

OVERVIEW

This activity is designed to help staff, volunteers and participants in community food initiatives to carry out a group activity that explores the finer details of their work. Particularly it encourages exploration of how well their current practice contributes towards promoting a sense of dignity for the people who take part in it. The activity may also highlight new ideas and alternative forms of practice to be piloted in their setting. It should highlight any discrepancies within the group around understandings of why things are carried out in particular ways and contribute towards building a better shared understanding.



AIM

To encourage the staff, volunteers and participants in a community food initiative to think through the extent to which specific parts of their work are helping to promote dignity.

Note: This estimate is based on 10-15 people discussing five questions. This activity will take longer depending on the size of the group and the number of questions that are discussed.

MATERIALS

- Large sheets of paper.
- Pens.
- Post-it notes
- A poster with the Dignity Spectrum (illustrated on page 2)

INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1: Preparing for the session:

1. On a large piece of paper copy the Dignity Spectrum as illustrated on page 2. Make sure there is enough space to stick post-it notes on it and for everybody to see.
2. Prepare posters with questions for discussion: Write one question on each poster, in large letters so everyone can see.
 1. At what times does your service operate and why is it organized to take place at these times?
 2. What words are used to describe the people who come to participate in your activities, and what does that say about them?
 3. How do you welcome people who attend, and what impressions does that give them at arrival?
 4. What is the space like? (Please describe it in detail, e.g. What notices are up on the walls? What is the lighting like?) What kind of atmosphere does this detail create and how might people respond to these details?
 5. What choices do you offer people about food to take home, and how do they respond to these?
 6. (How) Do you ask people to show that they are eligible to access your services, and how do they respond to these requirements?
 7. What roles do you encourage your participants to take on in delivering your services or developing the way things are done? And, do people actively take up these roles as you would wish it?

The number of questions depends on the size of the overall group and the time available. You are aiming to gather at least two or three people around each question. A good number of questions for a 30-40 minute session with a group of 10-15 participants is about five.

Hang the posters on the walls, spaced widely around the room so that there is room for small groups to rotate around them.

Step 2: Small groups respond to questions (approx. 15 mins)

Explain to participants what the aim of the exercise is and summarise briefly how it will run. Read the questions on the posters to the group, ensuring that everybody understands them. Ask participants to circulate round the posters (ideally in pairs or threes) to discuss the questions in turn.

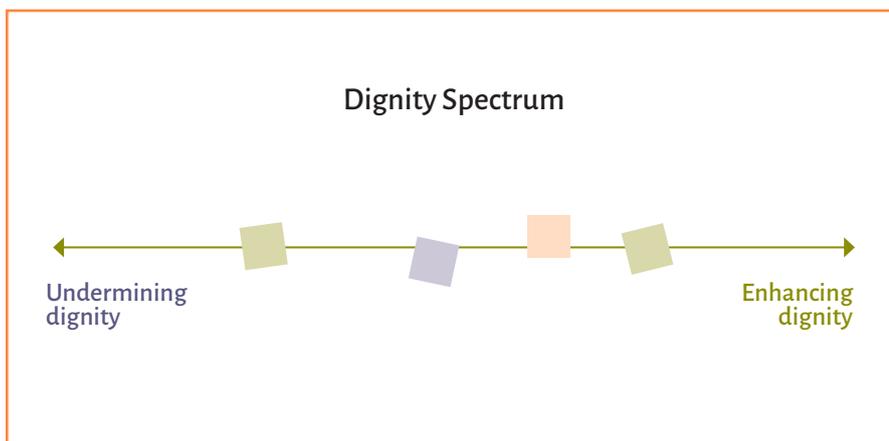
Invite them to write their responses on post-it notes and stick these on the posters as they discuss each question. After 15 minutes, call people together to promptly move on to the next step in this activity.

Step 3: Group responses are placed on the Spectrum (approx. 15 mins)

Allow people a minute or two to view all responses on the post-it notes by milling around at random.

Call the group together promptly and start rotating around the posters, turning the group's attention to each question in turn. At each poster, read out the responses one at a time, inviting participants to select a place for each post-it note on the Dignity Spectrum. The location on the spectrum should reflect how much they think this example is likely to enhance or undermine the

dignity of the people who attend your community event. If they aren't sure where to place their response on the spectrum, or its position would depend on other contextual details that are not clarified, the note should be placed somewhere in the middle.



Step4: Discussing responses (approx. 15 mins)

As each response is placed on the Dignity Spectrum, open up discussion about the position that was selected. It may be that there are different ways of looking at it from within the group. During the discussion, the group may decide to move the post-it to a different place. It is important that different perspectives are handled respectfully, and it should be emphasised that there are no 'wrong' responses.

This is also a good opportunity to highlight and take note of any comments about examples of practice that were felt to undermine dignity, and to invite discussion about what changes in practice might help to promote dignity instead.

Step 5: Bringing the activity to a close (5 mins to get a quick impression, 15 mins for a post-event review)

We suggest the following questions may be tackled as a way of evaluating the activity and bringing closure to the exercise. This can be done either with the group at the end of the session, as a way of gathering quick thoughts, or by the organisers separately in a debrief after the event.

- 1. How did the activity go? How useful were the questions? Were there other questions that might have been asked instead?**
- 2. Was there anything that stood out in terms of how services are provided? Did any new ideas arise in discussion? What needs to be followed up, how is this going to be done, and by whom?**

Variation One: Reflecting on our project as a whole

Instead of using posters with questions, use this alternative activity focus on the dignity principles 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.