

APPENDIX III:

Testimonials and feedback on the training

A selection of comments from attendees of whole-day training programmes and those who have carried out the Diversity Assessments and received their report and action plan.

General comments

From Dr Helen Owen-Hughes, Educational Psychologist, Durham County Council

Having Dr M'gadzah work with our service was both a valuable and powerful experience. The full-day training on race, diversity and equality introduced us to helpful questioning tools and techniques, scripts and frameworks, many of which I continue to draw on both in both my professional and personal life. More than practical tools, though, the necessary confronting aspects of the training has left a lasting impression – the practice of looking inwards, exploring what forms our own identity, questioning and challenging our own prejudices and biases, perspective-taking, should be a core feature of every organisation (and individual!). I would encourage anyone who has the chance to listen to, or spend time with, Dr M'gadzah to do so!

From Mrs Joni Stidwell, Team Leader and Advisory Teacher for Equalities Education team

I attended a virtual professional development day led by Dr M'gadzah in September 2021. This session was aimed at Durham County Council staff working mainly within the SEND and Inclusion service, mainly consisting of Advisory Teachers and Educational Psychologists. Shungu's session was very powerful and thought-provoking. It encouraged each individual within the group to reflect on their own thoughts, feelings and perspectives as well as encouraging a unity within the group of how we can move society forward within our local area and through our own work. I particularly appreciated the six stages which gave some clarity to the direction and pathway we need to follow as individuals as well as a community. Shungu was able to use video clips and role-play to encourage active discussion and interaction throughout and the day whizzed by. As a member of staff who delivers training regularly myself, I can appreciate how challenging it is to try and initiate challenging thoughts, conversations and discussions and audience

interaction through the medium of a screen, without the intimacy of face-to-face contact. Shungu managed to succeed and her session is something we have referred to and reflected upon within our team a number of times since.

Miscellaneous comments

Thank you so much Shungu and Shirley for two fabulous, enjoyable, challenging and energizing days.

Uncomfortable and challenging, but excellent!

I loved the training and the framework.

Terrific!

I have a framework to use when having conversations and will approach #drshunguconversationsonrace in a different way.

I can't stop thinking about yesterday's brilliant training session with Dr M'gadzah @Inclusionpsychs!

I haven't felt this excited or passionate about a piece of CPD for some time.

How useful did you find the training?

I found the training extremely useful because it added to my understanding of racism and improved my ability to deal with racism.

I think by the nature of the sessions, the first day provided more learning around understanding racism, whereas the follow-up training day was much more focused on supporting us to put our learning into practice.

Pauseful listening and SCARF model were very helpful in terms of offering an alternative/softer approach to 'challenging' and one that might be more fruitful.

I ended the day much more optimistic about us (self and team) actually doing something as a result of this training.

It was really helpful to see how Shungu helps people unpick things they say and experiences they mention, in a way that facilitates reflection rather than bring up defensiveness – thank you.

Discussing the history of racism and biases generally really helped with my understanding of racism.

One of the most interesting and useful courses I've attended in years!

Very useful – lots to think about and the Six Stages was a useful framework.

The experiential nature of the training lent itself very well to the subject and to enabling us to get the most out of the day and personalise the content.

Fantastic delivery – lots of discussion and food for thought.

It was also useful to have time to reflect on my own experiences and realise how much of my early life was spent in white-only environments, and what experiences since then have led to me being where I am today.

The 'caves of privilege' was a useful concept for me, alongside the Six Stages model of understanding and dealing with racism.

Also highlighted areas that I want to revisit (e.g. theories around group think; negative automatic thoughts), further reading (e.g. Noughts & Crosses) and further study (strength-based resilience).

Did the training add to how you might deal with racism?

The framework is extremely helpful and has helped me to reflect on how I have previously engaged in discussions around race, and things to consider for the future, not only on a professional level but on a personal level.

The pre-reading (history of racism) was especially helpful.

Discussions on stereotypes, biases and negative automatic thoughts were particularly helpful in exploring this further, as well as the pre-course reading. Also, the metaphor of the cave is a very helpful way of conceptualizing racism and prejudice and how/when people move deeper into their cave.

The Six Stages gives a very helpful framework and the role-play activity provided an alternative approach to my more usual response of direct challenge and confrontation, that I can see as being far more effective.

Small groups and then whole-group discussions were helpful, hearing others' suggestions, for example how to challenge stereotypes in a 'genuine spirit of psychological curiosity'. The key will be on how I implement this learning – and this is something that now depends on me, on my repeatedly doing it and learning from and reflecting on how I deal with racism each time I have to do this.

I think it definitely has but I will/would still be anxious about doing so.

I would like to know more about planning conversations.

Did the training meet your expectations?

Yes, I had hoped for a space for further reflection, to come away with an action plan (personal and team) for which I think we now have a good foundation, and to feel a little more empowered to take on the challenge of racial injustice, and feel I now have some tools that will help.

The follow up was described as invaluable in making some of our hopes and aspirations in the area of inclusion and diversity much more practical with a clear picture of how we will move forward as a team.

I was feeling somewhat discouraged concerning taking this forward as a team, as we seemed a few weeks ago to have lost our motivation, but today helped me to see that there is a level of commitment within the team to think about racism and what we can do to challenge racial injustice.

I think the day was perfectly pitched to support our goal of setting a clearer plan and way forward.

I was particularly expecting discussion around service delivery and how this links to racism and was pleased with the opportunity to explore this.

Definitely! It provided an opportunity to discuss a challenging subject as a group with honesty and openness.

Yes – one of my main expectations/hopes was that I would go away with something to do that I could review on day two, in a sort of action research way and this hope was fulfilled.

I also hoped that there would be a framework that would help us to consider racism and our response to racism as a team, which we were also able to do.

I wasn't expecting the training to be so reflective so yes, definitely.

It was no other training I've been on, I felt that you both (quickly) created a safe space to discuss some issues that we often shy away from. I also liked how you encouraged a group of educational psychologists to actively listen rather than ask clarifying questions etc. – powerful exercise.

It was more nuanced than I expected (in a good way).

I felt I had a voice to a greater extent than I expected (as a white person).

I possibly would have liked to understand/discuss the history of racism to a greater extent. The psychological concepts and models – added, precious stimuli and framework for thinking.

Role-play – useful to have something to apply the framework too and reflect on what was done and the impact of this.

I was particularly expecting discussion around service delivery and how this links to racism and was pleased with the opportunity to explore this.

What did you enjoy most about the day?

Shungu and Shirley's warmth as trainers; opportunities for reflection with others; being able to start creating an action plan and feeling positive and motivated to move things forward.

The participants reported that they enjoyed having the time and space to think about such an important issue as a team, facilitated by two wonderful and talented women.

Working together as a team on this matter; breaking frequently into small discussion groups with very defined tasks; facilitating everyone's voice being heard.

Seeing Shungu 'in action'!

Opportunity to be with colleagues; safe and facilitated forum to discuss racism; discussion around terms around race; the time spent reflecting on our own biases (and their impact).

Opportunities to reflect in small groups.

Role-play and discussion.

Opportunities to hear my colleagues' perspectives in this area.

Role-play between the presenters really helped my understanding of the framework.

Lots of practical tips and resources.

Discussions on stereotypes, biases and negative automatic thoughts were particularly helpful in exploring this further as well as the pre-course reading. Also, the metaphor of the cave is a very helpful way of conceptualizing racism and prejudice and how/when people move deeper into their cave.

The way you organized and planned the training to provide containment for a very emotive and difficult area so that it was a safe environment for talking, sharing, revealing, taking risks.

What did you find most difficult?

Identification of our own biases.

Knowing how to filter down what our priorities are/should be. Reflecting on own biases.

The use of terminology – what is appropriate.

Seeing and hearing some of the biases that I and others hold.

Being the only black woman in the room. I was very conscious of how others were responding to the training.

Knowing whether it would be ok to say some of the things I was thinking and/or to question some of the ideas being put forward.

The case study we didn't have time to do (though I am planning to suggest we do this in team meeting or perhaps another team forum) – I didn't know where to start on this.

*Acknowledging my own biases. Identifying where these come from (still not sure about one of these).
Still not sure of the difference between unconscious and implicit bias (and if this difference is important).*

What would you like future training to focus on?

I want to look at Nancy Kline's team meeting work. I'm going to regularly revisit the Six Stage model for understanding and responding to racism. I want to develop calm and respectful listening particularly when listening to people with different views.

Perhaps what we have 'done' in the in-between time – discuss why that is and what's next.

Having difficult conversations.

How to introduce training into schools.

Linked to both how to balance building bridges with not losing the focus on racism – can indirect approaches work? Are they acceptable?

Perhaps more around hosting helpful conversations.

About how you have used the framework in practice.

Further exploration of issues of racism and prejudice in our organisation and within our work.

Further ways that we can work with stakeholders around this issue.

Exploring and thinking about issues around segregation (e.g. segregation within some of our school populations).

Progress towards our personal action plans; next steps for our personal action plans; how we 'cascade' this training to others in the Authority; developing and implementing our service development plan in this area; how/if we take this out to our schools.

If this were face-to-face training I would include role-play, as I know that this is one of the ways I learn best (and I am aware that some people are wary of this way of learning).

What one thing might you do as a result of today's training?

Use the framework to adapt the way I engage in conversations around race.

The check-in and debrief offered by Shungu extremely helpful – I understand that this will be a standard offer moving forward.

A greater focus on terminology and checking this with people.

Read more about the history.

Challenge schools using the approaches shown by Shungu in the role-play.

Challenge stereotyping comments using the phrase, 'I'm genuinely curious about how you've reached this position' and other similar phrases.

Hear about how you have used the framework in practice.

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