



DEVELOPING TOGETHER

SOCIAL WORK TEACHING PARTNERSHIP

Anti-racist worksheet: Exploring the influences of early life

This exercise requires a degree of trust between student and practice educator, due to the personal nature of the tasks. It may be best not to undertake this too early on in a placement. However, if both student and practice educator complete this together, the practice educator's experience of sharing this information can be an effective way of making the student feel safer talking about their own experiences.

Although this worksheet looks at attitudes towards black people and white people, the same format can be used to explore attitudes towards other groups of people who regularly face discrimination (for example: Asian people, disabled people, gay people). The practice educator can adapt this worksheet depending on situation.

- 1) Recall your earliest memories of black people.
- 2) Now recall your earliest memories of white people.
- 3) Write down or think about what you remember, including:
 - Who was there
 - Who was talking
 - What was said
 - What else was happening

The practice educator and student should share their thoughts with each other, and then explore the following questions:

- How did these memories differ between the two groups of people?
- Where did these influences come from? Family/school/peers?
- How does this affect the way you think or behave now?
- Have your views changed as you have grown up? And if so what has shaped this change?
- How does this affect the way you work with service users or colleagues?

From your knowledge of human growth and development you are aware we start life without any preconceived notions about people. You also know that conditioning begins, if not immediately after birth, fairly soon. The collective values, standard, attitudes and behaviour of family and significant others has an impact on us as individuals.

If we consider the importance of this period of our lives on our emotional and intellectual development and briefly assess its effects, we soon realise how our own attitudes, behaviour and perceptions are the result of negative and positive responses based on early influences.

As we grow up, however, and encounter different experiences and relationships, our attitudes continue to be open to influence.

In order to ensure that practice is anti-discriminatory, it is crucial that students are able to reflect on their own values, both past and present, and how these have been influenced.

Having explored the questions above, it is important that the exercise is ended with the following question:

- What practical steps can you take to challenge racism/discrimination?