

Preparing to Facilitate USW Equality Workshops

Equality workshops can and should bring up challenging comments and feelings. As facilitators, we can't prepare for the exact words and ways these challenging moments happen, and that can often make us nervous or even reluctant to facilitate equality topics at all. How can we deal with the unknown, in ways which are creative and effective?

Here are some questions facilitators can ask ourselves to prepare for equality workshops. The questions help us think about openness and resistance, challenges and limits, and strong emotions.

Some questions are meant for use *before* the workshop begins, for the facilitator to reflect on themselves. Other questions are for use during the workshop, when you are at the end of one day and getting ready for the next, to assess and reflect on how participants are doing.

Your answers to these questions are not meant to be shared with the participants. Rather, these questions help the facilitator assess the needs of the class and develop greater insight that will lead to better dialogue..

Before the course, ask yourself:

- In this equality course, what am I most open to embracing from the participants, and to what am I most resistant?
- What are the most difficult parts of my life that relate to these issues?
- How can I facilitate more effectively if participants voice opinions I personally reject?
- Related to this equality course, what circumstances of loss have I experienced, including rejection, heartbreak, war and death?

During the course, ask yourself:

- In this equality course, what are participants most open to embracing, and to what are they most resistant?

- What are the most difficult parts of their lives that relate to these issues?
- What is it that allows participants to listen to opinions they personally reject?
- What circumstances of loss have they experienced, including rejection, heartbreak, war and death?

This article is a follow-up to an earlier posting to this page: "[Personal Preparation for Facilitators of Equality Courses](#)." It is inspired by a presentation by Julie Burnstein, a radio talk-show host, who gave a presentation called "[Four Lessons in Creativity](#)." Burnstein identifies four elements that must be embraced for creativity to flourish, and these four elements can also be used as a framework for facilitators of equality workshops.