

OVERVIEW

This activity is carried out in groups. It enables volunteers and staff to discuss what dignity means both generally and in a particular community food context. It also provides a safe space for groups to build a shared understanding of what dignity means for their context and what this means in practice. As well as increasing people's awareness of dignity in practice, it helps to identify what could undermine someone's dignity. It is important to run this activity following updated government guidelines on social-distancing, a way to do this is by running it on an online video call platform.



AIM

To encourage volunteers and staff to share their thoughts about dignity and build a shared awareness of how a person's sense of dignity might be promoted or undermined in a community food context.

MATERIALS

- Sheets of paper and pen to note outcomes of discussions for the group.

Optional: You can use [mentimeter](#) to gather participants responses anonymously.

PREPARING THE ONLINE CALL

Ensure everyone has access to the online platform and knows how to use it. If a participant doesn't have access to a computer, consider whether there are any actions you can take to provide them with one. If any of the participants is not comfortable with using technology maybe someone else in the household can support them.

Step 2: Has your dignity ever been undermined?

Ask participants to think about a time when perhaps their own dignity has been undermined. Ask them to silently reflect on how this made them feel. If participants are comfortable to do so you can welcome them to share any experience and/or feelings with the rest of the group. Make sure you do not put pressure on anyone to share anything. If you would like to share a personal experience yourself, you could do so as a way to start the conversation. As the conversation evolves, keep note of the feelings mentioned. Once the conversation has ended read out loud the list of feelings or if you chose to use [Mentimeter](#), ask participants to input their responses. You can then read out loud the responses anonymously, if that suits the group better.

PARTICIPANTS

It is ideal for there to be 4-6 people in the call including yourself. Smaller groups allow for each participant to contribute to the conversation more fully.

INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1: What does dignity mean to you?

In the call, ask people to take a couple of minutes to reflect on the words that come to mind when they think of dignity. Then get each participant to share and take notes of the words being mentioned. Once everyone has had their turn, read out loud the list of words.

WHAT DOES DIGNITY MEAN TO YOU?

Step 3: What do we think dignity means as a group?

Reflect on how both lists show the extent to which people share similar definitions of dignity, bearing in mind there might be differences, considering their backgrounds and personal circumstances. You can emphasise the degree of similarity by drawing attention to words that come up more than once.

Step 4: Summary and Reflection

Take a few minutes to summarise and reinforce the idea that someone's experience and sense of dignity is affected by small detailed gestures that impact on how they feel. You can read the quote below.

“Putting dignity into practice requires us to think carefully about all of the factors that affect how someone feels when they visit a community food project. The decisions we make, small or large, as both staff and volunteers, will have an impact on how someone feels about the space, situation or the way they are treated. Therefore, it is important to recognise that dignity is in the detail.”

You can also emphasise how from our own personal experiences we can see how the feelings generated when our dignity is undermined are something we never forget. Therefore, as community food providers we have a huge responsibility to ensure the way we run the service does not undermine people's sense of dignity.

Optional: You may decide to follow this activity up with the [*Dignity Spectrum*](#)