

Training Session Plan

Human Rights for Everybody? An introduction to discrimination as a human rights violation



Developed by: Adriana Zumaran Jibaja
Catherine Ludeña Egoavil
Joan Nyanyuki
Vizla Kumaresan
Written by: Alicia Dibbets

The International Federation of Health and Human Rights Organisations (IFHHRO)

IFHHRO forms a unique network of active organisations committed to the protection and promotion of health related human rights. Members and observers are human rights groups which address health-related rights violations, medical associations involved in human rights work, and organisations that have been created specifically to mobilize health workers for human rights protection.

For more information visit our website: www.ifhhro.org

Copyright © IFHHRO, 2009
Version 2

This session plan may be reproduced provided the source is specified.
IFHHRO welcomes applications for rights of translation.
Copies of the session plan in a different format can be requested.
More information: ifhhro@ifhhro.org

Cover: "Nuestras madres", Salud Sin Límites Perú" (top)
Prisoner receiving medical treatment (bottom)



Learning Objectives

- To recognize that discrimination is a human rights violation
- To identify the occurrence of discrimination in health practice



Target Group

Health workers with little to no knowledge about human rights and discrimination



Duration

90 minutes



Materials

- 4 sheets of flip chart paper
- 7 sheets of A4 paper
- Markers



Training Aids

1. Discrimination scenarios
2. Definitions of discrimination
3. Statements on discrimination in the context of health



Session Plan

The session works best in combination with general introductory sessions about human rights in relation to health. To deepen the understanding of discrimination as a human rights issue this session should be followed up with sessions about specific health themes in relation to discrimination and sessions on the role of health workers. The introductory sessions, as well as related follow-up sessions, can be found online in the IFHHRO Training Manual 'Human Rights for Health Workers' at www.ifhhro-training-manual.org

Preparation

Download the PowerPoint presentation which includes Training Aids 1, 2 and 3 from the online IFHHRO Training Manual (see above website).

Write the following headings on four different sheets of A4 paper:

Group 1: discrimination against patients

Group 2: discrimination among health workers

Group 3: institutional discrimination

Group 4: discriminatory policies

Take three sheets of A4 paper and write one of the following words in big letters on each sheet: YES MAYBE NO

Step 1 Introduction to Discrimination (10 minutes)

Introduce the participants to the concept of discrimination using the scenarios of different types of discrimination (Training Aid 1). Present the scenarios one at a time by showing the corresponding PowerPoint slides. For each scenario ask the participants whether or not they

think the situation constitutes discrimination. Discuss and explain why the situations described do or do not amount to discrimination.

Step 2 Human Rights & Discrimination (10 minutes)

Demonstrate that the elimination of discrimination is an integral part of human rights using the definitions from Training Aid 2 which contains the articles on discrimination from two international human rights treaties and a definition on discrimination in the context of health.

Show the PowerPoint slide with article 2(2) from the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* and read out the text. Ask the participants whether this definition helps to determine whether situations (such as the scenarios from Step 1) constitute discrimination.

Next, display the PowerPoint slide with article 1 from the *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women*, reading out the text. Ask the participants whether this definition provides more information on how to determine whether a situation constitutes discrimination.

Point out the different elements of the definition and explain that in the context of human rights discrimination means that everyone is entitled to the enjoyment of their rights without any distinction on the basis of specific grounds. Illustrate this by presenting the definition of discrimination in relation to health on the next PowerPoint slide.

Step 3 Group Work: Daily Examples of Discrimination (20 minutes)

Divide the participants into four groups. Each group will be asked to come up with examples of discrimination at a different level. Hand out the prepared sheets of A4 paper with the different titles:

Group 1: discrimination against patients

Group 2: discrimination among health workers

Group 3: institutional discrimination

Group 4: discriminatory policies

Ask the groups to come up with as many examples as they can think of and to write them down clearly on the piece of paper.

When a group has at least 3 examples ask them to determine whether the situations they have come up with constitute discrimination by answering the following three questions for each example:

- Who is/are the victim(s) of discrimination?
- What is the ground of discrimination?
- Which human right is being denied?

Next, provide each group with a sheet of flip chart paper and request them to select the best example(s) of discrimination and to note these down on the flip chart.

Step 4 Presentation of Group Work (20 minutes)

Hang up the flip chart sheets where everyone can see them. Very briefly walk through the examples and select those which are most relevant. Discuss these examples using the three questions from step 3. While discussing these questions together with the participants link back to the meaning of discrimination as a human rights violation explained in step 2.

Different elements of this explanation come back in the questions. Use the questions to help participants understand what facts are necessary to identify the occurrence of discrimination. If participants do not know the answers to some of the questions help them with examples.

Step 5 Discussion (10 minutes)

Discuss the group work using the following questions:

- Was it easy or difficult to come up with examples of discrimination?
- For which level was it easiest to determine discrimination? Why?
- For which level was it most difficult to determine discrimination? Why?

Explain that in order to determine whether or not a situation constitutes discrimination it is important to know the specific context. Discrimination against patients or amongst health workers may be easier to identify. Institutional discrimination or discriminatory policies can be more difficult to identify, but can also have effects that are noticeable in the daily practice of health workers.

Step 6 Discrimination in the context of health (15 minutes)

Gather the participants together in one area of the room. Place the prepared sheets of paper on the floor: YES on one side, MAYBE in the middle and NO on the other side.

Present the statements on discrimination in the context of health (Training Aid 3) one by one by showing the PowerPoint slides. For each statement ask the participants to stand near one of the sheets of paper depending on whether they think this statement constitutes discrimination. After each statement ask a few participants to explain their choice. Next show the fact on the PowerPoint slide and provide further explanation, if necessary.

Step 7 Conclusion (5 minutes)

Conclude the session by summarizing the main points:

- Discrimination is a human rights issue when people are denied their human rights on the basis of specific grounds such as age, race, disability, sex, or social status.
- Identifying discrimination requires knowledge of the specific context of the situation to be able to identify whether a distinction is being made and on what prohibited ground.
- Discrimination can occur at different levels within the health sector. Health workers have the capacity to start changes in their daily work to end discrimination. These can be small but all of them will contribute to reduce discrimination in the long term.

Training Aid 1 – Scenarios of possible discrimination

Scenario 1

A company is looking for practitioners. The application form includes the question: "Do you have any children?"

Two young students, a woman and a man, who both have children and are equally qualified apply for the job. The company chooses the male applicant because he would be more dedicated to the job.

Scenario 2

A 35 year old blind woman decides to have a baby and elects for artificial insemination. Upon medical examination, it was found that she has severe heart disease. Her application is denied.

Scenario 3

A child is not accepted into a school because she has two fathers. The school thought that it would cause discomfort to other parents.

Scenario 4

A retired husband and wife decide to apply for medical insurance. The woman, aged 48 years, is accepted. The man, aged 65 years, has his application denied.

Training Aid 2 – Definitions of discrimination

Human Rights & Discrimination

The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to guarantee that the rights enunciated in the present Covenant will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, art. 2 (2)

For the purposes of the present Convention, the term “discrimination against women” shall mean any distinction, exclusion, or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on the basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, art. 1

Discrimination & Health

Peoples chances of enjoying good health must not be disadvantaged because of their sex, race, colour, age, language, religion, disability, health status, sexual orientation, socio-economic or other status.

Training Aid 3 – Statements on discrimination in the context of health

Statement 1

People get the HIV virus because they have unusual sexual practices.

Fact

The highest infection rate for HIV is among monogamous heterosexual housewives. Blaming victims for their sexual behavior causes stigma and social exclusion.

Statement 2

A prisoner is found to have drug resistant TB. He must be isolated for 2 months.

Fact

Drug resistant TB is highly contagious and slow to respond to treatment. It is a matter of good practice to isolate patients, especially in crowded conditions as in prisons. However, isolation should be performed in accordance with the principle of dignity and the best possible conditions for recovery.

Statement 3

Indigenous women do not go to antenatal clinics because they do not care for their health or the health of the unborn babies.

Fact

There are different factors that delay or prevent indigenous women from using health services during pregnancy. These factors include affordability, geographical access and misunderstanding of indigenous people's preferences in relation to health care during pregnancy. Many cultures believe that pregnancy is a natural process. They believe that people go to the doctor only when they are sick, and pregnancy is not a sickness.

Statement 4

People who have 3 or more sexual partners should not be allowed to donate blood.

Fact

Anyone can donate blood. Blood samples should be examined, and unhealthy samples cannot be used for patients. Selection based on profiles reduces access to blood and increases stigma.