

Diversity Awareness at The Children's Trust

The organisation

The Children's Trust provides care, education and therapy to children with multiple disabilities and complex health needs.

The need

The organisation had grown significantly and seen a marked increase in the diversity, not only of the children it serves and their families, but also of staff and volunteers. The Trust already ran a diversity awareness session as part of its induction programme, however it was felt that more was needed for those working in a challenging environment and who were from a variety of cultural, educational, professional and social backgrounds.

What we did

We ran a one-day pilot for senior managers based on an existing Cultural Awareness training course we had developed in association with the National Minority Ethnic Network of Age UK. The senior management team agreed that the core models used and Jacqueline's facilitation approach would work well at the Trust. Jacqueline was asked to develop the workshop further to include all aspects of diversity and be deliverable as a 2-hour foundation course for all staff and volunteers. The foundation course would then be followed up by internally run, team-based workshops to apply the learning. The foundation workshop objectives were to:

- Increase participant's awareness of what diversity is, how it affects them and their interaction with others
- Enable participants to be more open with each other and the people in their care about diversity issues
- Become more enthusiastic and motivated to learn more; particularly about specific diversity issues represented by the children, families and staff at the Children's Trust
- Learn practical tools and models to support participant learning.

Jacqueline delivered the foundation workshop to 320 staff and volunteers over the course of 5 months with some scheduled in the evenings to make it easier for shift-based staff to attend. Following the workshops, managers were asked to develop an outline of follow-up activities for their teams.

Benefits

The workshops were well received with 98% of participants agreeing that the course achieved what it set out to do. Six months later the workshop continued to have an impact as a number of managers have carried out follow-up activities with their teams and one manager explained how attending the workshop had made them more motivated towards gaining the Investors In Diversity accreditation. Comments from staff and volunteers indicate that the workshop has had an impact at all levels and throughout the organisation.

Comments from The Children's Trust

Participants' comments:

- "An awareness about diversity and how to not stereotype, the bigger picture, made me think about what I do. It will make me think outside the box and think how others may view things as to how I view them."

- “Thinking about ‘un-stereotyping’ my conscious brain and unlearning assumptive behaviour.”
- “The course was really good. I found it very interesting and fun, we could have gone on for another hour or so, as there was so much interaction with everyone in the training.”
- “The best diversity awareness training session I have attended. Very dynamic and flowed very easily.”

“Jacqueline is a dynamic and engaging facilitator and this is well reflected in the evaluations.”

Isabelle Labonte, Training & Development Officer at The Children’s Trust

“Diversity is a very large subject and Jacqueline worked hard with us to deliver a foundation that was well received by all staff, as well as economical and practicable.”

Sue Kaemena, HR Director at The Children’s Trust