was said regarding the confidentiality of the interpreter. Obviously this will come back via the interpreter, but you should be able to get an idea if there is clear communication between them.
- Address all questions as if you were talking directly to the service user.
- Keep your sentences short and precise so that the interpreter can relay what you have said accurately.
- Keep control of the situation. Try not to allow lengthy exchanges between the service user and interpreter to continue without asking the interpreter to explain to you what is being said.

Should you use a friend or relative of the service user as an interpreter?

There are obvious financial advantages and the immediacy of using a friend or family member makes this a tempting option, but there are a few important things to consider.

- Often the friend that is brought along speaks only marginally better English than the service user, although in their eyes he/she is fluent in English.
- How confidential is the discussion likely to be? Informal interpreters may not be bound by the same responsibility to remain confidential.

- It is very common that children will speak much better English than their parents and will act as the interpreter and link to the outside world for the family. Often this role will make them appear mature beyond their years, but don't forget that they are children and can be distressed by what they have to relay. Think twice about what you may be discussing before allowing the interview to go ahead.

What to do when you're working with a face to face interpreter:

- Face the service user, and address all questions directly to them
- If possible try to arrange the seating so that the interpreter is to one side
- It is common for the service user to answer and direct questions to the interpreter. Try and encourage them to address you directly. Talking through an interpreter is not a natural or even comfortable way of communicating but this will help and soon communication will improve.
- Despite the agreed code of confidentiality, it should not be necessary for the interpreter to read or handle any documents relating to the interview.

GUIDANCE ABOUT GETTING TRANSLATED MATERIALS

Translating written materials can be a one off expense, which can be cost effective in the long run. There are, of course, issues to consider first.

What are the issues to consider in relation to translating written materials?

- As with English speakers, not everyone is literate and therefore may not be able to read the translated materials.
- Online instant translation should be treated with caution, as the results are often, at best, funny. If you are planning to produce something of use then use a professional who will probably charge by the word.
- There are over 6,900 living languages in the world – it's not possible to cover every language.
- Need to consider what the commonly spoken languages are in your area – and this may require a broader approach in your area – perhaps surveying Police and emergency services, hospitals; social services, housing services, education authorities and third sector agencies regarding which languages they most often need the services of interpreters for.

