

Equality and Diversity

Key Message

Understanding Equality and Diversity is vital if we want to deliver person-centred, safe and effective care. Equality is about creating a fairer society where everyone can participate and have the opportunity to fulfil their potential and no one is unfairly disadvantaged. Diversity is valuing peoples' differences and addressing their different needs and situations.

Delivering on equality and diversity in the health service means that we are tackling barriers which may prevent some groups of people from accessing services. It also means that we are delivering services which meet the diverse needs of our patients, service users and carers. Good equality and diversity practice:

- ensures that everyone is treated with dignity and respect
- supports involvement and self-management and supports improved outcomes for all.

Equality and diversity are not 'add-ons', but should be an essential part of how we deliver our services and how we work together.

What does this mean for the Effective Practitioner?

All staff play a vital role in delivering a service which promotes equality and diversity. The Practitioner must be able to:

- Recognise discrimination and identify risks of discrimination - whether direct discrimination, indirect discrimination or harassment;
- Understand the potential consequences of discrimination;
- Be able to identify and respond to the specific needs of diverse patients, service users and carers which arise from their personal, social or cultural background;
- Be accountable for providing a service which demonstrates good equality and diversity practice; and
- Support the empowerment of patients, service users and their carers so that they may be involved in their own care and health improvement.

Good equality and diversity practice involves:

- Communicating with patients, service users and carers in a way that is accessible to them;
- Making reasonable adjustments in the way we do our work and deliver our services to take account of the particular needs of disabled people;
- Understanding the role that cultural and religious beliefs play in health care and peoples' experiences of the health service;

Find more work-based learning activities on the effective practitioner website at www.effectivepractitioner.nes.scot.nhs.uk

- Ensuring that everyone gets care which takes account of their individual needs;
- Treating everyone with dignity and respect at all times.



Learning Activities



Information Needs and Service Delivery

Consider the population within your local area. Sources of information include your local Equality & Diversity representative; the local lead for Patient Focus Public Involvement in the NHS Board or the Local Authority website.

- Based on the data you have sourced, are there groups of the population who use your services more than others? If so, why?
- Select a client group that either use your service or potential service users that you want to make your service more accessible to.
- Discuss with colleagues and/or service users from this client group to establish what kind of information they might need and if it is available in an accessible format.
- Consider the barriers this client group might have to your service and to information.
- Source relevant information which already meets the needs of this client group.
- Consider how you might address any gaps to improve your service for this client group.

Related KSF core dimensions: communication and service improvement.

Notes



Local service barriers

Consider a patient/client that you have been caring for recently. This could be someone with a cultural difference, someone with a disability or someone from a deprived socio-economic background.

- What barriers did the person face in accessing your service?
- What did you do to help them and facilitate access to your service?
- How can your reflections improve the way in which you or your colleagues deliver your service?

Related KSF core dimensions: service improvement, equality and diversity.

Notes



Discrimination

In your work experience have you ever seen a situation in which people were experiencing discrimination or harassment? This could have been a service user, carer, or co-worker.

This might be an explicit example such as someone making racist comments or at the more indirect level. For example, a person who is blind needs a follow-up appointment and the only way is to get the appointment is on a card – this person asks for the appointment to be sent to the phone but the receptionist says that this is unavailable. This local policy has discrimination inbuilt.

In your own example:

- i. What was the nature of the discrimination?
- ii. What impact did it have on the person who was discriminated against?
- iii. What impact did it have on you?
- iv. What did you do?
- v. If you had to do it over again, what would you do differently?

Access the local policies and procedures that can help you to challenge discriminatory or inequitable behaviour.

- Find out where you can turn to for advice?

Related KSF core dimensions: personal and people development, equality and diversity.

Notes