

Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust Managers Day, July 2007

There were 28 delegates, all of whom were managers within the mental health field. Most delegates found the workshop met or exceeded their expectations, describing it as *engaging, interactive and stimulating, thought-provoking, really fab, fun while learning*.

The workshop aim was to address diversity issues in the workplace, in relation to mental health services. First there was a short play set in a mental health unit, in which each character was discriminated against and, in turn, discriminated against somebody else. Characters experienced this in terms of their mental illness, race, sexuality, gender, disability, and religion.

Delegates commented:

It made me think about whether I judge by appearances and there were many (too many) situations which I have come across at a personal level. It highlighted the subtleness discrimination can take, how our behaviour fosters others' prejudices and the difficulty of seeing past the stereotype into the person underneath.

This was followed by Hot Seating: an opportunity for delegates to question the characters to gain insight into the thoughts and experiences behind their discriminatory behaviour. During the subsequent Forum Theatre, two scenes were replayed and delegates were involved in providing advice to the characters on how to deal with the situations and challenge the discrimination.

This was useful because it showed how good advice/individual trying harder could still go wrong because of other's agendas or behaviours.

The workshop finished with group discussions and a plenary session to look at ways to carry the learning forward into the workplace.