

# TRAINING FOR INCLUSION

A Cross-Sectoral  
Curriculum  
for Professionals  
Working with  
LGBT+ Families





# INTRODUCTION

**T** *Training for inclusion. A cross-sectoral curriculum for professionals working with LGBT+ families* is an outcome output of “DOING RIGHT(S). Innovative tools for professionals working with LGBT+ families”, a project co-financed by the European Union’s Erasmus+ programme. It is intended as a tool for use in training professionals from the education, social work, law, and health sectors whose work brings them into contact with families where there is at least one parent who does not identify as heterosexual, or who is a trans person.

Since 2006, the Council of Europe has stressed the importance of adopting a pluralistic approach in regard to the family. In recent years, the EU has focused attention on the difference, in certain nations, in the protections afforded to individual rights and the level of protection given to familial bonds, a situation in which trans people appear to be particularly vulnerable. Against this background, a recommendation by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers highlighted a lack of resources and competences in the fields of artificial reproduction technology (ART), custody decisions, foster care and adoption, all contexts where there is a particularly high risk of discrimination.

However, effective inclusive work with LGBT+ families depends on a variety of conditions. While the competence of the relevant professionals in interacting with children and parents

is certainly an essential factor, it is also important to recognise that in order to achieve inclusive outcomes not only must professionals be properly trained, but the organisational framework in which they are operating – i.e. the organisation or institution – must also function in way that is inclusive and welcoming for all families.

Within the framework of the DOING RIGHT(S) project, we have been working to identify a set of key competences that will enable professionals in the healthcare, social work, education and law sectors to work with LGBT+ families in an effective, fair, inclusive way and support organisational learning in a way that gives rise to environments that are more welcoming of family diversity. As part of the summer school “Frameworks and tools for working with LGBT+ families in education, health and social care”, which was held in Verona in September 2019, our international team had the opportunity to design and implement a series of training modules that would be suitable for use in a variety of contexts and different countries, work that led directly to the booklet you are reading!

While the authors assume full and sole responsibility for the contents and the opinions expressed within this publication, we wish to acknowledge the invaluable contribution of Tarah Fleming, Giulia Giardina, Stephen Hicks, Giovanni Papalia, and all the students who attended the Doing Right(s) summer school.

# HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET?

The booklet is organised in sections, each of which relates to a fundamental aspect of dealing with LGBT people and their families in a fair and respectful manner, and thus to a particular set of “key competences”. These are as follows:

## **0. Building a learning environment**

- 1. Gender differences, norms and models**
- 2. Family diversity**
- 3. Professional practice**
- 4. Assessment**

Each section focuses on an area of particular importance in the training process, which is addressed on two levels: first, there is a brief, theory-based introduction, complete with suggested reading for a more in depth analysis. This is followed by a selection of “units”, which is to say suggested activities for developing a training programme in relation to the topic. Each unit provides a detailed description of the activity, including instructions and timings, and a list of required items or supplies, but also a summary of the specific areas of focus and desired learning outcomes. Taken together, the

sections form a cohesive training programme. However, professionals may choose to focus on a single section, and select the units according to their own needs and the context in which they are working. The activities described can be used with a wide range of audiences, and are intended to be adaptable to different contexts and modes of interaction.

We have made every effort to make this booklet as clear and easy to use as possible. Bear in mind, however, that the activities are meant as a starting point, and can be adapted according to the background and experience of the instructors, the specific aims of the training activity and the needs of the participants, rather than following them to the letter. With some of the activities, it is necessary that the professionals delivering the training have a firm grounding in the field of gender and parental roles. To facilitate this, we provide a bibliography with recommended reading. Furthermore, certain activities touch on the experience of discrimination or that of witnessing or even perpetrating violence; in these cases, it is vital that instructors are capable of leading participants through the group process safely and sensitively.

## SECTION 0

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# BUILDING A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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**W**ith any in-person learning process, whether it is an individual training activity (for example, a 3-hour workshop) or in a longer programme (e.g. a 5-week course), there are a number of desirable, or even necessary, preconditions which should be in place. Specifically, the aim is to ensure the participants feel they have access to all the resources they will require, and that the interpersonal dynamics are such that they are supported, and that questioning, learning, and change are possible.

Creating these conditions involves a number of different processes:

- getting to know each other and getting to know the instructor(s)
- helping participants to understand and engage with the overall vision and the goals of the activity
- building a non-judgmental, welcoming learning environment
- helping participants to feel they are part of a group that is diverse but oriented towards common goals
- offering opportunities for exercising an active, reflective, critical attitude towards content, languages, norms and longstanding personal and professional habits

In creating a fruitful learning environment, it helps to focus on some or all of these objectives from the very beginning of the process, for example by taking care to plan how the participants are to be welcomed, how the class is to be composed, how to induce a shared attitude of self-reflection.

This applies to all training activities. However, there are two further things to keep in mind when developing training activities in the field of LGBT+ family inclusion:

- we can expect the participants to exhibit different degrees of personal and professional awareness and motivation in relation to these issues, especially in response to specific circumstances: for instance, a teacher whose class includes a pair of twins who have two fathers, a new situation that the teacher does not know how to deal with; an LGBT activist who has been engaged in promoting social justice for a long time; a family mediator who is lesbian, and has a strong interest in, and awareness of, LGBT issues but has not, herself, come out in her working environment. These examples

## Section 0 *Building a learning environment*

are intended to illustrate how diverse participants can be in terms of previous knowledge, world views, familiarity with language relating to the issue, and levels of political engagement and activism, not to mention the meanings and functions they associate with their jobs. Initial activities should aim to create conditions in which these participants can share their ideas, knowledge and experiences and learn from each other's perspectives;

- in many countries and regions, professionals working in support of LGBT rights and inclusion may be exposed to prejudice, risk (physical and verbal attacks, or even losing their job) and negative media coverage. They might experience stress and loneliness, and lack support in their working environment. The training activities may offer them an invaluable opportunity to establish or strengthen a support network, to feel empowered as professionals, and to learn skills that can help them effect change in their organisations.



## UNIT 0.1

# BEGINNER MINDSET

**Focus:** This is an ideal beginning activity for a new group. Participants are presented with a new learning challenge that involves both their body and their mind. They are asked to focus on how they feel about “learning new things” within a group, their attitude to new challenges and the fact that they – along with the others – are “beginners” at the start of a learning process.

**Duration:** 10 minutes

### Learning goals

- Becoming aware of ourselves as learners in the face of a new challenge
- Supporting openness and creativity in the group
- Enjoying a light-hearted, initial moment of contact with the other participants

### Description and timing

#### Step 1 – 5’

The instructor asks the participants to stand (leaving any stuff they have brought with them to one side). They (the instructor) then demonstrate some (2-3) simple exercises that require some degree of coordination between the mind and body, and the participants are invited to follow their example.

Some options:

- Make circles with your hands in opposite directions;
- Touch your nose with one hand while using the other hand to touch your ear on the opposite side. Keep changing hands, getting faster and faster;
- Point forward with a finger while making the “OK” sign with the other hand; keep changing hands, getting faster and faster, but try to avoid making a “gun” sign (something that can be quite difficult as the participants change hands faster and get mixed up);

- “Kiss the bunny”: one hand is a bunny and jumps up and down on the spot, the other hand should move in a straight line towards the bunny to catch it (the challenge is stopping the “chasing” hand from jumping)
- Make circles in the air with a foot while writing your name in the air with the opposite hand.

After every activity, the instructor gives the participants a few seconds to “shake it off” (laugh, breathe, reset the body).

#### Step 2 – 5’

The instructor asks the participants to think about what has just happened: it is likely that some participants haven’t been able to do all the exercises, there has been confusion, there have been mistakes... The instructor asks the participants how they felt during the activity. The feelings that emerge might involve frustration, feeling vulnerable or incapable, shame, anxiety, pressure, but also joy, pleasure, a sense of fellowship. Some participants may talk in terms of competition and comparison (trying to be better than the others, feeling less skilled than the others...).

The instructor brings the activity to a close by explaining that it is important to notice how we are as learners, what our attitudes are when faced with new challenges, what feelings come up and how they impact on our learning process.

**Guidance and suggestions:** *At the end of the activity, the instructor may wish to point out that the exercise is meant to help the participants put aside the “I already know it all” attitude. The physical exercises are simple, but they have made everyone feel a bit odd or vulnerable, creating a sort of “beginner mindset”. The instructor may wish to use this activity directly before the one below (0.2 - Safe space, brave space), which focuses more explicitly on creating the learning environment. The exercises can also be used again in later sessions as an icebreaker, a “body activation” exercise or as a reminder of the “beginner mindset”.*

## UNIT 0.2

# SAFE SPACE, BRAVE SPACE

**Focus:** The purpose of this activity is to help the participants form an initial agreement about what they require to establish a “brave space”, meaning a space in which they are able to be and to express themselves with a view to becoming agents of change.

**Duration:** 15 minutes

### Learning goals

- Building a learning group
- Becoming aware of our own needs in a learning context that relates to social justice challenges
- Agreeing a framework in which we set out the conditions that will allow the group to welcome each identity and experience, and to function effectively in terms of learning and agency

### Description and timing

#### Step 1 – 5’

The instructor and participants stand in a circle. The instructor briefly introduces the difference between “safe space” and “brave space”. Safe space is an expression some participants might be familiar with, especially if they already have a good awareness of social justice issues. However, although we all need a safe space, in a setting such as this, a truly and totally “safe space” cannot really exist. We define a “brave space” as a space where everyone can bring their identity, express thoughts and feelings, question current knowledge and practice, and act with others toward new goals. A brave space is continuously created by the participants.

#### Step 2 – 5’

The instructor asks every participant to say and complete the sentence: “For a brave space, I need...”. If the group is new, this moment can also be used for the participants to introduce themselves (for example: “my name is Helen, and for a brave space I need...”).

While the participants respond (each person should speak when they feel they are ready, rather than respond in turn) the instructor writes their answer on a board, where necessary asking the speaker to explain what they mean to ensure the whole group has a clear understanding of everyone’s perspective.

#### Step 3 – 5’

The instructor brings the group’s attention to the whole set of answers, and summarises how these needs, if met, can help the learning group to make progress. They also remind the group of its own, active role in creating and sustaining the brave space.

### Supplies needed

Board/poster/flipchart to write down participants’ answers

**Guidance and suggestions:** *The instructor should facilitate the participation of all members of the group and write exactly what is said. It is important to keep a record of these answers (through a picture shared with the group, or having the poster on the wall throughout the course) so that the group has a shared framework in which to work, and to refer back to them when evaluating how the group is functioning.*

## UNIT 0.3

# RATING PRIORITIES

**Focus:** The basic idea behind this activity is to allow the nature of the group as a varied, dynamic (and changing) entity to emerge. It should help the group to be aware that they are not a single unit, and that – even though they might share the same basic values – individual positions and local contexts can vary greatly. The LGBT+ world is multi-layered, and so are the needs of the participants.

**Duration:** 20 minutes

### Learning goals

- The LGBT+ population comprises a multiplicity of subjects whose needs are shared in part, but also often very different
- Peeling back the multiple layers of the causes and experience of the denial of rights and recognition
- Understanding how the way the needs of LGBT+ people are framed can be determined by ideological positions
- Considering the impact of local contexts in defining need

### Description and timing

#### Step 1 – 2'

Lay a strip of paper/fabric out on the floor and mark out a scale on it with scores from 1 to 10. Explain the scores: 1= not important at all; 10 = of absolute importance.

#### Step 2 – 3'

Read the following items aloud, one at a time. For each item, ask the participants to rate it by positioning themselves on the scale from 1 to 10.

1. Marriage Equality
2. Access to assisted reproduction for LGBT+ people
3. Adoption for LGBT+ parents
4. Laws to counter homophobia
5. Being legally identified with the gender you choose
6. Being able to use the toilet of your choice

7. Having all-gender bathrooms in all schools and public services
8. Regular classes on gender issues at school
9. Depathologising trans identities

#### Step 3 – 15'

Finally, facilitate discussion among the participants about their experience in doing this activity, and what it means. Guide questions could be:

- How did you feel doing this activity? How easy was to prioritise these needs?
- Did anybody change their mind about their scores, while doing the activity?
- Why do you think there are differences among your scores?
- What might be the reasons for these differences?
- What conclusions can we take from this activity?
- What observations might we make?

The purpose of the discussion is to explore how discrimination and rights violations are often understood within a static ideological framework, which creates the risk that the consequences are considered largely in abstract terms rather than with real people in mind. It can also have the effect of reinforcing processes of discrimination by under-representing certain groups and individuals (e.g. trans people). There are no “standard needs”; rather, needs are dependent on the individuals/groups involved and the context.

### Supplies needed

- Strip of paper/fabric; markers; enough floor space to allow participants to move around and stand at their chosen score.

**Guidance and suggestions:** As presented, this activity suits a group that largely shares common values in relation to LGBT+ issues. When using it with a group that has a wider spectrum of opinions, the “priorities” can be tailored accordingly. The ultimate aim is not to start a dialogue between contrasting positions, but rather to push each participant to examine their own ideas about priorities in relation to specific, meaningful contexts.

## UNIT 0.4

# MY EXPECTATIONS

**Duration:** 35 minutes

### Learning goals

- Fostering personal engagement in the work of the group
- Giving the learning process greater direction, through a selection of keywords and defined stages
- Enabling the group to share in the evaluation of the process

### Description and timing

#### Step 1 – 10'

The facilitator writes on the flip chart/board: “My expectations, in a word, in a sentence” and asks the participants to answer, in a sort of brainstorming activity.

All the words and sentences should be written up.

#### Step 2 – 10'

The facilitator guides a discussion about the words and sentences that have been written up, where necessary identifying and summarising the expectations and motivations that the group has expressed. On a separate sheet/board, they then group the words/sentences into categories (i.e. information, tools, abilities, comprehension, changing the way my organisation functions etc.) and topics (i.e. sexuality, gender identity, social norms, etc.).

Ultimately, content should be selected and grouped in a way that fits with the goals and duration of the training programme, and it is important to explain to how the grouping process works, what the underlying reasons are for including certain items and excluding others, and so on. This helps define what the training activity/programme can be expected to address.

Lastly, the facilitator groups the selected issues under key-words that give an idea of the learning pathway ahead.

#### Step 3 – 15'

At the end of the session, the facilitator(s) returns to the page/board with all the words generated in step 1 and 2. They then guide the participants in comparing the initial set of words and sentences with the later set and exploring how they currently feel, focusing on how their expectations of the training activity fit with the actual learning pathway, and encouraging them to reflect on any changes in their own perspectives, feelings and awareness.

Guide questions might include:

- How do you feel when you are presented with this “picture” of the group? Do you still identify with it?
- Is there anything you would add/erase?
- Is something still missing?
- Thinking back to what you said at the beginning, has anything changed?
- Has your viewpoint on how LGBT issues relate to your own professional practice changed in some way?
- Do you feel your attitude towards any issue has changed in any way?

The facilitator takes the answers and produces a general summary of the process experienced by the group, identifying what has been achieved, where any changes have taken place and what is still missing/remains to be done.

### Supplies needed

Flip chart

**Guidance and suggestions:** *During the debriefing session, when the participants’ contributions are laid out to be discussed, it is important to take care to make it clear that some of the issues raised will not be included in the scope of the course, and explain the reasons. Participants need to feel that the issues they raise have been properly considered, even if there is no room to include them in the training activity in question.*

## SECTION 1

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# GENDER DIFFERENCES, NORMS AND MODELS

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The ways women and men act within society, and the ways people form families and construct emotional and sexual relationships, are often still explained on the basis of stereotypical understandings that link behaviours, attitudes or practices with biological features. For example, women might be thought to have a natural talent for child rearing while men are considered unfit for primary care, and a family headed by a man and a woman may be considered a “natural” – and therefore positive – context in which to bring up children.

Despite the ongoing change in gender relationships, the increasing diversity of family configurations and the widespread agreement in the scientific community that gender differences, sexuality and the family are the product of a process of social construction rather than an inherent part of our nature, professional practice continues to be guided by this sort of stereotypical understanding. This can translate into potential discrimination or non-inclusion of LGBT+ individuals and families because their life experiences do not conform to, and even

## **Section 1\_ Gender differences, norms and models**

challenge, prevailing expectations about gender, sexuality and the family. To create room for an authentic relationship with patients and/or service users in which their actual needs and experiences are welcomed, rather than interpreted through the prism of stereotypical assumptions, it is therefore essential that these assumptions and stereotypes be questioned and deconstructed.

To do this, in addition to a basic understanding of the way notions of masculinity and femininity and gen-

dered parental roles are socially constructed – which is certainly important – it is essential that professionals and practitioners develop a capacity for self-awareness and self-reflection in relation to the stereotypes and expectations they hold themselves.



## UNIT 1.1

# FROM BODIES TO ROLES: THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER NORMS

**Focus:** This activity aims to explore the process by which masculinity and femininity are socially constructed by shining a light on how bodily and biological differences are transformed into social differences, how this process is connected to relationships of power, with differences arranged in a sort of hierarchy. It also aims to explore how gender norms function in our societies. In methodological terms, it is a bottom-up activity that draws on common gender stereotypes and assumptions as they are manifested in everyday experiences, prompting the group to discuss and reflect on the functioning of gender expectations in ordinary settings.

**Duration:** 2 hours

### Learning goals

- Identifying the processes by which gender differences are socially constructed;
- Identifying the links between gender and power in our societies
- Understanding how stereotypes give rise to bias and implicit norms
- Reflecting on and deconstructing the stereotypes and models we hold ourselves

### Description and timing

#### Step 1 – 5'

Divide the participants into groups of 4-6 people. Try to make the groups as heterogeneous as possible, mixing up the class by age, profession, gender, nationality or any other characteristic that might be relevant in your specific context. This will help stimulate discussion.

#### Step 2 – 50' (20' group work + 30' whole-class discussion)

Ask the participants to work together in their groups to answer the question “what are the differences between men and women?” identifying:

- a. bodily/biological differences (i.e. hormones, pregnancy, etc.)
- b. differences in terms of emotions and behaviours (i.e. women are more caring, men are more rational, etc.)
- c. differences in terms of social roles (i.e. professions, family roles, etc.)

When the discussion has concluded, bring the class back together and ask each group to share their answers. Write all the answers down on the board, setting them out in a table with two rows marked “men” and “women”, and columns marked

**a.** body; **b.** emotions; **c.** social roles.

You should end up with a table with entries in six boxes filled. Take the time to write down the answers from each group, and welcome comments or suggestions. Ask for clarification when needed.

	BODY	EMOTIONS	ROLES
♂			
♀			

#### Step 3 – 45'

First, ask the participants to read the chart horizontally, one row at a time looking at the connection between the physical differences, emotions and social roles associated with men and with women. This helps illustrate how biological differences (which mainly relate to the different roles of men and women in reproduction) have been translated into gender expectations in terms of emotional attitudes, professions, roles within



## Unit 1.1\_ From body to roles: the social construction of gender norms

the family, engagement in the public arena etc. For instance, the ability of women to bear children translates into a supposed natural aptitude for care and “caring professions” such as nursing or teaching. Ask participants to explore how and to what extent they feel comfortable within this linear way of thinking and whether they can think of examples/experiences that challenge it.

Next, ask participants to read the chart vertically, looking at the differences in the ways masculinity and femininity are understood. This can serve as an illustration of how gender differences are constructed in oppositional terms (what is feminine is not masculine, and vice versa) and how they are understood in terms of a hierarchically, whereby the attributes of “masculinity” (i.e. rationality, strength, but also aptitude for technical work) is typically afforded greater status by society.

Finally, ask participants to explore what happens when a man or a woman challenges gender expectations (i.e. a man crying in public, a woman getting angry) or occupies a social role (i.e. a woman who prioritises her career, a stay-at-home dad) that is usually associated with the other gender.

This is intended to promote discussion about the way gender norms function, for instance how they limit people’s opportunities but also how they shape the way we evaluate and interpret other people’s lived experiences.

### Step 4 – 20’

The instructor can use the remaining time to recap the main concepts that emerged in the discussion and suggest materials for further study on the issue of the sex-gender system and the social construction of gender differences, gender stereotypes and the functioning of gendered norms.

### Supplies needed

- Ample space to divide the class into smaller groups
- Paper and pencils for group work
- Flipchart or whiteboard
- Computer and projector

### Further reading

EIGE (2011). A study of collected narratives on gender perceptions in the 27 EU Member States, European Institute for Gender Equality, Vilnius.

Pilcher, J., & Whelehan, I. (2004). *Fifty Key Concepts in Gender Studies*, London: Sage.

Connell, R. (1987). *Gender and Power. Society, the Person and Sexual Politics*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

**Guidance and suggestions:** *Keep in mind that the participants may find it difficult to challenge the stereotypes and models that inform their own idea of gender difference because it brings their own condition as gendered human beings into play and their own socialisation to gender norms. Be aware, then, that each participant – both in the smaller groups and in the whole class discussion – is drawing on their own experience and their contribution has to be welcomed.*

## UNIT 1.2

# WHAT MOTHERS (SHOULD) DO, WHAT FATHERS (SHOULD) DO

**Focus:** This activity is aimed at challenging gender stereotypes and assumptions about parenting by highlighting how it can be more meaningful to interpret the everyday things that mothers and fathers do in raising and caring for their children as a set of parental functions – that can be performed by a man or woman, regardless of gender – rather than gendered parental roles. It is designed as a follow-up to the previous activity. Using a “bottom-up” approach, it uses the participants’ own ideas about motherhood and fatherhood to develop a conceptual understanding of “parenting functions”.

**Duration:** 2 hours

### Learning goals

- Identifying how gender assumptions and stereotypes inform our understanding of parenting
- Understanding parenting in terms of functions and not in terms of gender roles;
- Becoming aware we harbour prejudices and stereotypes, and how they affect our understanding of specific needs and situations.

### Description and timing

#### Step 1 – 5’

Arrange chairs for the participants in a circle to encourage a non-hierarchical form of discussion. Place a box in the middle.

#### Step 2 – 10’

Participants are given a piece of paper and asked to list up to 5 “things” they think mothers do with and for their children, up to 5 “things” fathers do and up to 5 “things” both of them do. They should not write their name on the piece of paper. When they have completed their lists, they put the piece of paper into the box.

#### Step 3 – 20’

Read each list, writing down the answers on a whiteboard in three groups, one for “mothers”, one for “fathers” and one for “both”. Ask for clarification when something is not clear.

#### Step 4 – 30’

Divide the class into groups of 4-6 people and ask each group to discuss the lists, using these guide questions:

- What characteristics do the activities associated with mothers have in common? What about those associated with fathers, or with both parents?
- In what way do gender assumptions come into play when we think about parenting?

#### Step 5 – 35’

Ask each group to summarise their discussion, modifying the lists on the board accordingly. Give space to the other groups to ask questions or make comments. Help the participants understand the role of gender assumptions and stereotypes in the way we define motherhood and fatherhood.

#### Step 6 – 20’

Use the remaining time for a short lecture to introduce participants to the idea of “parenting functions” and to explain how this perspective is helpful in understanding same-sex parenting in a way that avoids treating gender complementarity as a core characteristic of good parenting.

### Supplies needed

- Ample space for dividing the class into groups
- Paper and pencils for group work
- Flipchart or whiteboard
- Computer and projector



## Unit 1.2\_ What mothers (should) do, what fathers (should) do

### Further reading

Lee, E., Bristow, J., Faircloth, C., & Macvarish, J. (2014). Parenting culture studies. New York: Springer.

Hicks, S. (2013). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender parents and the question of gender. In LG-BT-Parent Families. New York: Springer, pp. 149-162.

**Guidance and suggestions:** *Keep in mind that stereotypes can actually be a useful tool in understanding and making sense of the world. The aim, therefore, is not to erase any stereotypes of masculinity and femininity that the participants may have, but to make them aware that they do have these stereotypes and need to challenge them if they are to be genuinely inclusive with regard to LGBT+ parents and their children. Our suggestion is to avoid introducing a right-or-wrong mindset, or a dichotomous approach in which one stereotype is replaced with a counter-stereotype, in favour of a dialogical approach that helps professionals develop an attitude of self-reflection.*

## UNIT 1.3

# DEALING WITH GENDER IDENTITY TRANSITION

**Focus:** Given that transitioning and/or gender questioning are still stigmatised and challenge the supposed natural connection between biological sex and gender identity, both processes can be highly stressful for both the (often very young) person going through the experience and their parents and other members of their family. Professionals can play a crucial role in helping the transitioning/questioning person and their family deal with these issues effectively and with minimal distress, aiding them in overcoming fears, challenging unhelpful stereotypes and achieving a sense of empowerment. This activity is designed to help the participants in assessing the needs of individuals and families in such situations.

**Duration:** 1.45 hours

### Learning goals

- Assessing complex family needs
- Developing and assessing inclusive working methods

### Description and timing

#### Step 1 – 30'

Depending on the level of knowledge and expertise in the group, introduce participants to the notions of gender identity and gender transition as required and recap the differences between biological sex, gender identity, gender expression and gender roles. You should then give an overview of the current socio-legal context in your country as far as trans rights are concerned.

#### Step 2 – 10'

Give each participant a case study. They should read this first individually, then in small groups.

#### **The story of Philip and his family**

*Characters: Philip, a 16 year-old who is questioning their gender identity; Philip's parents; John and Maria, employees at a public-sector agency that provides advice and support for trans people.*

*This is the report written by John and Maria after meeting Philip and his parents:*

Philip comes straight from school and arrives at the meeting before his parents, who are running a little late. While he is waiting, Philip wanders around; he looks at a trans-rights poster on the wall, reads

some leaflets that are lying on the table and asks us questions about how the service works. Philip seems a little shy, but he appears relaxed and curious. Maria asks him how he would like to be addressed and he says he'd prefer it if we used his chosen, masculine name. From then on, we use his masculine name and male pronouns. When his parents arrive, we move to the meeting room where we begin by asking Philip to tell us why he decided to come to our service. His parents seem a little nervous and we feel they are surprised we use masculine pronouns for Philip. However they don't mention it explicitly. Philip tells us that he has been dealing with gender identity issues for several months now and that he decided to come to us on the advice of his psychologists, with whom he had discussed his feelings about his identity. He reports he has never been comfortable with femininity, that since he was very young he has used Carnival as an opportunity to dress up as a masculine character. He has never met a trans person in real life, but he has looked for information on the internet and watched videos by trans activists. We explain to Philip and his parents what our service does, how it can offer support during the transition process and what the process means in legal terms. Both Philip and his parents listen attentively. A positive thing that we notice is that Philip's parents respect his space and give him room to ask questions and make comments, only stepping in when they need further clarification. Eventually they open up about their own main fears: the mother is deeply concerned of the irreversibility of the transition process, while the father raises



## Unit 1.3\_ Dealing with Gender Identity Transition

questions about hormonal therapy and the impact it might have for someone Philip's age, a teenager. They wonder if Philip's gender questioning might be connected with their family circumstances: Philip's brother has had a chronic disease since he was born and, over the years, this has been the focus of a lot of their energy. They have dealt with a lot of specialists and they are worried about Philip having to undergo a protracted medical process like his brother has, albeit for different reasons. At times they have felt exhausted by what they have gone through with Philip's brother, and lonely because they have never met other families facing the same situation.

### Step 3 - 30'

Each group imagines they are an interdisciplinary team working for the trans support service and have received the report written by John and Maria after meeting Philip and his parents. The team has been asked to study the report and offer advice and opinions before the second meeting with Philip and his family. In particular, the group should think about what Philip and his parents are asking for from the service, both the things they mention explicitly and those that remain implicit.

### Step 4 - 35'

Bring the whole class back together and have each group report what it has discussed. Note all the answers on the whiteboard. Give the class time to discuss each report, ask questions and fill in any missing information. Finally, help the group to reflect on how the relationship between professionals and service users might involve explicit and unspoken needs and requests, why some considerations remain in the background, and what service providers and professionals can do to help users clarify their needs and feel comfortable in expressing them.

### Supplies needed

- Ample space to divide the class into subgroups
- Printed copies of the case study
- Whiteboard

### Further reading

*American Psychological Association (2015), Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming People,*  
[apa.org/practice/guidelines/transgender.pdf](https://www.apa.org/practice/guidelines/transgender.pdf)

*Action for Children (2016) A guide to supporting trans children and young people,*  
[actionforchildren.org.uk/media/6718/a-guide-to-supporting-trans-children-and-young-people.pdf](https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/media/6718/a-guide-to-supporting-trans-children-and-young-people.pdf)

## SECTION 2

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# FAMILY DIVERSITY

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**A**lthough the family model of a man and a woman conceiving and raising children together is still the most common, a wide range of family diversity has become visible in our societies in recent years. This means that even though LGBT+ people have always existed, the increase of social acceptance of non-heterosexual relationships and the accessibility to new paths to parenthood for LGBT+ people has allowed their experience of family to gain greater recognition. There are parents who raise their children alone, adoptive families, families formed through assisted reproduction that do not share genetic links among all members, families with two fathers or two mothers, etc. Regardless of how it is composed or came to be formed, a family of any kind can provide the safe and loving environment a child needs for their development. Nonetheless, LGBT+ families still present organisations and practitioners

with unexpected configurations. This can expose shortcomings in terms of the skills and knowledge required to recognise the true experience of these families, and appreciate how they work, and what their needs are. Indeed, for many professionals familiar family structures are crucial to how they frame their understanding of how the family works. Parental functions are confused with parental gender roles, making it hard or impossible to perceive what is actually going on in families that do not fit these models, and making the struggle for these families to be recognised and validated even harder.

When encountering a new family situation, practitioners who have not received adequate training will tend to impose a heteronormative framework based on a binary model of gender identity. In this there is a risk of assimilating LGBT+ headed families to traditional, heterosexual-headed models

## Section 1\_ Family diversity

and underestimating the subtle, and even overt, prejudices that affect people in this category. One possible result is that, by misunderstanding the specific character and circumstances of the family, the practitioners themselves become agents of discrimination.

Furthermore, when practitioners come into contact with “atypical” categories of service user, such as members of LGBT+ families, there can be a tendency to focus primarily on this single aspect of their person at the risk of undervaluing other aspects that may be shaping their experience. Developing inclusive working practices means proactively working to create the proactive promotion of a responsive environment where professionals have the tools to recognise different family forms, and also to frame them within a complex and multifaceted understanding of the diversity of families and individuals.

Training professionals on the issue of family diversity must therefore involve developing their awareness of the social roots of the widespread and dominant heteronormative framework, its ability to assimilate diverse family models, and the inherent violence of such processes of assimilation, which are embodied at a fundamental level in many everyday activities. For this to work, practitioners need to know about the diverse configurations families can adopt and how they are formed, and develop both a suitable vocabulary that is respectful of different experiences of familial bonds, and learn to address the needs of children and parents in a range of different parental arrangements.



## UNIT 2.1

# WHO IS IN YOUR FAMILY?

**Focus:** This session aims to explore the plurality of LGBT+ families, their various configurations, processes of formation and the challenges they face. By analysing different cases, the participants will increase their awareness of the social roots of the heteronormative framework and its power in assimilating diverse family models.

**Duration:** 1 hour

### Learning goals

- Understanding family diversity as a necessary step in understanding diversity in LGBT+ families
- Becoming aware of the processes involved in the formation of family bonds (biological, genetic, cultural, emotional etc.)
- Becoming aware of the extent to which the make-up and dynamics of a person's family can vary over time

### Description and timing

#### Step 1 – 5'

Explain the idea of the workshop and introduce the instructors; each participant should be provided with a piece of paper and a pen

#### Step 2 – 10'

Individual task: each participant draws a family map:

- If you think of your family, whom do you think of?
- Make a list of the people in your family
- Make a family map: draw a map of your family and place each family member on the sheet to create a "picture" of your own family

#### Step 3 – 25'

Split into small groups (5-7 people) and discuss:

- How many people do you have on your maps?
- What boundaries or borders are there? Who is included and who is excluded, and why?
- What kind of bonds are there between the members of your family? Do they constitute kinship? Are the bonds recognised by law? Are there people with whom you are not related by blood?

- Has anyone included friends in their family? What about pets? Why? Why not?
- What does the way you have structured your map mean, or the distances between family members? (emotional, geographical, relational, generational or combination?)
- What do the differences between your response and those of the other participants mean?
- What would the list and the map have looked like a month ago? What might they look like in a year from now?

#### Step 4 – 20'

Choose a representative from each group to report the group's main conclusions. During this final discussion phase, comment on the understanding of the family that has emerged (i.e. who and what makes a family; boundaries; family bonds; diversity and variety of configurations; under which circumstances family configuration can change, etc.) and offer a clear summary of the key theoretical concepts relating to family and kinship configurations.

### Supplies needed

- Ample space to divide the class into groups
- Paper and pencils for group work
- Flipchart or whiteboard

### Further reading

Levin, I. (1993). Family as Mapped Realities. *Journal of Family Issues*, 14(1), 82–91.

Levin, I., & Trost, J. (1992). Understanding the Concept of Family. *Family Relations*, 348–351.

Carsten, J. (2012), *After Kinship*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

## UNIT 2.2

# RECOGNISING BONDS

**Focus:** This session is designed to explore the relationship between the processes by which families are formed and the regulatory framework, and how this varies between countries. It highlights the different challenges and forms of discrimination that LGBT+ families and children may experience. By analysing different cases, participants will increase their awareness of the social roots of the heteronormative framework and its power in assimilating diverse family forms, and begin to understand their responsibility as professionals in tackling prejudices and stereotypes.

**Duration:** 80 minutes

### Learning goals

- Understanding family diversity as a necessary step in understanding diversity in LGBT+ families
- Providing information about different legislative approaches to LGBT+ reproductive rights across the EU
- Providing information about the legislative framework in the participants' own country with regard to LGBT+ people and the discrimination faced by LGBT+ families
- Increasing the participants' awareness of their own and their organisation's responsibility in tackling discrimination

### Description and timing

#### Step 1 – 30'

Show the participants a film that deals with the legal status and rights of LGBT+ families in their day-to-day life. Films like this can be obtained from local/national LGBT+ associations or from international organisations like ILGA Europe. A good example is the film "Right 2 Love" directed by Adaia Teruel, which is available online. Data and information about the legal framework can be provided during the discussion.

#### Step 2 – 30'

Split into small groups (5-7 people) and discuss:

- What legal and social status do LGBT+ families have in the country in which the film is set? Has it changed since the film was made, or from when the story is set?
- What options are available in those countries for LGBT+ couples who want to have children?
- What difficulties, challenges and prejudices do families encounter in the film?

- What kind of strategies could the families adopt to overcome these challenges/problems: are they mentioned in the film? Can you think of other options?
- What is the situation for LGBT+ families in your own country, and how is it different from the situation in the countries you have analysed?
- Was there anything that surprised you about the family life depicted in the film?

#### Step 3 – 20'

Whole-group discussion. Possible guide questions include:

- What is the legal situation for LGBT families in my own country?
- What are the main similarities/differences with what we saw in the film?
- How does the legal/regulatory framework affect the daily work of practitioners? Is there anything discriminatory about it?
- Are practitioners aware of all this?
- How do practitioners and the families cope with discrimination?

### Supplies needed

- Ample space to divide the class into groups
- Paper and pencils for group work
- Projector to show the film

### Further reading

ILGA EUROPE (2019) *The annual benchmarking on LGBT rights in Europe*. [ilga-europe.org/rainboweurope](https://ilga-europe.org/rainboweurope)

Fundamental Rights Agency (2014). *EU LGBT survey – European Union lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender survey*. [fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/eu-lgbt-survey-european-union-lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-survey-main](https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/eu-lgbt-survey-european-union-lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-survey-main)

## UNIT 2.3

# REPRODUCTION AND FAMILY BONDS

**Focus:** Using the group's own experiences as a starting point, this unit aims to provide the participants with tools to form a theoretical framework for understanding contemporary family and kinship, especially in relation to the key theoretical axes (structure-function, blood-responsibility etc.). In particular, this process will allow the group to delve deeper into the topic of Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ARTs), and how developments in this area have affected our understanding of family relationships, in general and for the LGBT+ population specifically.

**Duration:** 70 minutes

### Learning goals

- Family as a cultural and historical product
- ARTs and the changing idea of the family
- The plurality of LGBT+ families and the role of ARTs in their formation
- The legal situation surrounding LGBT+ (reproductive) rights at a European level

### Description and timing

#### Step 1 – 10'

Introduce the topic, asking the whole group: "Who do you consider your family to be?" Give the participants 3-4 minutes to write down their answers then encourage an open discussion among the participants, highlighting the different sorts of bonds that might connect people.

#### Step 2 – 40'

Bring together the main issues that have emerged in the discussion, highlighting the differences and grouping the contents according to different theoretical approaches. The facilitator(s) can explain how both adoption and assisted reproduction techniques challenge the classic paradigm in which blood and genetics are the basis of kinship, and how a family might be better defined by its role, in terms of care, emotion and commitment.

#### Step 3 – 20'

Show the group some "family pictures" featuring LGBT families, and ask the group to guess how they were formed. A variety of possible bonds and relationships will be brought up: age, race, gender, biological, genetic, adoptive, chosen, foster care, etc. Allow contrasting viewpoints to emerge, facilitating debate between different perspectives and encouraging participants to support their position. At the same time, provide the group with informa-

tion about ARTs and the regulatory framework surrounding this issue at both EU and national level. It may be useful to note down the different "reproductive strategies" that emerge in the discussion on a board or flipchart, and point out at the end that they are exactly the same ones used by heteronormative families.

Finally, the participants will be asked to compare the different situations found in different countries, in terms of the legal framework surrounding reproductive rights, but also in terms of levels of support and awareness in the population. Participants should be encouraged to reflect on their own ideas about family bonds and relationships, and how the legal situation in the country they work in and their personal opinions affect their professional practice.

### Supplies needed

- Ample space to divide the class into groups
- Paper and pencils for group work
- Flipchart or whiteboard
- Projector

### Further reading

Eyler, A. E; Pang, S. C. & Clark, A. (2014). LGBT Assisted Reproduction: Current Practice and Future Possibilities. *LGBT Health*, 1(3).

Leibetseder, D. & Griffin, G. (2018). Introduction: Queer and Trans Reproduction with Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART), in Europe. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 20(1), pp. 1-9.

Marvel, S; Tarasoff, L.; Epstein, R.; Green, D.C; Steele, L. & Ross, L. (2016). Listening to LGBTQ People on Assisted Human Reproduction: Access to Reproductive Material, Services, and Facilities. In *Regulating Creation: The Law, Ethics, and Policy of Assisted Human Reproduction* (Lemmens, T. Ed.). University of Toronto Press.

## UNIT 2.4

# FAMILY PRACTICES

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**Focus:** The participants are presented with images of families of various forms asked to interpret them according to their own ideas of family. The aim is to introduce the “family practice” approach in relation to different aspects of the professional encounter with the “family”.

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**Duration:** 1 hour

### Learning goals

- Introducing family theory and its relevance to LGBT+ families
- Looking at a new perspective, that of ‘family practices’
- Increasing participants’ awareness of how they conceive of and picture “the family” and the way it functions, and how this might impact their professional practice

### Description and timing

#### Step 1 – 10’

Introduce the topic by presenting the participants with a range of pictures that represent different family set-ups. All sorts of different pictures can be used for this, including examples by “artistic” photographers such as Richard Billingham, Jim Goldberg, Martin Parr, Carrie Mae Weems etc.

#### Step 2 – 30’

Split into small groups (5-7 people) and discuss:

- What issues do the ways we envision ‘the family’ raise for us? And what might this mean in terms of our professional practice?

#### Step 3 – 20’

Group discussion:

- How do we think about “family”?
- What factors are most important in deciding what a family is, who to include?
- What factors inform our idea of a well-functioning family?

### Supplies needed

- Ample space to divide the class into groups
- Paper and pencils for group work
- Flipchart or whiteboard
- Projector

### Further reading

Hicks, S. (2011). *Lesbian, gay and queer parenting: Families, intimacies, genealogies*. Cham: Springer.

Morgan, D. (2011). *Rethinking family practices*. Cham: Springer.

## SECTION 3

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# PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

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GBT+ families often present organisations and practitioners with unexpected or unfamiliar configurations. This can expose shortcomings in terms of the skills and knowledge required to recognise the families' actual experience, and appreciate how they work and what their needs are. Not only do professionals risk assimilating these families into traditional, heterosexual-headed models, they can also underestimate – or be unaware of – the prejudices that affect people in this category and even, by misunderstanding the specific nature and circumstances of the people they are dealing with, become agents of discrimination themselves.

Discrimination can be direct or indirect. Direct discrimination, for instance, might be manifested in language; indirect discrimination can emerge in factors such as the design of physical environments or in forms of institutional invisibility, such as the use of interview protocols based on a heteronormative framework or a binary model of gender identity. The activities in this section are designed to illustrate and reinforce a number of fundamental principles: that there are many ways to be a family, and that professionals need to connect with these different forms of family-making and the meanings they have in the lives of the people using their service;

### **Section 3\_ Professional Practice**

that the participants, as individual practitioners and as part of an organisation, have a responsibility to offer a welcoming, empathic and non-judgmental environment in which all family experiences are respected; that heteronormativity is often an implicit norm that negatively affects non-normative lives; that professionals' own identities influence their practice and that it is important to be aware of the role of identity in determining power dynamics. The activities should also help the participants to be more aware of their own identities and reflect on their (the identities') intersectional nature, and how they can be associated with power and privilege, in some cases, or discrimination and oppression, in others.

These learning outcomes can aid the development of "equity literacy" in professionals who work with families and help lay the groundwork for the creation of inclusive spaces, tools, language and working methods that facilitate open communication with parents and children and greater inclusion of family diversity.



## UNIT 3.1

# GENDER AND FAMILY DIVERSITY IN PRACTICE: MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS

**Focus:** This activity looks at how theoretical ideas about gender and family diversity can be translated into professional practice, with particular focus on how the relationship between professional and service user can be managed in the education and health sectors. Using role-play, it helps the participants familiarise themselves with actual situations where assumptions about gender differences and the working of the family are involved.

**Duration:** 2 hours

### Learning goals

Through this activity participants will learn to

- analyse how gender stereotypes shape conventional understandings and mainstream practices in relation to families and parenting;
- adapt/transform their professional practice to help minimise the impact of stereotypical visions of gender and family relationships;

### Description and timing

#### Step 1 – 5'

Divide the participants into groups of 5-7 people. Try to make the groups as heterogeneous as possible, mixing up the class by age, profession, gender, nationality or any other characteristic that might be relevant in your specific context. This will help stimulate discussion.

#### Step 2 – 15'

Below are three scenarios that can be used for the activity. Read them to the whole group and provide any extra information the participants might need to understand what is happening in each one.

#### **Scenario 1 – Sofia and the teachers**

Janet is a social worker. She has received a call from the local primary school: there is a girl in primary 3, Sophia, who has two fathers and the teachers are worried about her behaviour. She only hangs around with boys, and the other girls are a little scared of her because she is "too bossy" and sometimes "aggressive". She is described as behaving in a "very masculine" way. The teachers at the school think that living in a male-dominated environment

has had an impact on her gender identity development, and has also affected her social inclusion within the classroom.

Sophia's fathers, Richard and Joao, have agreed to have a meeting with her teacher and the social worker to help clarify what is going on.

Let's imagine that meeting...

#### **Scenario 2 – Martha and the doctor**

Martha is 36 years old and lives in a medium-sized town where she is an office worker at a bank. She and her partner, Sophia (39) have been thinking about starting a family for years, and now feel the time has come. Together, they searched the internet for information about the options available to them as a lesbian couple, but felt overwhelmed by all the information, much of which was contradictory. They decided to ask for an appointment with a reproductive health service they read about in an internet forum: a lesbian woman said she felt very welcomed by the doctor there who gave her information on the different options for conception. Martha phoned the clinic and arranged an appointment for 3 weeks later. She and Sophia were going to go together, but at the last minute an issue came up at Sophia's work that would prevent her from attending. They decided to keep the appointment, although Martha felt a little anxious about going by herself. She is quite shy, and would have preferred to go with her partner, but the couple did not want to risk waiting another 3 weeks for a new appointment.

#### **Scenario 3 – Marco and Emma**

Shortly after his second birthday, Marco was adopted by a gay couple, Carlo and Roberto. The family



## Unit 3.1\_ Gender & Family Diversity in Practice: Managing Relationships

recently moved to a new neighbourhood and Marco has gone into primary 3 at a local school. Carlo takes him to school in the morning and Roberto picks him up in the afternoon. Emma, a girl in his class, has asked Marco about Carlo and Roberto, and he has told her they are both his parents. Emma has never met a child with two fathers, so she is confused about it. She approaches their teacher and says, "Marco says he's got two fathers. That is impossible. Two men can't have a baby. He is a liar!"

Let's imagine the conversation between the teacher and Emma...

### Step 3 – 60'

Assign one scenario to each group and ask them to decide which members of the group will play the characters and who will be observing the scene. Give them a list of guide questions to discuss after the role-play and write them on the flipchart for the whole-group discussion.

- How do you think the non-professional(s) feel(s)?
- How do you think the professional(s) feel(s)?
- How does each person deal with the situation in practical terms? What do they do?
- What behaviour/words/situations might make things easier for each of the individuals involved?
- What behaviour/words/situations might make things harder for them?

### Step 4 – 45'

Each group reports back to the whole class. On the whiteboard, make a note of the key issues that have emerged from the individual group discussions giving particular attention to anything that was difficult to perform/discuss and anything that has been identified that would have helped the individuals in the situation. After each group has reported back, help the participants to identify common threads in the different scenarios and reflect on how gender and family stereotypes have been challenged in, and/or had an impact on, the situation.

### Supplies needed

- Flipchart and papers
- Whiteboard
- If possible, multiple rooms where the small groups can work separately

### Further reading

Golombok, S. (2015). *Modern families: Parents and children in new family forms*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press

Fundamental Rights Agency (2016) Professionally speaking: challenges to achieving equality for LGBT people, FRA, [fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2016/professional-views-lgbt-equality](http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2016/professional-views-lgbt-equality)

**Guidance and suggestions:** *The scenarios presented are to be taken as suggestions, or as a starting point for developing something more appropriate. There can be significant differences between countries in terms of access to assisted reproductive technologies and/or the way the school system operates, so it may well be necessary to adapt these scenarios to suit your specific context.*

## UNIT 3.2

# GENDER & FAMILY DIVERSITY IN PRACTICE: DEVELOPING PRACTICAL TOOLS

**Focus:** This activity can be treated as a follow-up to the previous one. It is designed to help the participants develop practical tools to promote better inclusion in specific work settings. In this case, participants are asked to reflect on how to intervene in work settings at an organisational level.

**Duration:** 2 hours

### Learning goals

Through this activity participants will learn to

- Recognise and handle different needs presented by families, children and colleagues
- Develop and implement LGBT-inclusive strategies in their workplace

### Description and timing

#### Step 1 – 5'

Divide the participants into groups of 5-7 people. Try to make the groups as heterogeneous as possible, mixing up the class by age, profession, gender, nationality or any other characteristic that might be relevant in your specific context. This will help stimulate discussion.

#### Step 2 – 15'

Below are three example scenarios that can be used for this activity. Read each scenario and the associated task to the whole group.

#### **Scenario 1 - training for health professionals**

The doctor who met with Martha feels he has handled the meeting poorly and asks the director of the clinic to organise a short course on communicating with diverse couples and families to be attended by all the doctors and nurses at the clinic.

The director agrees and asks your team to plan and implement the training.

As a group, develop ideas on:

- What is the aim of the course?
- How will it be structured?
- Who is to attend the course? In what capacity?
- Who will lead it?
- What will it cover?
- What are the expected outcomes for the clinic staff and the patients?

#### **Scenario 2 - a meeting between school staff and families**

The head teacher is worried. She has received complaints from Emma's parents and the parents of three other children in the class. To make matters worse, the local bishop has called, asking her to explain what is going on in the school. Your team has been asked to act as facilitators at a meeting between the school staff and the parents on the issue of family diversity.

As a group, develop ideas on:

- What is the aim of the sessions?
- How will they be structured?
- Who should attend?
- Who are the facilitators? Should you ask anyone else to help? Who?
- What will the sessions cover?
- What are the expected outcomes for the teachers and the children?

#### **Scenario 3 - a training course for teachers**

Following a request by Sofia's parents, the school asks your association to organise a cycle of 3 training sessions with the teachers to improve their awareness and competences with regard to gender issues.

As a group, develop ideas on:

- What is the aim of the sessions?
- How will they be structured?
- Who should attend?
- Who are the facilitators? Should you ask anyone else to help? Who?
- What will the sessions cover?
- What are the expected outcomes for the teachers and the children?
- ¿Qué resultados se esperan para el profesorado y el alumnado de la escuela?



## Unit 3.2\_ Gender & family diversity in practice: developing practical tools

### Step 3 - Group work, 45'

Assign a scenario to each group, and ask them to think about each question thoroughly and write down their answers. Ask them also to note any issues they think might cause problems during the encounter.

### Step 4 – 60'

Bring the whole class back together ask each group to present their work. Note down the main points made by each group on the whiteboard. After each group has finished, allow the others to offer comments and feedback. Help the participants to identify similarities and differences between the three cases, to highlight the pros and cons of the chosen strategies and relate the fictional scenarios to their actual professional contexts.

### Supplies needed

- Flipchart and papers
- Whiteboard
- If possible, multiple rooms where the small groups can work separately

### Further reading

Goldberg A.E. and Allen K.R. (2013), *LGBT-parent families. Innovation in Research and Implication for Practice*, New York, Springer.

**Guidance and suggestions:** As with the previous activity, the scenarios presented above should be treated as suggestions or examples that can be modified as necessary to fit the legal and cultural context you are working in.

## UNIT 3.3

# CONVERSATIONS ABOUT IDENTITY, OPPRESSION, ALLIES

**Focus:** This dialogue-focused activity is designed to prompt participants to talk about themselves, using their own experiences as a starting point for exploring the intersectionality of identity, the connections between identity, power and oppression, and what it means to be an “ally”.

**Duration:** 1 hour

### Learning goals

Through this activity, participants will learn to:

- Talk about their identities and how these are connected with power and privilege
- Be aware of the emotions, thoughts and strategies that come into play when they are faced with examples of oppression
- Be able to recognise and enact “ally” behaviour

### Description and timing

#### Step 1 – 5’

The participants stand in a circle and the instructor gives them alternating numbers, one and two. The number twos are invited to take one step towards the centre of the circle, to make an inner circle.

Each number 1 stands in front of a number 2.

The instructor announces that one member of each pair will speak for a short time (one minute) in response to a prompt while the other person listens, before swapping roles.

This activity involves 3 prompts, each of which will be discussed by a different set of pairs: after each exchange, the inner circle takes a step to the right so that each participant is paired with a new partner. Give the pairs the following instructions:

- To the speakers: speak for the entire minute, and try to express yourself as you are right now, drawing on your own lived experience. Try to avoid anything that feels rehearsed or prescribed, the things you always say.
- To the listeners: do not interrupt, do not comment. Listen intently in your own way.

#### Step 2 – 5’

First prompt:

*Share with your partner all the words that you feel describe you and your identity. We are looking for words that express fundamental aspects of your person and identity, “big” words. So even though it is interesting to know that you are a foodie or something of a traveller, what we are interested in here are the parts of your identity that you have to negotiate in your everyday encounter with the world around you, that give you access to power and privilege or expose you to marginalisation and oppression. They might relate to race, class, gender, family status, sexual orientation, language, citizenship status, ability, body shape and so on. Try to tell your partner all the labels and examples of language you use to talk about these aspects. If you run out of words before the minute is up, talk about the words you have already mentioned, where they come from, whether you like them, how you use them, what words other people use to talk about you.*

Once the first partner has spoken, the other person takes their turn to speak for a minute. Advise them to try not to mirror, or relate or react to, the first partner’s account, but speak from personal experience. When both partners in each pairing have taken their turns to speak and listen, ask the participants to reflect, in silence, on what has happened.

Useful guide questions might be:

- How did it feel like to name these identities and to talk about them?
- How did it feel to listen to someone else’s identities?
- Is what your partner said different from what you would have expected them to say?



## Unit 3.3 Conversations about identity, oppression, allies

Finally, invite the participants to thank their partner, then ask the people in the inner circle to take one step to the right so that they form a new pairing with the person in front of them

### Step 3 – 5'

Prompt:

*Talk for a minute about a time then you witnessed another person being oppressed, discriminated against, dehumanised, marginalised or othered in some way. It could be something that happened a long time ago or as recently as today, a major incident or a small moment.*

As with the previous step, after both partners in each pairing have spoken for a minute, give them a few moments to reflect in silence, prompting them with questions such as:

- did you, or do you, sense a physical reaction to the episode?
- What emotions came to the surface?
- Why is this story significant? Where are you in the story?
- How do you fit into the power dynamics?

### Step 4 – 5'

Prompt:

*Talk for one minute about a time when you acted as an ally. Ask the group what "ally" means, if necessary explaining that while – in general terms – an ally is someone who offers help and support, the word can be used in a social justice context to mean to*

*someone with a privileged identity who adopts and affirms a position of solidarity with a targeted or marginalised group. It should be clear that the ally, in this sense, is not part of the target group.*

These ideas can be useful in understanding dynamics of power and privilege.

Reflection: encourage the participants to be aware of their positionality, using questions such as:

- Where are you in that story?
- Which of your identities are most evident?

### Step 5 – 40'

Ask the group to return to their seats, and begin the discussion

- What happened in this activity?
- Where is the learning?
- Did you feel uncomfortable about any of it?
- What did it bring up?
- What didn't come up?
- How literate are we when it comes to talking about power and privilege?
- About our own experience of white privilege/ male privilege/straight privilege and so on?
- How can people in a position of privilege express or offer support for marginalised groups without being patronising or talking over them?

### Supplies needed

- Flipchart and papers
- Whiteboard

**Guidance and suggestions:** This activity is meant for groups in which the participants all feel fairly safe and comfortable with one another. It is important to be attentive to the participants' feelings during the course of the session.

When talking about privileged identities, take care to avoid encouraging the participants to feel ashamed or guilty about their own identities. Make it clear that this is not the point of the exercise; rather, it is about increasing awareness and promoting equality and freedom for everyone.

For the one-minute monologues, the instructor should keep track of the time and alert the participants when there are 10 seconds left.

The idea is not for the participants to share their reflections after both partners have spoken for a minute. Rather, they are asked to reflect in silence as a way of developing their own awareness.

## UNIT 3.4

# BODIES AND POWER

**Focus:** This activity uses a physical movement activity inspired by theatre exercises to help participants reflect on questions of power dynamics, and how they involve both our identities and the roles we play.

**Duration:** 20 minutes

### Learning goals

Through this activity, participants will:

- become aware of their own feelings, both when exercising power over other people, and when others have power over them
- understand how their own identities and the identities of other people form part of the power dynamic
- understand the relationship between power and responsibility

### Description and timing

#### Introduction - 3'

The instructor(s) and participants stand in a circle in an empty room or an outdoor space. The instructor and a volunteer participant demonstrate the activity, which will be performed in pairs.

#### Step 1 – Moving - 7'

Get the participants into pairs. Using one hand, though without actually making contact, one member of the pair guides the movements of their partner: the partner should follow the movement of the hand with their head, following it up, down and around and so on so that their head is always the same distance from the hand.

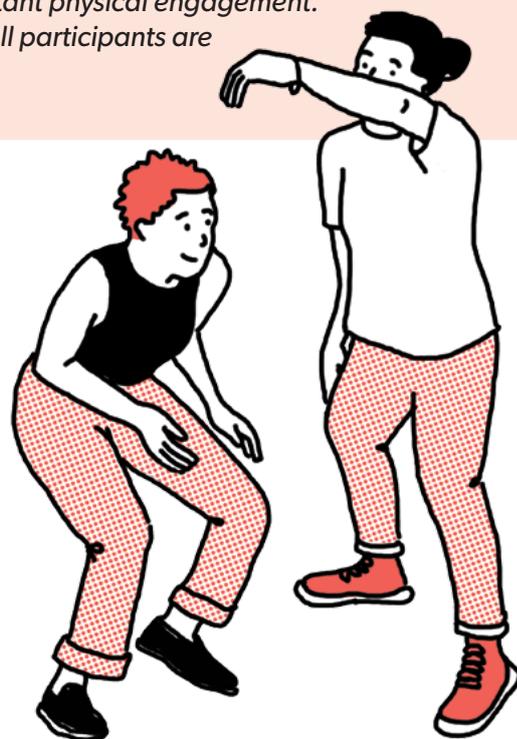
After a couple of minutes, the partners swap roles. After another two minutes, tell the pairs that they are to lead/follow each other at the same time.

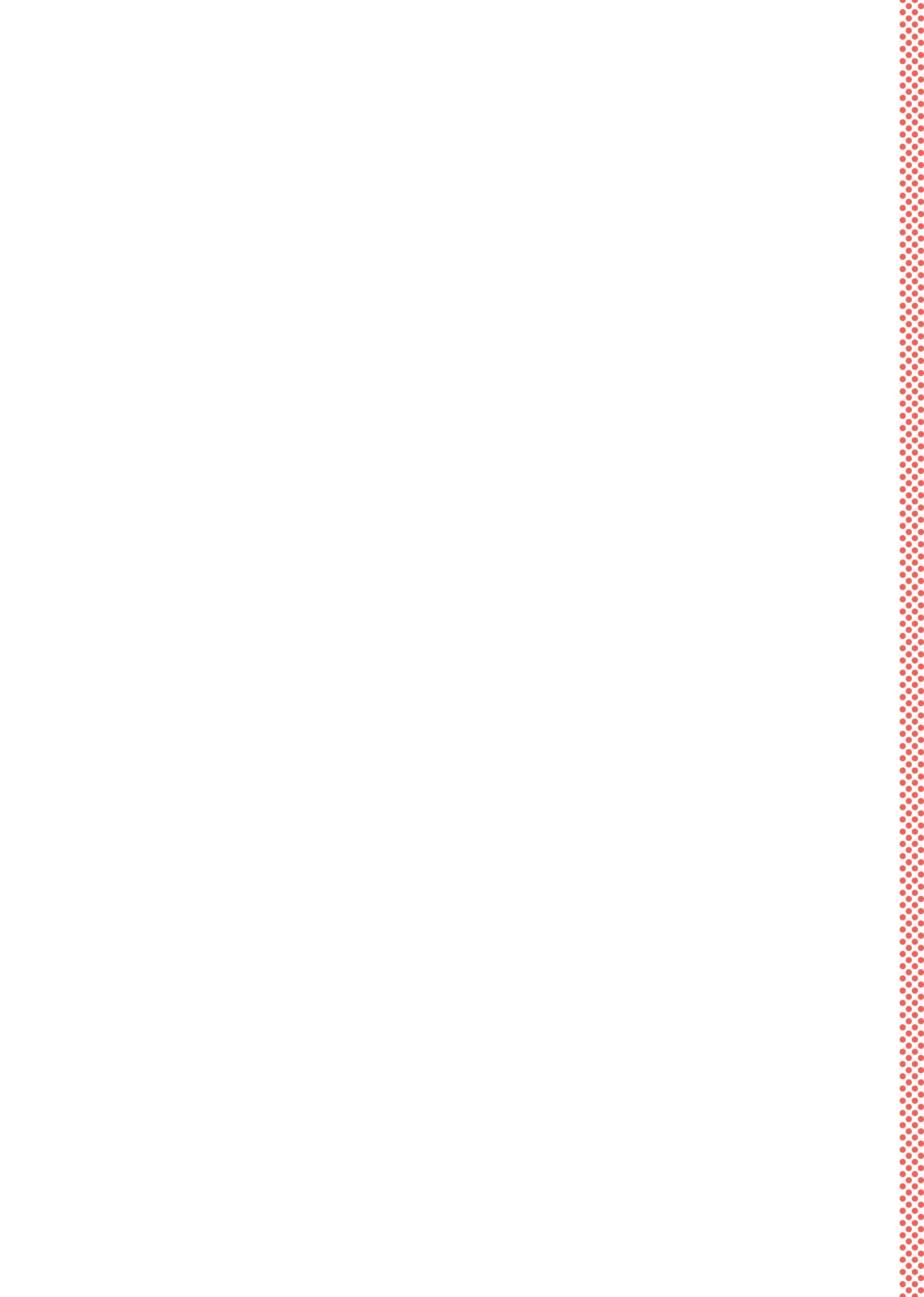
#### Step 2 - Debriefing - 10'

The participants are invited to discuss their experience of the exercise. The instructor can facilitate the discussion using questions such as:

- What was it like to take the lead? What did you focus on, while leading?
- How did it feel to be led?
- What was the most difficult part, and why?
- How did identity come into play? (e.g., how did it feel as a black woman to be made to go down on your knees by a white woman)?

**Advices for implementation:** This activity normally involves constant physical engagement. It is hoped that it is open to everyone, but care should be taken that all participants are able to take part without feeling unsafe or vulnerable.





## UNIT 3.5

# TAKE A STEP FORWARD

**Focus:** This activity focuses on the question of inequality and discrimination and helps participants to understand that differences in people's circumstances are often beyond their control. This exercise is taken from the Council of Europe publication "Compass: Manual for Human Rights Education with Young people" though it has been modified slightly for use in the "Doing Rights" project. The Manual has been translated into a number of European languages and you can find more information about it, and the exercise, here: [coe.int/en/web/compass/take-a-step-forward](http://coe.int/en/web/compass/take-a-step-forward)

**Duration:** 1.10 hour

### Learning goals

This activity is designed to increase the participants' awareness in relation to inequality of opportunity as well as developing their capacity for imagination, critical thinking and empathy with regard to people who are less fortunate than they are.

It is also intended to undermine the prejudices that many people hold in relation to other, "different" groups and, depending on the level of awareness in the group, may be suitable for use at an earlier stage.

### Description and timing

#### Step 1 – 10'

Establish an atmosphere of calm, asking first that the participants stand in silence for a moment. Next, ask each participant to take a role card from a hat or container.

Tell them to keep the description on the card to themselves and not to show it to anyone else. Invite them to sit (preferably on the floor) and carefully read what is on their role card.

Now tell them they should take a moment to "get into their roles". To help with this, read out a few of the following questions, pausing after each one to give the participants time to think and build up a picture of the character and their lives:

- What was your childhood like? What sort of house did you live in? What kind of games did you play? What sort of work did your parents do?
- What is your everyday life like now? Where do you socialise? What do you do in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening?

- What sort of lifestyle do you have? Where do you live? How much money do you earn each month?
- What do you do in your free time? What you do in your holidays?
- What are your hopes, and your fears?

Below are some roles you can use. It is probably best to treat them as suggestions that can be adapted to country-specific circumstances and cultures.

- You are 24-year-old girl who was brought up by two mothers. One of them still doesn't have parental rights because in your country there is no recognition of same-sex parenting.
- You are 20-year-old gay man who lives with his parents. Nobody knows about your sexual orientation.
- You are a transwoman who is undergoing gender transition. You have a wife and together you have 2 children.
- You are an unemployed single mother.
- You are the daughter of the local bank manager. You study economics at university.
- You are an Arab Muslim girl living with your parents who are both devoutly religious.
- You are a 17-year-old Roma girl who didn't finish primary school.
- You are a middle-aged sex worker who has HIV.
- You are the daughter of the American ambassador to the country where you are now living.
- You are the owner of a successful import-export company.
- You are a retired worker who used to be employed in a shoe factory.
- You are the girlfriend of a young artist who is addicted to heroin.
- You are a 22-year-old lesbian.
- You are a fashion model of African origin.



## Unit 3.5\_Take a Step Forward

### Step 2 – 20'

This part of the activity requires a big enough space for the participants to stand on a line and take a number of long steps forward. Once the participants have familiarised themselves with their roles, ask them to line up beside each other (like on a starting line). Remind them that they are not to give away anything about their "identity". Tell them that you are going to read out a number of statements. Every time that they feel the circumstances described apply to their character, they should take a step forward. Pause between each statement to give the participants time to look around and take note of their position relative to the others. At the end, tell them to take note of their final positions. Then give them a couple of minutes to "get out of character" before debriefing.

Here are some suggested statements, but feel free to adapt them or add new ones:

- You can inherit from your both parents without any obstacles.
- You can you can get married to your partner.
- You feel comfortable and safe with your partner in public.
- You feel accepted and valued by your religious community, and can participate fully in it.
- You are not afraid of being harassed or attacked in the streets, or in the media.
- You have never had to face genuine financial difficulty.
- You are not afraid of being stopped by the police.
- You know where to turn for advice and help if you need it.

- You have never felt discriminated against because of your origins.
- You have access to adequate social and medical care for your needs.
- You are not afraid for your children's future.
- You can fall in love with the person of your choice.

### Step 3 – 40'

Start by asking participants about how the activity went, and how they feel about it. Go on to talk about the issues the activity raised and what the participants feel they learned from it.

- How did people feel stepping forward – or not?
- For those who stepped forward a lot, at what point did they begin to notice that others were not moving as fast as they were?
- Did anyone feel that there were moments when their basic human rights were being ignored?
- Can people guess each other's roles? (Let people reveal their roles during this part of the discussion)
- How easy or difficult was it to play the various roles? How did they form a picture of the person they were playing?
- Does the exercise mirror society in some way?
- Which human rights are at stake for each of the roles? Could anyone say that their human rights were not being respected or were denied?
- What first steps could be taken to address the inequalities in society?

### Supplies needed

- Flipchart and papers
- Whiteboard

**Guidance and suggestions:** *If you do this activity outdoors, make sure that the participants can hear you, especially if you are doing it with a large group! Some participants may say that they don't know very much about the life of the person they have to role-play. Tell them this does not matter especially, and that they should use their imagination and to do their best.*

- *The power of this activity lies in actually seeing the increasing distance between the participants.*
- *To increase the impact, adjust the roles so that they are more relevant to the participants' own lives. As you do so, be sure to adapt the roles so that only a few people can step forward for each statement (i.e. the statement applies to their character).*
- *During the debriefing, explore how the participants came by any knowledge or assumptions about the character they were playing. Did they come from personal experience or from other sources of information (news, books, and jokes?) Are they sure the information and the ideas they have about their character are reliable?*

## UNIT 3.6

# THE PRIVILEGE PIE

**Focus:** This activity is focused on identity and privilege, and the ways they are connected, in the context of a specific society.

**Duration:** 1h 15'

### Learning goals

This activity is designed to help the participants identify which aspects of their life and person are associated with power and privilege in the society in which they live and which are associated with marginalisation and oppression.

In this way, the participants are helped to become more aware of the ways privilege is at work in their everyday lives.

### Description and timing

#### Step 1 – Drawing the pie, 10'

Draw a big circle on board and split it into "slices" using lines radiating out from the centre, then instruct the participants to draw the same circle on their notebook/paper. This is the "pie".

The instructor asks the group to suggest ways through which people receive power and privilege in society. Participants might mention words like gender, class/money, education, race, ethnicity, passport, citizenship, family structure, language, beauty, ability, religion, profession, age...

#### Step 2 – Completing the pies, 15'

Ask the participants to complete their own pies by writing down any areas of life or aspects of a person's identity that they feel are significant in terms of power and privilege in their society. Participants can then compare their own pie with a partner's, before working with the group as a whole to complete the pie on the board, using the contents of the individual pies.

Ask the participants to colour in any "slices" that represent areas in which they, themselves, enjoy power or privilege.

#### Step 3 – Discussion in pairs, 10'

With the participants still in pairs, ask them to discuss their own privilege pies using the following guide questions:

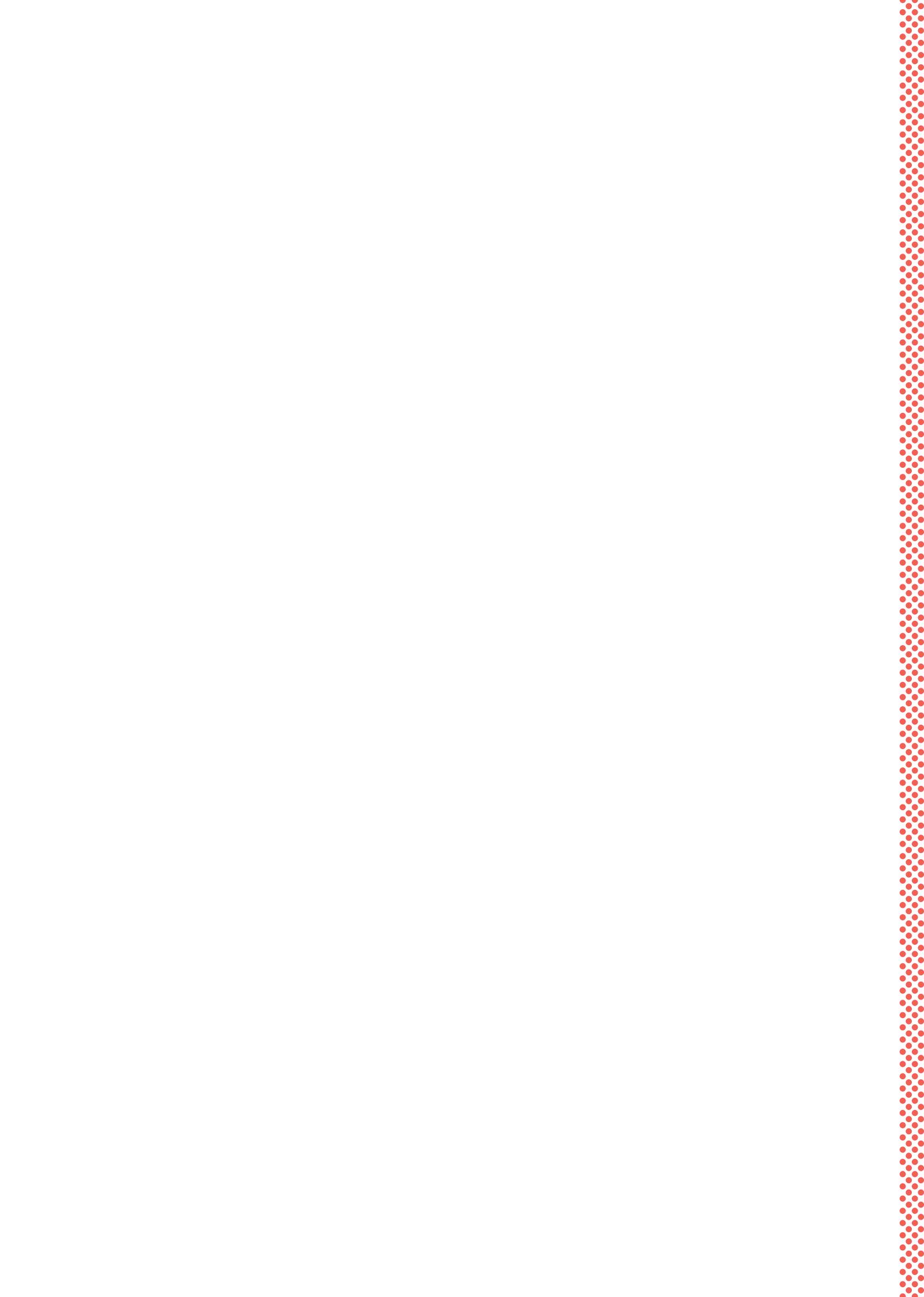
- Can you identify "identities" that put you in a position of power?
- Give examples of how these forms of privilege – white privilege, cis privilege, straight privilege, male privilege etc. – are manifested in your life.

#### Step 4 – 40'

Guide a discussion on the exercise, using the following questions as a starting point:

- What issues did the process of making the pies bring up? What insights or "aha! moments" did you have?

**Guidance and suggestions:** As with previous activities, when talking about privileged identities, take care to avoid encouraging the participants to feel ashamed or guilty about their own identities. Make it clear that this is not the point of the exercise; rather, it is about increasing awareness and promoting equality and freedom for everyone.



## UNIT 3.7

# FOUR CORNERS ACTIVITY

**Focus:** This activity is adapted from the Welcoming Schools curriculum, which is designed for groups of children between the ages of 8 and 11. It promotes awareness and discussion about how we react in the face of discriminatory behaviours and bullying, and why. It is also a useful training exercise for use with adults, especially professionals who work with children.

**Duration:** 55 minutes

### Learning goals

Participants will:

- Become more aware of how they respond in the face of injustice and oppression
- Become more aware of the group dynamics that play a role in “ally” and “bystander” forms of behaviour
- Learn how to talk to children about dealing with bullying, harassment, and name calling

### Description and timing

#### Step 1 – Introduction, 5

Ask the participants to imagine themselves as their 10-year-old self and to respond during the exercise as that child, rather than as the adults they actually are. Explain that in this activity they will be presented with situations in which they have to decide, in the moment, how to react to seeing someone being teased or bullied. For each situation, the participants have to choose their response from the following four choices, which are written on sheets of paper or placards and placed in the four corners of the room.

- Walk away
- Intervene personally
- Talk to the perpetrator in private
- Seek help from an adult or someone older

#### Step 2 – Presenting scenarios, 5'

The instructor presents 3 scenarios and invites the participants to move to the choice that best represents their position.

The scenarios cover a range of different issues (you can find a complete list here:

[assets2.hrc.org/welcoming-schools/documents/WS\\_Lesson\\_Ally\\_or\\_Bystander.pdf](https://assets2.hrc.org/welcoming-schools/documents/WS_Lesson_Ally_or_Bystander.pdf)).

Here are a few examples relating to gender and family.

#### *Gender expression/Gender identity*

- When you are with a group of friends, one of them makes fun of a younger student because of the way they dress
- One of your friends keeps saying to other boys, “hey, stop acting like a girl” or to other girls, “stop acting like a boy”
- A friend in your class teases a younger boy for having a doll or a girl for playing with a car
- A student in your class keeps asking a new student if they are a boy or a girl.

#### *Who you love/families*

- A new kid at school calls your friend “gay/lesbian.”
- A group of students your age keeps saying “that’s gay” to mean they don’t like something.
- A group of students your age keeps saying “that’s gay” to mean they don’t like something, and you know that your friend’s dads are gay.
- Your classmate has two mums, and you hear a child ask them which one is their real mum.

#### Step 3 – 20'

When the participants have made their choice for each prompt, invite the group that has formed at each corner to discuss, between themselves, the reasons for their decision.

After the members of each group have talked among themselves, invite a couple of participants from different corners to say why they chose that option. You might want to ask them for an example of what they could say to the person being teased or bullied, and what they could say to the perpetrator(s).



## Unit 3.7\_Four Corners Activity

### Step 4 – 25'

After all the scenarios have been presented, facilitate further discussion using open-ended questions, such as:

- Did you respond differently to the different scenarios?
- What are some of the reasons you chose one corner versus another?
- When were you more likely to ignore the situation? Why?
- Would you respond in some other way that was not represented by one of the four corners?
- What does it mean to be a bystander? What does it mean to be an ally? What are the advantages or risks of being a bystander/an ally when you are 10?

### Further reading

Useful materials can be found in the teaching resources section of the Welcoming Schools Curriculum website, and in the book by L. Derman-Sparks and L. Olsen-Edwards (2012), *Anti-bias Education for our Children and Ourselves*, New York: NAEYC.

## UNIT 3.8

# NETWORKING WITH LGBT+ NGOS AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS

**Focus:** LGBT NGOs can be an invaluable ally for professionals working with LGBT+ people and families, in the sense that they offer both a resource for increasing the professionals' own knowledge base, and a network to which professionals can turn for a range of different forms of expertise and experience. LGBT+ families are no different from other families insofar as they present a multi-layered selection of needs and experiences that cannot always be addressed effectively by a single professional. The purpose of this activity is to enhance the participants' ability in networking with LGBT NGOs and other professionals to address the needs of LGBT+ families.

**Duration:** 1.5 h

### Learning goals

Through this activity participants will learn to

- identify the NGOs or experts who can best compensate for gaps in their own knowledge and/or provide practical support;
- build effective relationships with both the LGBT community and professionals in different fields
- obtain support from colleagues and NGOs so that they themselves (i.e. the participants) can address the needs of their service users

### Description and timing

#### Step 1 – 15'

Begin the activity with a short introduction to the LGBT+ NGOs in your country, identifying the most prominent organisations, their main areas of expertise and the issues they are most concerned with. Although the participants presumably have some knowledge about LGBT+ organisations, it is important not to take for granted that they are all equally familiar with the LGBT+ community. If possible, invite representatives from one or more NGOs.

#### Step 2 – Introducing the scenario – 5'

Divide the class into teams of 4-6 people. Take care to make them as heterogeneous as possible, particularly in terms of professional roles/fields of expertise. Read the following scenario to the groups.

#### *Anne, Mary and their child*

Anne is a cis woman and is in a stable relationship with Mary who is a trans woman. They are both in their 30s and live in your town. They have a 7-year-old, gender fluid child who is going through a hard time at school due to LGBTI-phobic bullying by some of their classmates. Anne and Mary are at a loss about how to support their child as they question their assigned gender, or how to ensure they are fully included at school. You are uncertain, too, because it's the first time you have encountered a trans family and you don't know how to address their needs. How would you support Anne and Mary?

#### Step 3 – Group Work, 45'

Ask each group to think particularly about the potential benefits of networking as a way of finding effective strategies to support Anne, Mary and their child.

First, ask them to identify what sorts of skills and resources they need to address the situation and which of these they are currently lacking.

Second, ask them to identify an NGO (at national and/or European level) that they think can help them, find its website, Facebook page or another social media profile and see if it contains or suggests any resources that they think might be helpful (materials, professional help, education and training etc.).

Finally, ask them to write an email to the chosen NGO asking for advice and support. Remind them that they can also create networks with professionals who work in different fields and in different countries.



## Unit 3.8\_Networking with LGBT+ NGOs and other professionals

Watch out for instances in which the team is effectively attempting to pass the problem on to another service or NGO, rather than attempting to deal with it themselves. If you do notice this tendency in any of the groups, you may wish to ask guide questions such as:

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of sending the client to another service/NGO?
- Is there a strategy that will help you learn what to do in the future?
- How can you make use of the NGO to support your own efforts?

### Step 4 – Debriefing, 30'

Bring the whole group back together and ask each team to report on the strategies and solutions they adopted to address and resolve the family's needs. Next, ask each group to explain which competences/knowledge they decided they were lacking, and summarise the email they wrote to the NGO. Ask them to reflect on their reasons for choosing a specific NGO and how they ultimately arrived at their solution.

- Can they think of other ways to handle the situation that would help them to build a network? What are the benefits of a networking approach when working towards the inclusion of LGBT+ families?
- Would they benefit from inviting a representative of a relevant NGO to visit their organisation, or go on a fact-finding visit themselves?

### Supplies needed

- Flipchart and papers
- Whiteboard
- If possible, multiple rooms where the small groups can work separately

### Further reading

The following resources may be useful in designing this activity:

ILGA - EUROPE [ilga-europe.org](http://ilga-europe.org)

RAINBOW CITIES NETWORK [rainbowcities.com](http://rainbowcities.com)

NELFA – Network of European LGBTIQ\* Families Associations [nelfa.org](http://nelfa.org)

Thoreson, R. R. (2014). Transnational LGBT activism: Working for sexual rights worldwide. University of Minnesota Press.

**Guidance and suggestions:** *Feel free to adapt or change the case study to make it more effective for your context, taking care to ensure you end up with a multi-layered scenario that requires the participants to use networking strategies to deal with it effectively.*

*To complement this activity, you might consider inviting an activist from an LGBT+ NGO to attend the session and talk about their work and the ways they can assist professionals working with LGBT+ people and families. It could even be conceived as a form of “networking in practice”, with the NGO representative and the training participants engaging in a mutual exchange of questions, information and experiences.*

*There are a number of standard questions that may be useful in facilitating this dialogue – e.g. What do you do? Who do you work for? Can you give examples of best practice that you find particularly useful in your work? What would your advice be in such and such a situation? – but there should also be room for new questions.*

*Encounters like this are not only useful because they provide the training participants with a direct account of how the NGO works; they also offer representatives from the NGOs themselves an insight into what professionals working in the field know and don't know.*

## SECTION 4

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# EVALUATION

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Any programme for training professionals to develop inclusive practices for work with LGBT+ families will be required to operate a number of different levels. First, it has to reflect the latest thinking on a range of issues, from the various configurations that LGBT+ headed families can adopt, how they function and what their needs are, to the legislative framework that governs major aspects of their lives, such as the legal status of their familial bonds. Given that we all live in a world in which we are immersed in heteronormative

contexts – in which heterosexuality is held explicitly or implicitly to represent the “standard” experience – providing professionals with this sort of information is of primary importance. Despite such efforts, the all-pervading nature of social norms makes it all but impossible to avoid prejudice and stereotypes entirely. This raises the need for forms of intervention that are more focused on processes than “information”, a second layer of training whereby the implicit knowledge possessed by the practitioners is made explicit. With a view to achieving this,

## Section 4\_Evaluation

this training programme is designed to promote experiential forms of learning, with activities that encourage self-reflection and contribute to self-awareness by requiring the participants to consider, share and challenge their own and others' attitudes. The multi-layered nature of the intervention is inevitably reflected in the evaluation process. Questionnaires are used to assess the participants' knowledge respectively at the beginning and at the end of the process,

and can also serve to elicit feedback about the way the course is organised and delivered. Assessing levels of experiential learning, however, requires different tools that are not necessarily suitable for use at the start and end of the course. In this curriculum, for instance, we have treated evaluation and the associated outcomes as an integral part of the training process itself, designing the assessment activities so that they are woven throughout the programme.



## UNIT 4.1

# QUESTIONNAIRES

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**Focus:** The aim of this activity is to evaluate the efficacy of the training programme in terms of knowledge acquisition, and elicit feedback on the design and delivery of the activities. At the same time, it serves as a self-evaluation tool for the participants, helping them to appreciate how their knowledge of the issues covered has improved.

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**Duration:** 30 minutes

### Learning goals

- Evaluating the efficacy of the training programme
- Assessing knowledge acquisition

### Description and timing

#### Step 1 – 10'

During the first session, before the group has begun to engage with any of the topics or issues covered in the course, the instructors should issue the participants with a questionnaire (paper or on-line) featuring a range of questions relating to the course content. The purpose of this, as should be explained to the participants, is to assess their starting level knowledge.

### Between-session tasks

After collecting and analysing the questionnaires, the instructors give the participants feedback on their initial level of knowledge.

#### Step 2 – 20'

During the last session, the instructors should issue participants with the same questionnaire (paper or on-line) that they used in the first session. Once the participants have completed the questionnaire for the second time, they are provided with the correct answers so they can assess their own progress.

### Supplies needed

Questionnaires

**Guidance and suggestions:** *The organisers may wish to add additional items relating to the organisation of the course to the questionnaires used in "Step 2". However, care should be taken to ensure that the questionnaires can still be completed in 10 minutes or less.*

## UNIT 4.2

# MY TAKEAWAY

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**Focus:** This activity can be included at the end of each session. It has multiple aims: increasing engagement with the work of the group; encouraging each participant to contribute to establishing the ultimate goals of the programme; producing a shared assessment of the training process as a whole, including potential weaknesses. It is also intended as an extra moment of self-reflectivity, in which the participant is asked to focus on potential shifts in their position and attitudes, and reframe their understanding of family and LGBT+ issues on both a personal and a professional level.

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**Duration:** 40 minutes

### Learning goals

- Evaluating experiential learning processes
- Making explicit any forms of implicit knowledge that may be affecting the participant's professional practice, whether positively or negatively
- Understanding that there are techniques and tools for turning implicit knowledge into explicit knowledge
- Helping the participants to appreciate that they are engaged in a process of change that will continue beyond the end of the training programme

### Description and timing

#### Step 1 – 10'

At the end of each session, each participant is asked to write down on a piece of paper, *in one word, what I am taking away from this session*, explaining their choice of word and how it is significant.

The answers are collected together in a box. The instructor will gather all the words (with the accompanying comments and explanations), and study them to identify the most prominent and significant themes. The responses will tend to coalesce around a group of key issues that relate to the content of the session. The process is designed to capture a combination of emotional responses and more tangible takeaways. These can both take the form of single words.

#### Step 2 – 30'

Before the end of the course, the words, sentiments and themes that have emerged from the responses should be shared with the participants. They should be understood as a sort of "map" of the programme as a whole. The instructors should guide the group in discussing what the words and issues mean. What can they tell us about the learning process that has taken place? The discussion should also consider to what extent expectations about the training programme were reflected in the actual learning process, as well as focusing on any shifts in the participants' attitudes, feelings and awareness. It is important that individual words are also discussed, as these can often reflect complex and ambiguous/contradictory responses.

These are the main themes that emerged from your responses, and may be understood as reflecting how we really frame the topics we covered.

- How do you feel about this "picture" of the group? Do you identify with it?
- Is there anything you would add or leave out?
- Is something still missing?
- When you think about how you responded originally, has anything changed?
- Has there been any shift in your perspective in relation to LGBT+ issues and your own professional practice?
- Do you feel your attitudes have changed on a more general level?

Starting with this last point, the instructors should offer a brief recap of the key elements of the learning process and reframe the topic using the language generated by the participants.

### Supplies needed

- Flipboard

This booklet has been produced by six institutions coming from three different European countries. All institutions deal in their practice with LGBT+ families, either by doing research or by providing help.

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