

Anti-discriminatory practice

FRUIT SALAD!

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Social work which is culturally competent, anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive is not easy to achieve. There are difficulties in agreeing common definitions of what these terms mean, and even more problems in translating them into practice. *Fruit Salad!* begins (and we emphasize that it is just a beginning) to address anti-discriminatory practice by using a small, concrete example. Like all these activities, it is drawn from practice experience.

Method

Fruit Salad! can be done by a practice teacher and student together or by a small group. Try discussing it as a pair first, then moving into a group.

Make sure students immerse themselves in the situation; they *are* the groupworker using *Fruit Salad!* and they *have* to make a decision. When they are thinking about options, challenge any glib answers and don't get sidetracked into discussing the value of *Fruit Salad!* as a warm-up itself, because this avoids the issues. This is a tough activity and it is too easy to get diverted.

Ask students to write down their decision as the groupworker, and the reasons behind their decision. As usual, get feedback about the activity itself. (Allow about one hour in total).

Variations

The issues of power, difference and disadvantage raised by *Fruit Salad!* are relevant to all forms of discrimination. However, at the conclusion of this activity, you should draw parallels with other forms of discrimination. You could ask the student to construct a similar incident to bring out the issues for a different focus of discrimination, based on race or gender or class or age or creed or sexuality, etc.

Anti-discriminatory practice

FRUIT SALAD! Activity

You are co-leading a group for single carers of young children on a large estate. You and your co-worker have run other similar groups and they have been participative, hard-working and fun.

The group is planned to meet weekly and consists of twelve parents. You have had a fairly successful first group meeting and you plan to start off the second session with a short *warm-up* which regularly gets you and the group in good spirits. Even people who are not fond of games say they enjoy it. This is it:

Group members and your co-leader sit on their chairs in a circle whilst you stand in the middle without a chair. You explain that you will go round the circle giving each person the name of a fruit (apple, orange, pear ... apple, orange, pear ... etc), so there are three or four people in each fruit set. You will shout out the name of one of these fruits, and those people (for example, the "oranges") have to change chairs. Since you are also searching for a chair and there is a chair short, somebody is left standing in the middle again. That person then shouts the name of a fruit ... etc. You also explain that the person in the middle can shout, "Fruit Salad!" at which point every person (apples, oranges, pears) must move seats. Inevitably, people end up sitting in each other's laps and every-one has a good laugh. Energy is released and people feel in a good mood to start the group off. You usually let the game go on for ten to fifteen calls, or about five minutes.*

* a yuppie version of FRUIT SALAD! uses kiwi, kumquats and mangoes!

Like most introductory activities used as a warm-up, it can sound pointless on paper, but comes to life with action.

During the first session of the group you have noticed that Joan, the only carer in the group who is looking after a grandchild, walks with difficulty and uses a stick. She looks as though she suffers from arthritis. She was an enthusiastic participant during the first group session.

Fruit Salad! would be just right for the group to start off the second session.

What options do you have?
What do you decide to do?