

## 1.2 Readiness to learn      Becoming aware of my own biases

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What	Challenging one's own assumption and biases
Purpose	To reflect on one's own assumptions and biases
Target group	Teachers and trainers in vocational education and their students
Level	Level 2-3-4 in vocational education.
Execution	Preparation of the teacher
Sources	Learning to address Implicit Bias Towards LGBTW Patients: Case scenario's. National LGBT Health Education Center, September 2018.

### Introduction

All people are more naturally prone to prefer the familiar. People like others that look like the same, talk the same and think the same. It is not always easy to accept that we may have biases, especially for people who have chosen a career in care and wellbeing. For care professionals it is important to establish solid, trusting relationships with clients in order to promote their wellbeing. With LGBT+ older clients this is especially important in order to counteract the exclusion, discrimination and stigma that many have experienced previously. Despite our best intentions, however, internal or implicit biases, may affect the way we talk to and behave with clients. Therefore it is important to notice prejudicial attitudes and beliefs, especially of yourself.

### Activity

This activity can be done in a playful manner and you can make it a bit of a role play as a teacher. Start by saying: 'We have to be careful today because there might be a heterosexual in the room!'. Ask two students to play out the following interview. You can select the questions that you think most appropriate. Perhaps pretend they are interviewing for a tv programme etc. Tell the interviewer to begin by introducing themselves and what they are doing e.g. "Hello I am .... Today I am interviewing a heterosexual person so that we can find out what they are like"

Interviewing a heterosexual person:

1. Do you think that heterosexuality is innate or learned?
2. When and how did you decide to become straight?
3. Is it possible that your heterosexuality is a phase you might grow out of?
4. Is it possible that your heterosexuality originates from a fear of same-sex people?
5. If you have never slept with someone of the same sex, is it possible that you could be homosexual? After all, you have never tried it so how do you know?
6. Why do you heterosexuals always try to promote their lifestyle to others?
7. Why do you go on about your heterosexuality so much? Can't you just be yourself and not talk about it so much?
8. Do you think it is safe to expose children to heterosexual teachers?- 95% of known sex offenders are heterosexual males
9. The number of divorces is increasing despite the fact that we value marriage so highly. So why are there so few stable relationships between heterosexual couples?
10. Why are heterosexuals so promiscuous?
11. Would you want your children to be heterosexual, even though you know about the problems they might face, for example broken hearts, illnesses and divorce?

When they have finished, the teacher asks for comments and elicits some thoughts that the questions sound wrong/ridiculous/ strange / intrusive. Ask the class why?

Then the teacher asks the class whether they think the same questions might have ever been asked of LGBTI+ older people and whether they might also find the questions strange and intrusive? The class can then be facilitated to have a conversation where the class examine previously held assumptions so that the teacher can help the students to see how the world is framed by heterosexual expectations of what is the norm and why it is wrong, for example, to link homosexuality with predatory sexual behaviour etc.

### **Keep on learning**

Based on the interview the teacher can make clear that we all have values and make assumptions about what we see as right or wrong. These ideas were often formed in our childhood and become unconscious assumptions by which we gauge unfamiliar situations. If we grow up in a heteronormative environment, we may well assume that all adult relationships will be M/F. This means that when we meet new people we tend to assume that they are heterosexual. As many LGBT+ images in the media have traditionally been negative, we might not challenge the negative stereotypes but act as if they were true. In order to work in the helping professions, the teacher, will explain that the learners need to become more conscious of their own assumptions and to challenge them and also those of others they encounter.



### **Keep on Learning**

Ask the class to reflect on where their values came from as they were growing up. Ask them to think about how some values change as we realise more about how certain behaviours can harm people who we are trying to help.

Ask them to look again at the ground rules and the rules of their organisation that address inclusive practice.