Nourish Scotland and The Poverty Truth Commission January 2018





Dignity in Practice



Tools for community food providers



Introduction

This practical resource has been developed by Nourish Scotland and the Poverty Truth Commission with and for community food providers, including those providing emergency food aid. It includes tools and exercises to help projects think about what dignity looks like in practice and how this can be achieved, and complements the 'Dignity in Practice' report.

We co-produced this resource as part of the Dignity Project to support staff, volunteers and those taking part in community food initiatives to:

- consider how the design and delivery of their project makes people experiencing food insecurity feel;
- + reflect on what more could be done to promote and restore dignity in practice.

We will be adding more resources as we continue to work with people with lived experience, community food providers and others in the time ahead. We hope you will find them useful, do contact us with any suggestions and feedback – we would love to hear from you.

Project team

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Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this resource by sharing their thoughts, views and experiences about dignity, and grappling with often challenging questions, during the course of this project.¹

Many thanks to Pete Ritchie, Nourish Scotland, for his guidance and advice throughout.

In developing these resources we have been greatly inspired by the 'Changeover Foundation Course' materials developed by Scottish Human Services in 1995, and especially by John O'Brien's 'Five Essential Accomplishments' framework.²

The Dignity Project was funded by the Scottish Government's Fair Food Transformation Fund. This resource was designed by graphics.coop with support from the Seedbed Trust.

² O'Brien, J. and Lyle, C. (1987) Framework for Accomplishment, Responsive Systems Associates



¹ A special thanks to the participants of the Dignity Project Peer Support Programme; volunteers and staff from Bridging the Gap, Castlemilk Parish Church, Central and West Integration Network, Midlothian Foodbank, Moray Foodbank, St. Paul's Youth Forum, Start Up Stirling, The Freedom Cafe, West Dunbartonshire Community Foodshare and Woodlands Community Cafe.

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The Dignity Principles

Scottish Ministers appointed an Independent Working Group on Food Poverty³ in 2015, tasked to consider the issues related to food poverty and make recommendations to the Scottish Government on future actions. The Working Group's report, *Dignity: Ending Hunger Together in Scotland*, stated that:

A truly dignified system would be one where everyone is food secure, with access to adequate, nutritious and culturally appropriate food, without the need of emergency food aid. It is one where the right to food is understood as a matter of justice rather than charity.⁴

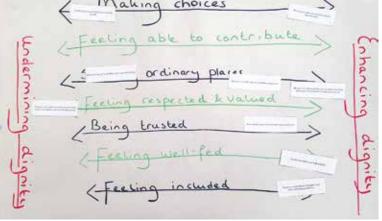
The Working Group identified the following four Dignity Principles to guide the design and implementation of dignified responses to food insecurity:

- 1. Involve in decision making people with direct experience.
- 2. Recognise the social value of food.
- 3. Provide opportunities to contribute.
- 4. Leave people with the power to choose.

The Scottish Government's Fair Food
Transformation Fund (2016-18) that followed
on from this work required applicants to
demonstrate "how they propose to meet the
four principles for a more dignified response to
food poverty"⁵ identified in the *Dignity* report.
Applications were considered for projects that
were already aligned with this approach or would
support emergency food providers to "transition
existing charity-based models of emergency
food provision into services that exemplify the
four principles for dignified food provision".



Photos taken at a workshop of the Dignity Project peer support programme.



³ Members included: Big Lottery Fund, Bridging the Gap, Child Poverty Action Group, Church of Scotland, City of Edinburgh Council, Fareshare, Food Commission, Nourish Scotland, Oxfam Scotland, Poverty Truth Commission, STV Appeal, The Poverty Alliance, The Robertson Trust, Trussell Trust.

⁴ Independent Working Group on Food Poverty (2016) *Dignity: Ending Hunger Together in Scotland*, p 13.

⁵ This requirement was based on the recommendation in *Dignity: Ending Hunger Together in Scotland* (2016, p 14): "Any organisation which secures Scottish Government funding and support to work on tackling food poverty must demonstrate how its approach promotes dignity and is helping to transition away from emergency food aid as the primary response."

The Dignity Project – exploring dignity in community food provision

With support from the Fair Food Transformation Fund, Nourish Scotland and the Poverty Truth Commission undertook a year-long project that aimed to a) explore what the Dignity Principles mean in practice for community food provision, and b) support community food providers to reflect on and transition their practice towards a more dignified response to food insecurity.

Between November 2016 and October 2017, the project team worked closely with people with lived experience of food insecurity, staff and volunteers involved in community food initiatives and wider stakeholders to explore what dignity means in practice and develop practical tools and guidance to support community organisations to use the Dignity Principles in their work. From the beginning, the project had a strong commitment to involve people with experience of food insecurity in the process, in line with one of the core messages of the *Dignity* report: "Involving people experiencing food insecurity is where we will find the solution." 6

→ 'What does Dignity mean to you?'

In the early stages of this project, we gathered views of those delivering, volunteering for and taking part in community food initiatives about the question: 'What does Dignity mean to you?' People from diverse backgrounds and experiences explained dignity through an experiential, rather than theoretical, perspective.

Responses consistently included feeling:

- trusted as capable to make your own choices and decisions:
- seen as an individual, regardless of past and present circumstances;
- listened to, at both an individual level about your needs and preferences and at a project level about how projects are run;

 valued as a person and a member of the community, with something to contribute.

Through these conversations, it was clear that putting dignity into practice requires thinking carefully about all the decisions that affect how someone feels about a place, situation or way they are treated – dignity is in the detail.

→ Dignity Principles in Practice

The following Dignity Principles in Practice are designed to assist community food providers to reflect on the design and delivery of their work by considering the Dignity Principles from the perspective of someone experiencing food insecurity. These Dignity Principles in Practice complement the Dignity Principles identified by the Independent Working Group on Food Poverty in 2016 and were developed with the support of a wide range of stakeholders engaged in community food provision, including people with experience of food insecurity.

The Dignity Principles in Practice ask staff, volunteers and those taking part in community food initiatives to consider how the project supports people to feel:

- + a sense of control
- + able to take part in community
- + nourished and supported
- + involved in decision-making
- + valued and able to contribute

⁶ Independent Working Group on Food Poverty (2016) Dignity: Ending Hunger Together in Scotland, p 3.

Dignity Principles in Practice

Community food initiatives can put dignity at the heart of their project by supporting everyone taking part to feel:

+ A sense of control

Having power to make choices about what, where, when, how and with whom you eat.

+ Able to take part in community life

Feeling able and welcome to take part in different aspects of community life, regardless of your financial situation.

Nourished and supported

Being able to enjoy food and access support that meets your needs.

Involved in decision-making

Feeling able to share your views and ideas and to have those views taken seriously in decision-making.

Valued and able to contribute

Feeling recognised and valued as a whole person with knowledge, skills and experiences to share.

Exercise 1 Observing Dignity in Practice

Aim of this exercise

For those involved in the design and delivery of a project to understand more about the many small and large decisions that affect people's sense of dignity.

Overview

This exercise encourages staff, volunteers and those taking part in community food provision or initiatives to take time to observe and reflect on what takes place on a normal, busy day. This can also be used as part of a peer-to-peer visit to another project.

Instructions

Observe what's happening at the project on a busy day – as if you're visiting for the first time.

You may want to sit and just watch for a while or make a note of the way the room feels (e.g. Is it too hot? Too cold? Are people speaking to each other respectfully and in a friendly way? Is it clear to a new person where to go when they arrive for the first time? Is someone meeting them at the door?). Try to speak to people as well, to get a sense of their feelings about the place. If possible, speak to at least one staff, volunteer and participant present. After the observation, try answering the questions on the following pages.

Based on these reflections, consider – individually or as a group – what steps could be taken to change or improve practice to promote and restore the dignity of someone experiencing food insecurity. Make sure to arrange a time to discuss what you learned about the project with people who can respond to any issues you identified. This exercise can be a useful starting point for reflecting together and identifying what more can be done to put dignity front and centre in your project.

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+ Is this a place I would come? Why?

Include feedback on how welcoming and inclusive the project or space feels. What observations did you make about how people were being treated? What did people tell you about how the project makes them feel about being involved (for example behaviour of the staff and volunteers, quality of food, location, etc)?

Specific points:	
A sense of control To what extent does the project give people control over what, where, when, how and with whom they eat? What else could be done?	
Able to take part in community life To what extent is the project designed and delivered to be inclusive of diverse members of the community, without stigma? What else could be done?	;
Nourished and supported How does the project ensure that people feel supported and have a choice of nourishing and fresh food to eat? What else could be done?	
Involved in decision-making How and at what levels does the project involve people with direct experience of food insecurity in decision-making? What else could be done?)
Valued and able to contribute How does the project provide appropriate and diverse opportunities for people to contribute, whether with time, skills or resources? What else could be done	

Exercise 2

Dignity in Practice Scenarios

Aim of this exercise

For participants to gain a better understanding of the Dignity Principles in Practice through applying them to real-life scenarios.

Overview

In small groups, participants will discuss how the ways in which people are treated by community food providers might **enhance** or **undermine** the dignity of someone facing food insecurity. This exercise builds understanding about the Dignity Principles in Practice by encouraging participants to consider real, practical examples from the perspective of someone who is experiencing food insecurity.

Participants

Each group should have approximately 5-8 participants – a smaller group allows each participant to contribute to the conversation more often. If you are dividing participants into more than one small group, remember to bring enough materials for each group to have a 'Dignity in Practice board' and a set of scenario cards.

This activity is designed to work with a variety of participants – including staff, volunteers and participants in community food projects, and anyone seeking to understand more about the Dignity Principles in Practice. If you are using the activity to reflect on the specific practice within your project, we recommend inviting project participants, volunteers and staff to take part in the discussion to provide a diverse range of perspectives.

Scenarios

At the end of this exercise you can find two sets of practice scenario cards. If you have little time or this is the first time you and/or your group reflect on the Dignity principles, you can focus on the first set of cards. If you have more time, you can add the second set of cards with more complex scenarios for discussion.

The scenarios are based on practical examples from a variety of community food projects throughout Scotland. You may also wish to generate your own examples. To do so, work with members of your group to think about specific and practical things that happen in your project – perhaps inspired by the 'Observing Dignity in Practice' exercise.

Materials

This exercise can be done with very few materials. You will need:

- Scenario cards (approximately 20 for each group)
- + 'Dignity in Practice board'

Note: Prepare a large piece of paper with the five Dignity Principles in Practice written on it from top to bottom and arrows pointing towards the words 'undermining' on the left and 'enhancing' on the right, see image below.



Preparing the room

Move chairs into groups of 5-8 – around tables or into small circles – and place a Dignity Principles in Practice board in the middle of each group. Ensure that chairs are close enough to the board to allow each participant to see. Provide each group with a set of scenario cards, placed face down.

Time required

20-60 minutes – depending on how much time you have and the aims of the session.

Instructions

Each participant selects 2-3 scenarios from the pile.

Without speaking, each participant reads their cards to themselves and places them face-down on the 'Dignity in Practice board' depending on:

- A. which principle they think it relates to most, and
- **B.** how much the scenario **enhances** or **undermines** the dignity of someone experiencing food insecurity.

Once everyone has placed their card(s) on the board, participants take turns flipping each card over, reading the scenario aloud and sharing why they chose to place it where they did.

Group members then discuss each scenario, considering the following:

- + Would others have placed the card in the same place? Why or why not?
- ♣ What other principle(s) do you think this practice relates to?
- + What would the opposite of this scenario feel like?

There are no 'right' answers – the aim of this activity is to encourage participants to engage in a discussion about how these practice examples affect someone's feeling of dignity.

Once everyone had their turn, or all the cards are turned over, start another round. Use as many scenario cards as you want and have time for. Using fewer cards or allowing more time for the exercise means groups can reflect on each scenario in more depth.

What if I can't choose where to place my card?

The Dignity Principles in Practice are related to each other, and practice examples will have often related to several principles at once. Participants place the scenario on the principle that seems *most relevant to them*.

Example: "Everyone can eat together if they want to"

Participants may decide that of the 5 Dignity Principles in Practice, this relates most to *Feeling able to take part in community life* and belongs on the 'enhancing' side of the spectrum. The fact that everyone eats together means that there are no distinctions drawn between those on little or no incomes and those with secure incomes.

On the other hand, participants may feel that this relates most to *Feeling* nourished and supported because sharing a meal together may enhance the dignity of someone who does not have enough money to afford the fuel to prepare a warm meal at home.

Variation One: Reflecting on our project as a whole

Instead of using the scenario cards, use the exercise as a self-evaluation tool to reflect on the way your project is run overall. Ask participants to consider the following question:

To what extent and in what ways do you think the project currently leaves someone experiencing food insecurity feeling:

- ... a sense of control?
- ... able to take part in community life?
- ... nourished and supported?
- ... included in decision-making?
- ... valued and able to contribute?

Participants 'rate' the project's overall practice on each spectrum line by placing an 'X' or a sticker somewhere between 'enhancing' and 'undermining'. Group members then discuss practical steps that can be taken to move closer to the 'enhancing' end of each spectrum line and/or check in on progress regularly.

It is important that participants feel able to speak freely and honestly about their views of the project and for those in positions to make changes to be clear about what steps can and will be taken.

Variation Two: Placing yourself around the room

Instead of doing this exercise seated, invite your group to 'think on their feet'.

Find a way to mark out each Dignity Principle in Practice spectrum line on the floor, for example with pieces of string or chalk. Explain to the group that one side of the room represents 'enhancing' dignity, and the other side 'undermining' dignity.

Participants select one scenario card at a time and move to the appropriate place in the room (choosing which principle the issue relates to most and whether it is 'enhancing' or 'undermining' dignity). Each participant takes a turn reading out their scenario and explaining why they placed themselves at that point in the room. Participants may choose to discuss each scenario as a group.

Set 1. Practice Scenario Cards

This is one of many places in my community where I come to buy or share food	I have been coming here for years, so it was easy to get support when I needed it
I received a food parcel packed by someone else	It's only possible to get food here with a referral from another agency
People here are kind and welcoming, they never speak badly about others	I don't know who I'd speak to if I had a concern about the project or something felt wrong
The community meal is cooked from scratch with lots of fresh produce	Every month, there is a time for us to share our ideas about how to improve the project
Everyone eats together here – staff, volunteers and community members	Community members have a lot of responsibility here, but we get support from staff when needed
Before I lost my job, I never would have come here	It is easy to be myself here
When I have an idea, people here take my views seriously	Someone always offers me a cup of tea when I arrive
I think the staff make most of the decisions here	If there are leftovers of the meal, I'm offered to take some home
I feel like part of the community because I'm always involved in setting up before the meal and clearing up afterward	Here I can learn to grow my own fruit, vegetables and herbs
I don't have any time to help out, but I always leave a few pounds in the donation box	The meals here are prepared by members of the community

Set 2. Practice Scenario Cards

I had to eat with people I don't know or like	None of the staff or volunteers have experienced food insecurity
My children don't eat the kinds of food I received, but I'm too embarrassed to ask for something different	The staff have encouraged and supported me to join a steering group, which I never thought I'd have the confidence to do
I have to explain my financial situation to someone every time I come to the project	Staff and volunteers are more friendly with each other than with the people who come to the project
There is no ramp or disabled toilet because it's in an old church hall	Staff and volunteers wear uniforms, like in a cafe
Being given food that is near or past the expiry date makes me feel like I'm rubbish	They deliver my food parcel to my house because I have mobility issues
The parcels are always the same, I have eaten the same food for weeks	There are religious and faith symbols all over the hall
There are feedback forms, but I don't know if anyone uses them	I was turned away at the door, but no one told me this project was only for certain groups of people
It's only the most articulate and well-educated people who are asked to join the steering group	I feel comfortable leaving my children to run around and play freely in this space
I'd be happy to help out here, but I get my food served to me at a table and wait to have it cleared	A staff member always decides what the menu will be
There is a sign on every table saying that people should pay what they can for the meal	It's hard for me to find a place to access food that caters for my dietary needs

Exercise 3

Reflective Questions

Aim of this exercise

To inform a strong review of existing practice and ideas for possible next steps.

Overview

As part of this exercise, staff, volunteers and participants come together to reflect on the project's practices and to identify steps that could be taken to respond to any concerns that arise.

Instructions

Consider the questions on the following pages about the Dignity in Practice Principles individually or as a group. Discuss your answers and consider for each Principle:

- + What else could be done?
- + What partners are there in our community who could help us achieve this?
- + How would someone experiencing food insecurity feel about this?

Every effort should be made to ensure that people with lived experience of food insecurity are able and encouraged to share their views about these issues.

A sense of control

- → How does this project enable people experiencing food insecurity to have greater control over how they access food in the community?
- → How does this project give people who participate control over what, where, when, how and with whom they eat?
- → How does the type and quality of the food shared reflect the views, priorities and choices of people who take part in your project?

Able to take part in community life

- ♣ What steps are taken to make the project feel positive and inclusive to everyone in the community, rather than a place someone has to go in a crisis?
- ♣ What groups of people aren't taking part in this project (e.g. people with young children, disabled people, people from different faith backgrounds) and why?
- → How much information do people need to give about their financial circumstances before accessing or taking part in this project?
 - What is the purpose of collecting this information, especially if people are required to bring evidence or discuss this more than once?
 - What are the circumstances in which people would be denied access to food or excluded from this project?
 - Who might not be taking part in this project because they do not want to share this information?

Nourished and supported

- What steps are taken to source and use high quality food that is socially acceptable and culturally appropriate?
- → How is food incorporated into positive, enjoyable and supportive activities that promote social, emotional and physical well-being?
- + How does the project provide or promote additional support and advice services?

Involved in decision-making

- What opportunities and processes are available for people taking part in this project to express and share their views?
 - How well are these opportunities working?
 - Which groups of people are not engaging with these opportunities?
 - What could be done to encourage or support more involvement?
- → What issues are people able to express their views about (e.g. opening times, location of service, type and variety of food, opportunities to contribute, accessibility to all members of the community)?
 - What decisions or issues are not open for people to share their views about, and what are the reasons for this?
- → What steps are taken by the staff/volunteers to consider and respond to the views people involved in the project share?
- → What steps are taken to make sure people with lived experience of food insecurity are at the forefront of decisions about running and shaping the project?

Valued and able to contribute

- What opportunities are there for people to contribute in different ways, whether with time, skills or resources?
 - How well are these opportunities being taken up by participants?
- ♣ What steps does the project take to build relationships between staff, volunteers and participants and to show people that they are valued?
- What opportunities and support exist for people to move from being a participant/ recipient to taking on more meaningful roles in the project? How well is this working?

Exercise 4 'Our Commitment to Dignity'

Aim of this exercise

For staff, volunteers and those taking part in community food provision or initiatives to develop a collective statement on how dignity is reflected in the design and delivery of their project. This 'Commitment to Dignity' statement can be used to communicate your aims and principles clearly with everyone involved and to guide your project in the future.

Overview

This exercise invites you to come together with staff, volunteers and those taking part in your project to discuss and develop a 'Commitment to Dignity' statement that reflects your project's particular aims and context. When finalised, you may wish to display your statement on your website and/or in a prominent space for everyone in your project to see. This can serve as your Code of Practice, or complement this if you already have one.

This Commitment can be used by everyone involved in the project as a guide for what should happen or how people should be treated. Your group may want to consider how the Commitment can frame your staff or volunteer inductions and/or any feedback you're gathering on how people think the project is doing. You may wish to return to your commitment every 3-6 months to see whether anything has changed.

There are two templates included in this resource. The first template includes statements based on the Dignity in Practice Principles. The second template has space for your group to write in additional or different statements that reflect your specific project.

Note: It may be helpful to work through the other reflective exercises from the Dignity in Practice materials before developing your Commitment to Dignity statement.

Instructions

Staff, volunteers and those taking part in your project should work together to develop a Commitment to Dignity statement that reflects your project's particular aims and context. The template on the next page provides a suggested starting place, based on the Dignity in Practice Principles. Feel free to edit as much or as little as you want – it is important that the group feels ownership over the final 'Commitment to Dignity' statement.

Once you've worked through the template together, you may want to type up your notes and design the Commitment to be displayed in such a way that fits your project. You're also very welcome to use the design template provided.

Step one:

Discuss the statements on the first template in small groups and consider:

- + How you're doing this already
- + What more you're hoping to do

Step two:

Decide as a whole group whether your project feels it can commit to these statements. If so, place your project/organisation name at the top of the page with the date and display prominently. You can use the template provided or re-design it to fit your project.

Step three (optional):

Discuss any additional statements that group members think should be included under each Dignity in Practice Principle. These should reflect any specific commitments to promoting and restoring dignity that you have or would like to have in your project. Try to be as specific and realistic as possible, but encourage participants to think about what would be possible in the future as well. If you want, you can fill in the second template with any additional statements and display this prominently.

For example:

Statements about what you're already doing may include actions you want to maintain: 'We source and use high quality produce from local community gardens.' or 'We have a diverse steering group and encourage everyone involved in the project to share their views about what could be improved.' Statements about what else you're committing to may include: 'We will work to find a venue that is easily accessible by public transportation and to people with limited mobility.' or 'We will increase the ways people can contribute to our project (e.g. preparing the meal, setting/clearing the tables, growing the food, playing music, paying by donation, welcoming new people at the door, etc).'

Our Commitment to Dignity

We commit to promoting and restoring dignity.

Project/Organisation name Date: / /





This means that together, we will work hard to make sure that everyone feels...





A sense of control

We support people to choose what, where, when, how and with whom they eat.

Able to take part in community life

We welcome everyone in the community to take part, regardless of their background or financial circumstances.

Nourished and Supported

We provide access to nourishing food and the support that people need.

Involved in decision-making

We make it easy for people with lived experience to be involved in all levels of decision-making.

Valued and able to contribute

We recognise and encourage people to contribute to the project in many different ways.

Our Commitment to Dignity

Together, we will work hard to make sure that everyone feels
A sense of control
Able to take part in community life
Nourished and Supported
Involved in decision-making
Valued and able to contribute





We welcome your thoughts and feedback on this work!



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Visit **www.nourishscotland.org/the-dignity-project/** for the accompanying '*Dignity in Practice*' report and to find out more about the Dignity Project.