

RECOGNITION

Session 5: Diversity, ageism and violence

Materials for this session²⁹

- Sign-in sheet
- Participant Manual, one for each participant
OR copy of Module 5 for each participant (Manual pages 65-81)
- Trainer Notes
- PowerPoint
- Handout
- Participant Evaluation Form #1
- Compilation and Summary of Data Collected with Evaluation Form #1
(for Trainer's use)

Key points in Module 5

Diversity and older persons in Newfoundland and Labrador

- Newfoundland and Labrador's population is the oldest in Canada.³⁰
- There is great age diversity among older persons in this province. In 2011:
 - 48,855 people in Newfoundland and Labrador were age 65-74;
 - 24,695 were age 75-84; and,
 - 8,560 were age 85 or older.³¹
- The needs of each of these groups can be quite different. This is even more so if we take into account other aspects of diversity such as sex, ethnicity, ability and disability, or health status.

²⁹ See pages 28-29 in this Guide for a Training Checklist and a comprehensive list of materials, supplies and equipment you may need for each training session.

³⁰ Statistics Canada. (2013, January). *Canada's Population Estimates: Age and Sex*. Retrieved from: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/110928/dq110928a-eng.htm>.

³¹ Statistics Canada. (2012). *2011 Census Profile*. Retrieved from: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>.

Dimensions of diversity

- Diversity is the differences that exist among people, such as sex, age, race, ethnicity, gender, ability, economic status, sexual orientation, culture, religion or spirituality, geography and social status. There are many dimensions of human diversity.
- **Primary** dimensions, like birthplace and ethnicity, are core elements of a person that we are born with. They usually cannot be changed.
- **Secondary** dimensions, such as marital status, education and income, have a powerful impact on our core identities. These are elements over which we have at least some degree of control or choice.

Prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination

- Sometimes, differences among human beings can lead to prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination.
- All forms of prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination:
 - have roots in ignorance and fear;
 - seek to preserve power and control through a range of methods that include violence and threats; and/or,
 - assume the natural superiority of one group over another.
- *Prejudice* means “pre-judge”; to have a negative attitude based on preconceived notions about members of certain groups. People who hold prejudices tend to think of others in terms of stereotypes rather than treat them as unique individuals.
- *Stereotypes* are generalizations; general, biased ideas about a whole group which does not recognize individual differences.
 - We all carry stereotypes around with us. We get them from our families, peers, society and the media.
 - Stereotypes keep us from seeing the whole person. This devalues people, insulting them and limiting their potential.
- *Discrimination* is an action (or lack of action) taken against individuals or groups, based on negative values, attitudes or beliefs, that excludes, harms or limits the opportunities of others. Discrimination is the denial of fair treatment or equal rights. If you believe that older adults are all frail, that is a stereotype. If you refuse to hire someone

simply because the person is a senior citizen, you may be engaging in discrimination.

Forms of prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination

	...is prejudice, stereotyping or discrimination...
<i>Ageism</i>	... against people because of age.
<i>Ableism</i>	... against persons with disabilities.
<i>Classism</i>	... against people because of their social status or income.
<i>Heterosexism</i>	... against people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.
<i>Racism</i>	... based on racial background.
<i>Sexism</i>	... based on sex.

The complex problem of ageism

- Society's attitudes are often negative toward older people and aging. As people age, they are often seen as inferior, feeble or useless. This negative view of aging contributes towards older persons' invisibility, marginalization and social exclusion. Their needs and their lives are treated as if they are less important and do not matter as much as those of younger people.
- Older persons may be subject to negative judgments, stereotypes and discrimination because of their:
 - Age: young-old, middle-old and old-old
 - Ability: intellectual, physical or other disabilities
 - Mental status: mental illness, or cognitive impairment such as dementia
 - Sexual orientation: gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender
 - Aboriginal status: on or off reserve, status or non-status
 - Location: rural, remote, isolated or urban
 - Income: low income, receiving Income Support or federal Guaranteed Income Supplement
 - Housing: social housing, location of home, quality and safety of neighbourhood, condition of home
 - Culture/ethnicity/colour: different than the dominant culture

- Food preferences: ethnic, based on culture or religion
- Education and literacy: little education, low literacy
- Marital status: widowed, divorced, never married
- Health status, habits and personal hygiene: “eccentric” or self-neglectful, yet harming no one.

Stereotypes and older persons

Stereotype: Older victims of violence are responsible for getting hurt, it’s their own fault.

- *The reality:* No one ever deserves to be harmed or neglected. Responsibility for violence rests solely with the perpetrator.

Stereotype: Old people are “burdens” to their families.

- *The reality:* Although many older people depend on their families for support, often the relationship is one of mutual help between generations.

Stereotype: Older adult violence does not occur in some cultures.

- *The reality:* Violence against older persons can occur in all cultures and religious traditions.

Violence affects different older persons in different ways

Older women

- Generalizations about older women often take the form of mistaken and negative stereotypes. Older women are typically described as inactive, unattractive, defenseless, lonely, unhealthy, dependent, passive and asexual.

Older adult immigrants, refugees and new Canadians

- Being a new Canadian can be very isolating. This is most so when a person has a limited network of family and friends.

- Problems with disclosing violence or abuse are universal. Specific challenges that may complicate the issue of violence against older persons from other cultures include:
 - Distrust of authorities;
 - Fear of being deported;
 - Financial or social dependency on the perpetrator;
 - Language barriers; and,
 - The definition of violence or abuse may vary from one culture to another. Some older adults will tolerate some forms of violence.

Aboriginal older persons

- Aboriginal groups vary by language, laws, customs and values. They may differ in what behaviour or actions are tolerated or deemed unacceptable.
- Aboriginal older persons are often at a higher risk of experiencing violence.
 - Colonization and the breakdown of the family unit have left many Aboriginal persons unable to care, feel or know what it means to be a family.
 - These injustices have led to serious social problems, such as substance abuse, poor health, and extreme poverty in many communities.
 - These injustices and racism have increased the risk of violence for Aboriginal older persons, women and children.

Older persons living with disabilities

- Older persons with disabilities are less limited by their disabilities than they are by lack of accessibility, services and supports. This leads to greater dependence on caregivers, family members and neighbours.
- Older persons with dementia may be more likely to experience violence since their ability to communicate may be impaired.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) older persons

- Many older LGBT adults lived through times of great hostility and harsh judgments towards people with differing sexual orientations. They have experienced prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination.

- Relevant and acceptable social and community services may be difficult to find or access. This makes it especially difficult for older LGBT persons who are involved in relationships where there is violence.

Older persons living with HIV/AIDS

- Older persons living with HIV/AIDS often face fear and ignorance. This includes sexism, racism and heterosexism.
- These older persons often struggle to access proper health care services. The stereotype persists that “old people do not get HIV/AIDS”.

Isolated and rural older persons

- Many communities do not have local police on site. Police may arrive too late to protect the older person from immediate harm.
- In a small community, an older person may not feel safe disclosing violence to a doctor, police officer or community leader. They may fear that this person will tell others in the community.

Interacting with older people who are different from you

- Stereotypes of older people as burdens, confused or frail can lead to violence. It is easier to harm those who we do not see as equal human beings.
- Words may have different meanings in different cultures (for example, abuse may be understood to mean physical violence only). Non-verbal cues, such as gestures and eye contact, may have different meanings too.
- Gender differences between a caregiver and an older person may create more challenges in some cultures than others.
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender older persons need service providers who will treat them with respect.
- Transgender older persons should be referred to and addressed by the name and pronoun they prefer and use, regardless of their genitals or present legal identification.
- Older Aboriginal victims of violence might not want:

- To leave their homes or their land, even when they have been harmed; and/or,
 - To seek help outside their extended family.
- Older persons who do not speak English as a first language may not be able to express themselves clearly in English. It may be uncomfortable for them to discuss private matters such as violence in the presence of an interpreter, who may be a (biased) family member or friend.

What You Can Do

- Examine your own biases and stereotypes about people who are different from you. Think about how you react to others who are different from you.
- Bear in mind that culture and diversity affect the ways we behave and act.
- Embrace, value and celebrate diversity in individuals and organizations.
- Question ageist language and images. There are plenty of examples of people who do not fit the stereotypes of what it means to be “old”.
- Challenge people who tell demeaning, ageist jokes. Refuse to discriminate, harass or bully others. Address these issues to effect change.
- Treat people of all ages with respect. “Over the hill” is a *negative attitude*, not an age.
- Replace judgment and assumptions with respectful curiosity. Ask older people about their culture, customs and views. Learn how their culture impacted and shaped their lives. Ask them to tell stories from when they were young.
- Find out about aging and aging care in other cultures and religions. Do this research to ensure that you ask useful, nonjudgmental questions. Remember that, even within a culture or religious tradition, each person and situation is different.

RECOGNITION
Session 5: Diversity, ageism and violence

AGENDA

Activity #	Activity	1.5 Hour session	Materials
1	<p>Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome participants. • Introduce yourself if necessary. • Participant introductions, if necessary. • Make housekeeping announcements. <p>Guidelines for being together (See some examples on p.14)</p> <p>Today's topic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefly explain that this is Session 5 in the <i>Respect Aging</i> training program. Today's topic is <i>Diversity, ageism and violence</i>. <p>Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Agenda. • If participants do not have their own copies of the Participant Manual, hand out copies of Module 5. 	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint slides 1-3 • <i>Participant Manual</i> • OR one copy of Module 5 for each participant
2	<p>Brainstorming <i>Dimensions of diversity</i></p>	15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint slide 4 • Flipchart
3	<p>Learning together <i>Diversity, ageism and violence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show slides 5-10. 	20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint slides 5-18

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to the Additional Notes on the slides for more information. • Slide 11: Read out the quotes and see if participants have understood the three concepts of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination. • Continue with Slides 12-18. 		
4	<p>Small group activity <i>Story from the Front Line - Mr. and Mrs. Tarkani</i></p>	35 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handout
5	<p>Wrap-up / Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute <i>Participant Evaluation Form #1</i> and ask participants to complete them. • Do a final go-round. Ask participants to briefly share how the session was for them, and how they will use what they have learned in their work or interactions with older persons. • Thank participants once again for their input, sharing and time. • Collect <i>Participant Evaluation Form #1</i>. 	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Participant Evaluation Forms</i>
<i>Total time</i>		90 minutes	

IMPORTANT!

After facilitating this session, please complete the form titled **Compilation and Summary of Data Collected with Evaluation Form #1** (page 221). Your feedback will help us keep project materials relevant, useful and up-to-date. Mail or fax within one week of the session to:

Provincial Training Coordinator
Women's Policy Office/Violence Prevention Initiative
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
Confederation Building, 4th floor, West Block
St. John's, NL
A1B 4J6

PHONE: (709) 729-5009
FAX: (709) 729-1418
EMAIL: vpi@gov.nl.ca

RECOGNITION – SESSION 5 ACTIVITIES

Activity 2: Brainstorming

Dimensions of Diversity

Prepare in advance a flipchart with two blank concentric circles. Label the inner circle *Primary Dimensions*. Label the outer circle *Secondary Dimensions*. (See slide 4).

1. Show slide 4. Provide the *Dimensions of Diversity* information in PowerPoint Notes. *Do NOT read out the lists of dimensions.*
2. Tell participants they will brainstorm together to construct their own Dimensions of Diversity diagram. It will be unique for this workshop. Each diversity diagram looks different, depending on who is present.
3. Ask participants to call out categories for the diagram. Have them say whether it is a Primary Dimension or a Secondary Dimension. Write the category in either the inner (primary dimension) or outer (secondary dimension) circle on the flipchart.
4. If there is debate about where a category belongs, allow some discussion. Try not to get too involved in debating where a category belongs – for the sake of time, just move on to another category.
5. If participants are not sure about what you mean by categories, start them off by saying that “ ‘Race’ is a category.” Then ask, “Where does it belong on the diagram?” (Note that “Race” is a Primary Dimension, since it cannot change – it is something you are born into.) See the Notes from slide 4 for other category suggestions.
6. Brainstorm until you have 6-12 categories in each of the two circles on the diagram.

Activity 4: Story from the Front Lines

Mr. and Mrs. Tarkani

1. Divide the participants into three to four small groups of four to six people. Ask each group to appoint a recorder and a reporter. Record all responses on a flipchart. Ask small groups to:
 - a) Identify all the *Dimensions of Diversity* that apply to Mr. and Mrs. Tarkani (age, location, ethnicity, etc.);
 - b) Identify the *types* of violence that are present. Identify any *types* of violence that *might* be present;
 - c) Identify any (1) *stereotyping*, (2) *prejudice* and (3) *discrimination* that may be taking place in this story; and,
 - d) Identify a possible *intervention* for this situation. Be prepared to share the solution with the larger group.
2. Bring the group back together. Ask groups to report out on their responses. Note any areas of agreement or disagreement.

RECOGNITION – SESSION 5 HANDOUT

HANDOUT: STORY FROM THE FRONT LINES

Mr. and Mrs. Tarkani

Mr. and Mrs. Tarkani are both in their seventies. They have lived in Newfoundland and Labrador for two years. At one point, they decided to return to live in their native Pakistan where they had family and friends. However, things did not work out as expected. They came back to live in this province. They stayed with relatives for a while, but that did not go well either. A family member brought them to a local social service agency and left them there. The Tarkanis were admitted to a residential care home on an emergency basis.

Mr. and Mrs. Tarkani are both physically frail. Mr. Tarkani has diabetes, and has had a foot amputated as a result of complications from the illness. Mrs. Tarkani has diabetes, as well as heart disease. They are the only persons of colour in the residence, and feel very alone, especially Mrs. Tarkani, who speaks no English at all. Family never comes to visit. Other residents are very unwelcoming to them, and seem especially hostile to Mr. Tarkani. They sometimes make racist remarks.

As the weeks go by, the Tarkanis begin spending more time in their room. They stop coming to the cafeteria for meals. Staff notice that Mrs. Tarkani has been crying a great deal. That seems odd, since the couple appears to be devoted to each other. The staff is convinced that the problem is not between Mr. and Mrs. Tarkani. When asked by staff how they can help, Mr. Tarkani says that his wife is just “too sensitive”. That is all that he will say.