



TORONTO
NEIGHBOURHOOD
CENTRES

Earning The Rainbow: Don't Assume

This workshop series and materials were prepared by William Porter in collaboration with members of the Rainbow Affinity Group for Toronto Neighbourhood Centres (TNC). You are free to use/adapt the materials as long as they are credited to: William Porter and Toronto Neighbourhood Centres.

ABSTRACT:

This workshop series focuses on our workplace environments, exploring how we can strengthen inclusive practice. These are experiential workshops to help identify challenges and explore solutions.

BACKGROUND:

This series was built over many meetings of the Toronto Neighbourhood Centres' Rainbow Affinity Group and informed by the lived experience of front-line workers, agency staff, managers and executive directors. The Rainbow Affinity Group is a Toronto based network of 2SLGBTQIA+ services providers who collaborate on policy development, evaluation, education, celebrations and mutual aid efforts.

RATIONALE:

Utilizing an experiential approach to facilitation, this series aims to improve inclusive practice through evaluation and mutual understanding of the unique challenges faced in our workplaces. The designers of this series agreed that we often learn the most from our mistakes and strived to build a safer learning environment where our mistakes can be modeled for collective advancement.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE:

This is a 4-part workshop series designed for both individual agency implementation and broad multi-agency engagement. Designed as “building blocks,” the series moves from the practical aspects of client experience, to the staff experience, to the management and upper management experience, and then concludes with a learning exchange.

WORKSHOPS:

- #1 – Don't Assume (Front Line)
- #2 – Strengthening Inclusive Practice in the Workplace (Staff)
- #3 – Strengthening Inclusive Practice in the Workplace (Management)
- #4 – Learning exchange (All)

ROLES:

Co-Facilitator #1:

- Lead Topic Introductions/Transitions
- Modeling Behaviours (Vulnerability, Compassion) to Promote Participation

Co-Facilitator #2:

- Dramatic Reading of Scenarios
- Modeling Behaviours (Vulnerability, Compassion) to Promote Participation

Co-Facilitator #3:

- Dramatic Reading of Scenarios
- Modeling Behaviours (Vulnerability, Compassion) to Promote Participation
- Chat Monitoring

Co-Facilitator #4:

- Dramatic Reading of Scenarios
- Modeling Behaviours (Vulnerability, Compassion) to Promote Participation
- Slide Management

Evaluation Team:

- Manages pre-post evaluations
- Transfers & Shares evaluation insights.

SLIDE 1/2: EARNING THE RAINBOW: DON'T ASSUME

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT:

WELCOME:

AGENDA:

CO-FACILITATOR INTRODUCTIONS:

Name, Pronoun, Agency & Role. Share one story of a mistake or challenge that models the vulnerability and honesty needed for the workshop.

Prompts:

What/who inspired this workshop? (RAG context)

Why – personally – are we here? (Lived experience)

Who are we? (Front line workers/there are no managers here).

SLIDE 3: COMMUNITY GUIDELINE STATEMENT

We invite everyone to turn on their camera, as this is NOT recorded. Everyone in this workshop has unique experiences, knowledge and ways of knowing. In support of that reality we ask that everyone strive to share time equitably, build off our fellow participants' ideas and – when we do not have consensus – challenge the idea and not the individual. This is a learning environment with no prerequisites. If you want to share, but want to distance or keep a story confidential please feel free to say “someone told me” or “I heard that”, and remove any gender/agency/time markers... If anyone would like to add to the community guidelines, please drop your ideas into the chat as we walk through introductions.

Prompts:

“one mic, one diva”

“one step forward to speak, one step back to listen”

PARTICIPANT INTROS (DROP OUT OF SLIDES):

Name, Pronoun (NOT required, no outing), Agency & Role. What brings you to this workshop?

Thank you all for sharing!

SLIDE 4: "WELCOME" (10min)

Now, we would like to invite you to imagine your workplace. What does the entrance look like, what is the physical, visual context? What does it sound like?

(Show image first) Now, imagine our community member here has just arrived.

What are your initial assumptions? What assumptions are we making?

As we walk through a few scenarios, keep those assumptions in mind and feel free to drop them in the chat. We will come back to them shortly.

“DRAMATIC READ TROUGH”

Prompts:

How do our actions (rooted in our assumptions) impact care?

If engagement is low, share a personal scenario to model participation.

What if a client is yelling “give me this support now” and de-escalation is needed?

How do we get someone's attention without using gender?

SLIDE 5: "PHONE CALL" (5min)

Building on the previous scenarios, let's move this to a different context: the phone call

What assumptions are we making?

"DRAMATIC READ TROUGH"

Prompts:

How do our actions impact care?

SLIDE 6: "FAMILY" (10min)

Fantastic! So now we are in the groove of this format, let's try to complicate things!

We are back in your workplace... imagine our community member here has just arrived, what are your initial assumptions?

As we walk through a few scenarios, keep those assumptions in mind and feel free to drop them in the chat. We will come back to them shortly."

"DRAMATIC READ TROUGH"

Prompts:

How do our actions impact care?

Share a scenario of power dynamics in someone's refusal to use pronouns or insistence on using dead names

SLIDE 7: "EMPLOYMENT" (10min)

Again, in our respective workspaces imagine our community member here has just arrived, what are your initial assumptions?

As we walk through a few scenarios, keep those assumptions in mind and feel free to drop them in the chat. We will come back to them shortly.

"DRAMATIC READ TROUGH"

Prompts:

How do our actions impact care?

SLIDE 8: BREAK (5min)

Co-facilitators can lead grounding exercise/play music if desired.

SLIDE 9: DIRECT QUOTE “READ TROUGH”

What comes to mind first? Do you agree?

Prompts:

If [blank] is true, then what is the impact for [blank]

Example of walking clients through the building and not assuming which washroom they will use and so pointing out washrooms for all genders

SLIDE 10: "SAFER SPACES" (20min)

Bringing the analysis we now share, let's walk through some common refrains and see what challenges arise:

“DRAMATIC READ TROUGH”

Prompts:

What assumptions have we made?

How do our actions impact care?

SLIDE 11: DIRECT QUOTE “READ TROUGH”

What comes to mind first? How does this feel to you?

SLIDE 12: NEXT STEPS

SLIDE 13: THANK YOU

CREDITS:

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We are thankful for the support of members of the Rainbow Affinity Group. In particular, the following members for their contributions throughout the development process:

Nickie D’Cunha
Pam Gawn
Ingrid Palmer
Abinna Subramaniam
Chi Cheng Wat



Don't Assume

Earning the Rainbow Series

Agenda:

- ❑ Land Acknowledgement
- ❑ Community Guidelines & Introductions
- ❑ Welcome
- ❑ Phone Call
- ❑ Family
- ❑ Employment

-----Break-----

- ❑ Safer Spaces

Community Guidelines

- This workshop isn't recorded, we invite everyone to turn on their camera if they feel comfortable
- Be conscious of everyone's unique experiences, knowledge and ways of knowing
- Share time equitably
- When challenging a point, make sure to challenge the *idea* and not the *individual*
- This is a learning environment with no prerequisites of knowledge or experience
- If you want to share, but want to keep a story confidential, please feel free to say: "someone told me" or "I heard that" and remove any gender/agency/time markers
- If anyone would like to add to the community guidelines, please drop your ideas into the chat



Client is standing near the reception desk, but has not approached or faced you. What would you say?

Excuse me Sir?
Can I help you?

Client turns around, and
you perceive a woman.

Oh my god! I am so very
sorry! Client becomes
visibly upset and asks to
speak with a manager.

Excuse me Miss?
Can I help you?

Client turns around,
and you perceive a
man.

Oh! Sorry... the client
mumble something
and walks away.

Excuse me? Can
I help you?

Client turns
around and asks
to register.

You welcome
and register the
client.

What assumptions are we making?

How do our actions impact care?

Client arrives with small child and states they are a newcomer:

Client attends one program.
They sob quietly throughout.

After program, instructor
refers client to mental health
team.

In session, client says "I am a
lesbian" and "i have never
said that out loud".

You share parenting,
childcare and parenting
support group resources.

Client says "thank you" and
they never return.

You ask the client if there are
any particular programs they
are interested in.

The client states they need to
talk to someone.

In session, client says "I am a
lesbian" and "i have never
said that out loud".

What assumptions are we making?

How do our actions impact care?

Client arrives for career planning session:

Client says "they/them" after introducing themselves.

You discuss OW funded programs together.

Client expresses interest in staying in banking, so you register them with bridging program.

Client enters workforce to full time role via bank's diversity program.

Client says "she/her" after introducing themselves.

You discuss OW funded programs together, and focus on construction worker training.

Client completes program and starts work.

Client works two part time jobs through employment agency.

Client says "he/him" after introducing themselves.

Client is on OW, so you refer them to security guard training.

Client completes program and starts work.

Client quits job abruptly.

What assumptions are we making?

How do our actions impact care?

BREAK

A settlement worker was explaining 2SLGBTQIA+ specific newcomer services being offered, and a mentor responded:

"Please help me here because I'm a bit confused. These seem like [general] settlement services; why do you need a special [2SLGBTQIA+] settlement worker for this job? Shouldn't any newcomer be able to walk into an agency and receive the services they deserve, in a respectful way?"

Earning the Rainbow in Everyday Service Delivery

Facilities

Outreach

Primary Care

Counselling

Referral

"Yes, of course!
Just stop by reception and they will give you the key to the bathroom"

"Happy Holidays!
Please invite your family and friends to our annual youth gift giveaway!"

"Oh, I'm so sorry!
Thank you for letting me know. You'll have to help me as I am still learning about pronouns, but I'll do my best."

"Look, there is no pressure to self identify at this time. For many of us, it is life long journey to self love and expression"

"So this is the closest food bank to your apartment. You just go to the side of the Church and they will get you everything you need."

What assumptions are we making?

How do our actions impact care?

**A community member who self-identifies as a
Trans woman shared her workplace hardships:**

“I gave up trying to understand the cis-world or trying to navigate a cis-normative workplace because the more I try, the more frustrated I become. In many non-profit organizations, women have broken the glass ceiling and become leaders, managers, and executive directors, but there are still barriers for trans woman to be treated seriously and be recognized for their work.”

Next Steps:

Workshop #2: Staff

Workshop #3: Management

Thank You!

The Earning the Rainbow Workshop Series is the product of the efforts and expertise of many contributors

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