

"It's Okay to be

Different"

Anti-Racism
Training and Awareness Project

MDAA



Royal Rehabilitation
Centre Sydney



Australian Government
Department of Immigration and
Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs



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This project is proudly supported by the Australian Government's *Living in Harmony* initiative. Administered by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, the *Living in Harmony* initiative aims to promote community harmony. It recognises that, whatever our backgrounds and beliefs, we are united as Australians and want to live in a country that is free of racial intolerance.

For more information on the *Living in Harmony* initiative, visit www.immi.gov.au/harmony.

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Anti-Racism
Training and Awareness Project Report

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Abbreviations

ACROD Ltd	The Australian Council for Rehabilitation of the Disabled until 1984, when the name was changed to ACROD Limited
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse
CDDS	Centre for Developmental Disability Studies, University of Sydney
CIP	Community Integration Program
DIMIA	Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
HREOC	Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
MDAA	Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW
NESB	Non-English speaking background
ODEOPE	Office of the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment
PWD	People with Disabilities Australia Inc
RRCS	Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney

1 Introduction

This Report details the background, content, process and outcomes of the “It’s Okay to be Different” Project (referred to as the Project).

The Project was a joint initiative between the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW (MDAA) and the Royal Rehabilitation Centre’s Community Integration Program (CIP) with funding from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) under the Australian Government’s *Living in Harmony* initiative.

The aim of the Project was to address the vulnerability of people with cognitive disabilities to simplistic and stereotypical messages about race and ethnicity. This aim arose from the experience of workplace racism exhibited by people with cognitive disabilities towards CIP workers who were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Through a structured discussion, the Report offers a context in which to consider diversity awareness training for people with disabilities. The development and implementation stages raised numerous questions about the marginalisation people with disabilities experience and its impact on these people’s capacity to address diversity. As such, this Report offers an opportunity to embrace a broader perspective on the concepts of diversity, awareness and training. The Background section explains the Project’s impetus followed by a summary and detailed discussion of the training phase. A conclusion and recommendations end the Report. This process was supported by a comprehensive literature review. The Report seeks to shed much needed light on some of the causative factors behind some people with disabilities’ response to diversity, and possible ways of working with this reality.

2 Background

The Community Integration Project (CIP) of the Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney (RRCS) was established to achieve community inclusion for people with disabilities who require support in order to live in the community. The CIP was originally established in 1993 with the primary objective of transitioning people with disabilities from the Weemala Centre

into the community. Weemala was established in 1907 to provide residential care to people with multiple disabilities. Originally a large institutional facility, the Centre began devolution in the 1990s, and is still devolving for remaining clients.

The CIP provides housing and support, community access and transition services, skills development, and training to clients across 23 locations in metropolitan Sydney. Clients of the CIP were the Project's target.

MDAA¹, in consultation with CIP, submitted a funding application for this Project to DIMIA under the *Living in Harmony Community Grants Program*. A steering committee was then established and comprised representatives from MDAA, CIP, PWD Australia Inc, and ACROD Ltd. The Project was undertaken between April and October 2003.

As outlined in the Grant Application,

“The starting point for this project is that people with disabilities² may be less able to question and analyse racist and racially vilifying messages as they are expressed through the media, friends and family, their neighbourhoods, etc. This inability may cause a problem for people with disabilities when they want/need to receive services from disability and/or other generic agencies, many of whom employ workers who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds” (page 7)

The Project assumed that, through targeted training, people living with a cognitive disability in supported accommodation could be positively engaged with an anti-racism message. In order to achieve this, the Project recognised the need to identify and/or develop specific anti-racism training resources aimed at this target group, the end result being development of greater harmony between people with cognitive disability and their support workers.

The Project involved a tender process seeking Expressions of Interest for a Project Officer/Consultant. The successful consultants were Ursula King and Maria Katrivesis who were subsequently engaged to:

¹ MDAA is the peak body for people from a non-English speaking background with disability and their families and carers in NSW

² As specified in the original funding application, the term ‘people with disabilities’ refers to people with cognitive disabilities

1. Review existing literature regarding anti-racism and training approaches for people with a cognitive disability
2. Develop anti-racism training materials for people with a cognitive disability
3. Conduct a pilot training program with this group
4. Produce materials regarding training in this area in a web accessible format
5. Produce a final report

3 Project Development

3.1 Literature Review

Anti-racism is a broad concept as is the phrase 'cultural diversity'. People with disabilities have not traditionally been the target of anti-racism/cultural diversity awareness training. The literature review for this Project, outlined below, sought to identify key, locally available anti-racism/cultural diversity awareness training resources that may have applicability for people with cognitive disabilities.

The inclusion criteria for the review were:

- Published in English
- Available in Australia
- Anti-racism/cultural diversity awareness training materials, and
- Suitable for use with people with a cognitive disability

Figure 1 Key terms referred to in the Literature Review

Term	Definition
Racism	A set of beliefs, often complex, that asserts the natural superiority of one group over another, and which is often used to justify differential treatment and social positions. This may occur at the individual, broader systemic or institutional level.
Anti-racism	Action orientated strategy for institutional, systemic change to address racism and the interlocking systems of social oppression. Anti-racism specifically names the issues of race and social difference as issues of power and equality rather than as matters of cultural and ethnic variety.
Discrimination	Discrimination means treating someone unfairly because they happen to belong to a particular group of people. For example, because they are a woman, because they have a disability or because they are of a particular nationality; and judging the person on the basis of pre-conceptions about the group they belong to, rather than on what they are like personally.
Diversity	Diversity includes: age, aspirations, class, country and nationality of origin, gender, intellectual ability, personality, physical ability, primary language, professional experience, race, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic backgrounds and work styles. Diversity includes virtually all ways in which people differ, not just the more obvious ones of gender, ethnicity and disability. Diversity is a broad concept which encompasses cultural diversity. The difference between the two terms is that cultural diversity acknowledges the existence of broad cultural groupings.
Cultural diversity	Generally refers to the differences that result or are attributed to members of these broad cultural groupings. Cultural diversity has been part of Australia's history, and through it, Australia's culture is constantly developing. Culture is not static. Cultural diversity includes (but is not restricted to) language, race, ethnic background, dress, values, religion and associated practices, social and community responsibilities, notions of family, family responsibilities, and political views.
Cognitive disability	Cognition refers to 'understanding', ability to comprehend what you see and hear, and to infer information from social cues and 'body language'. Cognitive disability refers to a difficulty learning new concepts, a tendency to make generalisations from one situation to another, and difficulty with spoken and/or written language expression. These impairments vary considerably amongst people with a cognitive disability.

For references, please refer to Section 7

Materials were sought from a variety of sources. These included: NSW State Library Resource Database, Australian university library collections, OPAC (Social Science Journal article database), AJOL (Australia Journals On-Line), the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) website, Anti-Discrimination Board library, and the NSW Community Relations Commission collection. These sources were selected because they provided the greatest access to the available literature with respect to anti-racism/cultural diversity awareness training. Discussion with university librarians and contacting experts in the field enabled sourcing additional resources in the form of books, essays, conference proceedings, and locally produced but not widely disseminated community resources.

Key descriptors used in the search were *anti-racism, diversity awareness, cultural diversity, disability awareness, anti-discrimination, and multiculturalism*, which were filtered using the terms *training, packages, materials, kits, manuals, and programs*. The key descriptors were then cross referenced with the terms *disability, cognitive disability, intellectual disability, developmental disability, acquired brain injury, traumatic brain injury and people with disabilities*.

Using this approach, 31 resources were identified however, only 16 were available locally. Only one resource, in the form of a student essay from York University in Britain, explored the relevance of racism to the lives of people with disabilities. No resources were identified that addressed the issue of racist attitudes perpetrated by people with disabilities nor how to provide training around this issue.

A possible reason for this is that people with cognitive disabilities, and in fact people with disabilities more broadly, have generally been defined by their disability. The idea of addressing the intersection between all forms of social oppression has yet to be adequately addressed when working with people with a disability.

MDAA has sought to redress this through acknowledging the additional disadvantage potentially posed for people living with a disability who have a culturally and linguistically diverse background. However, the specific question of how to provide anti-racism training to people with disabilities has yet to be answered.

With respect to approaches to anti-racism training/education, the literature highlighted several key frameworks. These were:

- A focus on difference and promotion of tolerance of difference
- A focus on commonalities/similarities and creating a sense of shared community belonging
- Promoting an ethic of justice, equality and equivalence without emphasising either difference or commonality
- Teaching conflict resolution skills to enable people to respond to racism either directed at them or others.

Training strategies varied according to the approach adopted. Essentially, most education/training programs looked at the impact of racism from an institutional and/or systemic perspective and then talked about the impact of this on the individual. Teaching strategies sought to inform participants about the social construction of racism and the mechanisms by which it is maintained within society. The legislative framework to redress this featured strongly in all materials reviewed. A key focus was the impact of racism on people from the non-dominant culture with respect to access to the societal power structures, and the social exclusion resulting from this.

A number of training programs emphasised the importance of teaching about racism and anti-racism strategies in the broader context of discrimination. This meant acknowledging that race was but one of a linked set of oppressed experiences that when broadened included sexuality, age, gender, and class. Interestingly, despite stressing the importance of this inclusive approach, the issue of disability and its associated oppression within society was largely ignored. The HREOC was the only organisation publishing material on anti-racism that recognised the fundamental importance of including disability when discussing oppression/marginalisation and strategies to address these.

The literature revealed two key groups as the target of anti-racism training/education:

- School aged children/young people
- Workers employed in public sector agencies

However, despite the target audience, all training programs recognised the necessity of placing anti-racism training/education within a broader school/organisational framework. This meant having in place, or developing in parallel, anti-racism policies, strategies, complaints mechanisms, etc. Although some programs targeting young people tended to train outside a school/organisational setting they still acknowledged the importance of broader frameworks, for example anti-discrimination legislation, in order to provide a context and structure for addressing these issues at the societal level.

The length of the training/education programs varied considerably. Those targeting workers/professionals tended to be short, one-off interventions and focused on behaviour modification i.e. promoting acceptable work place behaviours. School-based programs were more likely to be integrated into the curriculum so that children would be exposed to these issues over the course of a school year/s. They also embraced the principles of personal development as a means of developing a moral self, and the importance of this for community harmony. Once again, these programs were considered most effective when supported by broader organisational frameworks designed to redress racism.

The literature also indicated that anti-racism education/training, regardless of framework, tended to utilise a similar set of tools/activities to get the message across. These included definitions of racism, discrimination, racial vilification, cultural diversity, etc. This was then usually followed by a discussion of the historical context for racism within developed countries including a strong emphasis on the development, implementation and impact of anti-racism/anti-discrimination legislation. Self reflection on the experience of difference, inclusion/exclusion, often coupled with 'put yourself in my shoes' exercises, featured strongly. Concluding activities focused on the 'how to' of combating racism, mainly relating to methods for achieving positive behaviour change.

An emerging approach looked at the role of conflict resolution as a tool for responding to racism. This meant recognising that both 'perpetrators' and 'victims' of racist behaviour could benefit from developing skills in managing conflict situations arising from such encounters.

With respect to people with a disability, including a cognitive disability, the literature revealed no strategies or resources for working with this target group around anti-racism. This was because of the tendency for programs to construct anti-racism in a complex socio-political and historical framework and using this as the basis for learning. Those programs that extended learning from an understanding of self may offer some approaches that could be adapted for people with a cognitive disability. However, there were no exercises that were directly translatable into a training program suitable for the Project's target audience.

3.2 Development of Pilot Training Program

3.2.1 Objectives

The pilot training program (referred to as the Program) sought to achieve the following objectives:

Self

- To clarify and explore participants' current level of comfort with respect to cultural and linguistic diversity
- To facilitate increased comfort through understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity relevant to people's own lives

Household

- To facilitate the principles of community harmony within each participant's current household (housemates, workers, other immediate contacts) as measured by positive changes in behaviour of and language used by clients towards non-English speaking background staff

Community

- To facilitate the development of the principles of community harmony by participants within the broader community

3.2.2 Evaluation

The post-training outcome of this process is an increase in client comfort with respect to diversity and household harmony. This is to be measured by a reduction in the number of complaints/reports by staff of racial remarks and/or racially motivated aggression by clients.

This post-training outcome was evaluated through a separate ethics approved evaluation strategy to administered by the Centre for Developmental Disability Studies (CDDS).

In understanding this evaluation strategy, it is important to note the context in which complaints are managed by CIP. The CIP is responsible for monitoring and recording complaints from staff and clients about issues arising in the community houses. These include reports about race-based discrimination/aggression by clients towards staff. After reviewing the CIP complaints documentation, there appears no clear mechanism for identifying a race-based complaint. The documented complaints process does not allow objective assessment of the motivation for the complaint beyond a verbal report by the staff member(s) involved.

3.2.3 Training Program Structure

The training was structured around a spiral learning format in a small group context. Spiral learning involves introducing key concepts one at a time and then reiterating these points and adding to them during each subsequent training session. This repetition facilitates reinforcement of key learning, and when coupled with a single concept step-wise process, is particularly suited to an audience of people with a cognitive disability. To maximise the benefit of such an approach, a participatory interactive process was adopted as a cornerstone of the program. This involved engaging participants in the development of the training process rather than simply seeing them as passive recipients.

The development of trust in the group was considered fundamental in order to encourage deeper exploration of the issues. To assist participants to place the learning within their own lives, the training sought to work from their direct experience. This meant starting from personal stories. Participant's lived experience of disability could then create the platform from which to explore diversity more broadly. This approach aimed to assist participants in placing anti-racism into the context of discrimination – a common encounter for people with a disability. However, it could not be assumed that participants would have a shared understanding of discrimination. This included the ability to link their personal experience of disability discrimination with other discrimination experiences, eg racial vilification.

Locating the training in people's homes was a specific strategy. The aim was to provide people with a safe and familiar space from which to look at concepts of difference. Exploring participants' experiences of living in a shared household offered the opportunity to discuss what is required for people to live in harmony despite their differences. As such, conflict resolution strategies could then be introduced on the basis of participants shared cohabitation experience, and subsequently broadened to the wider community. It also had the potential to assist participants to place anti-racism strategies directly within their home environment.

Taking these principles on board, the following training approach was developed (see *Figure 2*). The training was initially based on a small group format with the intention of three sessions per group, each of two to three hours duration. As this was a pilot training program, it was necessary to embrace a flexible approach to content, flow, and training direction. As such, each training session was designed to be customised to reflect the specific needs of the group as they became apparent.

As outlined in *Figure 2*, the original three training sessions moved from a starting point of '*getting to know ourselves*', through '*getting to know each other*', to a final exploration of '*getting to know our community*'. In the absence of ready-made training resources for people with a cognitive disability to explore racism/diversity, exercises were only developed for the first training session. On the basis of this experience, i.e. the usefulness or otherwise of the exercises used, subsequent activities were to be developed for the remaining training sessions.

In order to ensure the training program addressed the actual problem, i.e. racist behaviour by clients towards staff, it was agreed that the consultants should receive de-identified information about incidents involving racial vilification of staff by clients with a cognitive disability. This was considered an important resource for informing the development of an appropriately targeted training strategy. However, the requested documentation was not provided. Therefore, the training content targeting anti-racism principles remained generic. The idea was then to customise the content to participants' specific issues regarding race/cultural diversity as they were drawn out during the training process.

Figure 2 Overview of Initial Training Sessions

Session Overview:	Training principles:	Key Content:
<p>1. Getting to know ourselves through story</p>	<p>This session will concentrate on building a group dynamic and developing an awareness of self through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Trust • Working from the narrative 	<p>Introducing ourselves</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who am I/why am I here? (Why people participated in the workshop and what they hope to get out of it) • Hopes and fears about doing this workshop • ‘A bit about me’ (colour/sound exercise) <p>Exploring Self</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is my life story Sharing life stories • Exploring similarities and differences
<p>2. Getting to know each other</p>	<p>This session will concentrate on building an awareness of ‘otherness’</p> <p>Awareness of difference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding difference in relation to self 	<p>Understanding ‘the Other’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured discussion exploring the similarities and differences within the group for example, age, sex, ethnicity/nationality, class, dis/ability spiritual/religious beliefs, etc. <p>House specific diversity issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Things that people do to make sharing a house easier or more difficult • How do you work things out when there is a problem?
<p>3. Getting to know our community</p>	<p>This session will concentrate on building an awareness of diversity in the community we all share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding diversity • Developing confidence re: living within a diverse community 	<p>Diversity in Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring the community I share • Integrating self with community

3.3 Recruitment

3.3.1 Project Promotion

A barbeque, organised by CIP to celebrate Harmony Day³, was the forum through which clients were introduced to the Project. Following this, the CIP undertook to further promote the Project by directly approaching potential participants. This process was supported by the consultants who met with community house team leaders to discuss the Project to facilitate their understanding of what was being proposed.

3.3.2 Participant selection

The Project sought to target people with cognitive disabilities living in accommodation supported by the CIP. As such, Project participants were to be drawn from this pool. It is important to note that this group of people had lived for varying periods in Weemala Centre, a large residential institution still administered by RRCS.

The CIP had sole responsibility for recruitment of participants and forming the training groups. A staff member was assigned the task of identifying potential project participants, introducing them to the Project, and then placing them into a training group. A total of thirteen people were eventually recruited. The target group for recruitment was meant to be people with a cognitive disability. However, within the three groups recruited, only four of the thirteen participants actually had a cognitive disability. This invariably influenced the style and content of the training program, which had been developed specifically for people with a cognitive disability.

As with the actual training process, the recruitment process evolved over time. This meant CIP learning how to present the issue of anti-racism training to potential participants. Initially the language used was that of diversity in its broader sense, only later including specific reference to anti-racism.

³ Held annually on the 21st March, Harmony Day was established by the Australian Government to celebrate and promote community diversity.

3.3.3 Timeframe

Recruitment was meant to occur in March 2003, with training commencing in April and concluding in May. However, recruitment did not commence until August 2003. This was because it was originally thought formal ethics approval from the RRCS Ethics Committee was needed for the training component of the Project. It was subsequently established that such ethics approval was not required for the training to proceed. Further delays were then encountered because of CDDS' intention to conduct a pre-training evaluation, which did require ethics approval. The end result was that both recruitment and training were delayed until six months into the Project. With the Project having to be concluded by October 2003 this effectively left only four weeks in which to recruit and train. At this time, the requirement for Public Guardian consent for some potential participants further delayed recruitment. As such only thirteen participants, in three groups, were able to be recruited and taken through the training process in the time available.

4 Project Implementation and Discussion

The following discussion seeks to highlight the key themes emerging from the training process. For reasons of confidentiality, quoted comments used in the text are not identified.

4.1 Participant Profile

The original Project target group, for which the pilot training program was developed, was people with a cognitive disability. However, as previously mentioned, people with a cognitive disability were in the minority. The majority of participants had a physical disability either congenital or acquired, the common link being all had previously been residents of Weemala. Two participants had a visual impairment and two were unable to communicate verbally. The majority required substantial assistance with activities of daily living, although the level of independence and involvement in the community varied substantially.

There was a relatively even mix of genders, with participants' ages ranging between early thirties and mid sixties. All training occurred in the house from which the majority of participants were drawn.

4.2 Locating the training in people's homes

From the outset it became apparent that working in people's home environment offered a number of advantages. As the majority of participants had lived together for some time, patterns of communication and trust relationships had already been established. In theory, this made the content of the first training session readily accessible. In addition, some of the principles of conflict resolution, which were to be explored in sessions two and three, had already been played out and embraced by participants through their shared living experience.

4.3 The impact of marginalisation and institutionalisation

During the first training session, participants revealed a mindset that required the intended training direction to be reviewed. The original aim of identifying and redressing participants' views – positive and negative – regarding race, racism, and racial discrimination, was premature. Participants' disability-related experience of marginalisation and disempowerment meant they were not ready to move into a broader discussion of diversity.

This disability-related experience so dominated the lives of the majority of the participants that they were unable to look beyond it. This meant that listening to and taking on board the discrimination experiences of others was very difficult.

"I don't care where someone comes from I just need them to care".

As highlighted in the literature, people need to be open to the idea of racism awareness before they are able to acknowledge the issue. To be successful, diversity awareness training must work from where people are now.

During the first session it became apparent that the starting point for the majority of participants recruited for this program was addressing their own disability-related marginalisation. This was directly related to their experience in Weemala. In the book, *Captives of Care* (1981), John Roarty, a long-term resident of Weemala, describes his experiences of institutionalisation there:

“Earlier in my life my brother Harry had made me learn to grow up. At the home, the opposite was the case. All the sisters tried to keep us young, and this I didn’t like at all. We were treated like children. But slowly, in spite of the sisters’ attempts at keeping us young, I started to grow into an adult.”⁴

Their institutionalisation had profoundly shaped participants’ worldview. The direct result of this was that they generally felt silenced, disrespected, and disregarded as individuals within society because of their disability, which had been the reason for their institutionalisation. The consequences were that although now living in supported community accommodation, participants were still working through the impact of their Weemala experience.

“No one ever listens to me. I try to tell the carers what I need but they just ignore me. I might as well throw myself under a car.”

As such, their ability to engage in a discourse around diversity beyond their disability experience was limited. Whenever the training process sought to broaden the discussion to include a broader view of diversity, the participants would invariably bring the discussion back to disability.

As a result, people became locked into a vicious cycle. This involved constant assertion of disability-related needs, which they felt were not being adequately met. Living with this on a daily basis produced considerable frustration. This meant disregarding anything other than what was needed to survive. The oppressed experience of others, including people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, had little currency for people living in this situation. Disability, through necessity, remained the main focus.

⁴ Roarty, J. *Captives of Care*, 1981, p24.

The exception to this was those in the third training group (made up of three people). No one in this group had a cognitive disability. All lived alone with CIP support and were able to engage in a deeper level of discussion about diversity. The reasons for this are open to debate. However, one major factor may be these participants' relative physical independence and its impact on their care relationships and daily living. This allowed these individuals to live actively beyond their disability, which was reflected in their conversations around the training themes. It must be acknowledged that such a small group does not allow this idea to be developed further.

4.4 Disempowerment

For the remaining participants the overwhelming experience of disempowerment was a further consideration. Participants' stories continually reflected how this was played out on a daily basis.

"I'd really like to go out at night, but I need two people to get me to bed, and there's only one carer at night, so I can't do it"

Power relations are at the heart of this issue. In this situation, the 'client' will always be dependent on the 'staff'. Someone with a history of institutionalisation has had to live with this as a matter of course. Many of these people require someone to shower them, dress them, toilet and feed them. It is difficult to feel powerful or to find your voice to assert your preferences in the face of this degree of daily vulnerability and dependence. The resulting disempowerment is profound. Given the relationship between disability and dependence for some people, only changing the way this dependency is responded to will have any impact. This means firstly acknowledging these power relations and secondly, developing care relationships that minimise their negative impacts.

4.5 My home or someone's workplace?

People with a disability are all too aware of the difficulty in securing suitable community housing support staff. The CIP provides staff to 23 community houses, which is supplemented by agency staff. However, it must be remembered that these 'community houses' are

actually people's homes. The reality of having many different staff necessarily accessing your home, in order to have your basic needs met, leaves little room for realising any real control over these aspects of daily living. For example, 'bed-time' is commonly determined by staff availability to provide assistance, rather than personal preference. Even a simple gesture like knocking before entering the house or a resident's bedroom can be overlooked because this 'home' is also a workplace. Placing the training within people's homes brought this into focus.

Although seemingly insignificant, these types of experiences are a daily reality for people dependent on others because of needs arising from a disability. The sense of disempowerment engendered by this reality cumulatively impacts upon a person's self-esteem. People feel devalued and disrespected and react accordingly.

4.6 The training response

In the context of a diversity awareness training program, these realities were both compelling and impossible to ignore. It must be remembered that the original training focus was to explore and redress the negative attitudes of participants with a cognitive disability towards staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The majority of individuals actually recruited by the CIP were not people with a cognitive disability. However, regardless of disability, the training had to start from where people currently were in relation to diversity. For the majority of participants, this meant starting with the overwhelming and consuming consequences of their disability experience.

Therefore, the focus of the workshops changed from anti-racism/cultural-diversity awareness to providing participants with an opportunity to express and explore their own diversity, starting with disability. In this way, the issue of empowerment became the dominant theme. This was a necessary first step.

Thus, the training process became a series of focus groups addressing the issue of empowerment. This enabled the people recruited to have their disability experiences validated. For these participants, embracing diversity in its broadest context, including anti-racism, would need to be a second training stage.

4.7 Revised training content

As explained above, the original training sessions were dismantled and replaced by a focus group approach. This provided opportunities for participants to explore, share, discuss and problem solve. Key themes addressed during this process were respect, empowerment, finding a voice, and working within existing constraints. Story-telling provided a powerful medium through which participants and facilitators explored these issues. Once participants felt heard, they were able to offer solutions to many of the problems arising from their lived experience.

4.7.1 Length of sessions

The sessions worked best in two hour blocks. The original three hour timeframe proved taxing for many participants. The first two groups each participated in a total of three two hour sessions. The third group demonstrated a well rounded view of diversity, which extended considerably beyond their disability experience. Given this, the training program both original and revised, was not suitable for this group. Therefore, the third group only participated in two sessions.

4.7.2 Group size and characteristics

The groups varied in size from six to three. The largest group was the most diverse with respect to functional ability. Even with two facilitators, working with six people with such varying needs around a challenging subject matter, was difficult. This group included two members with a cognitive disability, one who was non-verbal. The other members of the group had a physical disability, one also who was non-verbal. The rate, style, preferences, and baseline for learning were so different between participants that an inclusive approach was not possible. The provision of information about participants' individual needs prior to training would have enabled these realities to be more effectively addressed. Forming groups of people with similar abilities would also have been a more effective strategy.

4.7.3 Revised exercises

Session One

The original training program started with a focus on 'self'. This was still relevant. As intended, the first session worked through a series of simple exercises directed at building group rapport (see Figure 2). Resources required were minimal as most of this was conducted verbally. A record of participants' comments and a summary of group process were kept on butchers' paper during the session.

Starting with a 'name game', each participant was invited to introduce themselves. Each was then asked to state what they hoped to get out of the training process, and any concerns they had about participating. The first group made it clear that they were unaware they were participating in a training program because they had only been told they were attending a meeting. After clarifying that the training was based on the principles underpinning Harmony Day, i.e. living with and valuing community diversity, participants indicated a variety of reasons for attending:

"Attended Harmony Day, want to find out how other cultures live"

"Learn how to express ourselves with other people"

"Everyone is different"

"To find out what meeting's about"

"To understand about people"

"Just came with Nick"

The second and third groups were much clearer about both being invited to participate in a training program, and that it was about understanding cultural diversity:

"Want to learn to work better with diversity/non-English speaking background people at work. Improve relations between able bods and those in wheelchairs"

"Learn how it runs – find out what different language people need"

"Communication gap between us and other cultures"

As an introduction to diversity, participants were asked to name their favourite colour/sound, why they liked it, how it made them feel, and what the world would be like if that colour/sound was no longer in it. This exercise was used to explore difference from a personal perspective. Sharing these reflections encouraged people to consider their own preferences and compare them to others in the group. A discussion then followed pointing out that liking different colours/sounds would not cause a world war or lead to violence but other differences in society could. These 'other differences' were then presented and included age, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, culture, disability, class, and religion/spiritual beliefs. Although not discussed in any detail, participants were encouraged to look at these issues through the lens of their own experience. At this point the groups' preoccupation with the disability aspects of their lives started to dominate.

The original intention was to use personal differences/preferences highlighted by the group to explore conflict and how individuals resolved it. Examples were to be taken from people's every day lives. However, when asked to provide examples of conflict in the house and how it was managed, the participants spoke about their frustration with not having their needs met around their disability. Despite attempts to bring the discussion back to a broader focus the participants only moved further into their disability experience.

How do you deal with household conflict?

"Bottle it up and then let off steam"

"Staff forget it's our house"

"They (staff) don't listen"

"Don't get treated as you should"

How do you solve problems?

"Just have to put up with it"

"Try and talk to them (i.e. the staff)"

"Do as you're told and do as they tell you"

"Called into room and treated like kids"

This became a dominant and unmovable focus for the first two groups. The more attempts that were made to broaden diversity

beyond disability only resulted in participants more insistently vocalising their disability-related frustrations. It became clear that without assisting people to work through this, no progress was going to be made. Once people began to feel they were being heard with respect to their disability experience, the group process became more constructive. However, it is this point that the Report seeks to clarify and explore. Detailing the process as it unfolded seeks to explain why anti-racism awareness training per se was not possible for the participants recruited.

Subsequent sessions

With the emphasis now on validation and exploration of disability life experiences, a focus group format was adopted. Within this parameter people worked through issues of disempowerment and marginalisation. Although it was clearly not possible to fully address these issues in the time available, it remained a necessary starting point. 'Being heard' was the key. From here positive strategies for change were able to be developed.

One such exercise asked participants to come up with slogans that could be used on posters to promote empowerment and diversity. They were encouraged to draw on ideas they'd encountered through TV, popular songs, and advertising jingles. This was both a fun and positive way of engaging participants around an issue they predominantly saw as negative. The slogans developed included:

"R-E-S-P-E-C-T: Find out what it means for me"

"Respect is a two way street"

"Try a little kindness"

"Spend a day in my wheelchair"

"Knock on my door, ring on my bell, tap on my shoulder too"

"Treat me as you'd like me to treat you"

"Diversity: Dive into it"

"Diversity is the Spice of Life: So spice up your life today"

Participants were then encouraged to develop specific recommendations around these issues for consideration by the CIP (see Section 5). Given the actual focus of the training process,

a number of these recommendations fall outside the *Living in Harmony* objectives.

4.8 Other relevant issues

As recognised by CIP, diversity awareness training should occur in the context of a broader organisational framework. Several policy statements relating to aspects of working with diversity had been developed independent of the Project. These included the documents *Working Together*, *Guidelines to Maximise Client-Staff Communication*, and *Client Responsibilities*. In fact, the CIP was established to facilitate an organisation-wide, yet individualised, response to client needs. The phrase, *it's okay to be different*, actually comes from the CIP *Profile and Services* document.

However, as was discovered during the training process, diversity awareness is a complex issue and can be difficult to address effectively. The required process of change takes time, persistence, regular reflection, and a commitment to open discussion. It also must start from where people are. Although the participants in this Project were few in number, their experiences raised awkward but essential issues. By adopting a more open approach to working with how diversity was experienced by this marginalised group, important insights came to the surface. Uncomfortable as these may be, they serve as a reminder, and potential jumping-off point, for deeper consideration. This was the key point of learning to come from the training stage of the Project. Taking this further would involve asking some difficult questions such as:

- How best to prepare staff to work with people with experiences of marginalisation?
- How should the impact of power relations in care settings be acknowledged and addressed?
- How can clients with these experiences be best supported to explore their own diversity and its importance in their care relationships with staff?
- How can organisations with a history of institutionalisation most meaningfully move beyond the inevitable enculturation associated with this history?

- How can clients who have become disempowered through their marginalisation realise their autonomy?
- How can clients achieve true participation in decision-making processes about the structures designed to meet the needs arising from their disability?

Developing effective ways of responding to these questions remains an ongoing challenge. The training outcomes from this Project offer a potential starting point.

5 Conclusion

In order to be effective, anti-racism and diversity awareness training need to start from how people currently understand the issue of diversity. Such training must address the intersection between all forms of social oppression. Some people with a disability may not be able to access this intersection and, therefore, anti-racism awareness on first exposure to the issues. This is because the effects of disability-related marginalisation dominate their experience of diversity.

The experience of institutionalisation can leave a powerful legacy. This includes a sense of self over-shadowed by the negative realities of living with a disability. Survival in the face of dependence, disempowerment, and vulnerability, becomes the goal. Other people's needs, particularly when those people are considered more advantaged, eg community housing support staff, become secondary. These include staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

It is acknowledged that some people with a disability, as with the broader community, do express racist attitudes. This issue does need to be addressed. In the context of this Project, some of the complexities associated with redressing this challenging issue were highlighted. Key amongst these was that working only at the individual level was insufficient.

A whole of organisation approach to diversity awareness and anti-racism must underpin every strategy designed to achieve positive change. Such an approach would involve responding to racism in all its forms - from the individual to the systemic. This means having in place policies and

procedures able to empower individuals, both staff and clients, to respond to racist attitudes and behaviours. It also includes developing and implementing integrated strategies over time. This approach requires constant review and must be informed from all perspectives.

The “It’s Okay to be Different” Project was aimed at redressing individual client attitudes towards people, in particular carers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Although important, this was perhaps not the best place to start. The lessons learned through implementation of the Project shed much needed light on the complexities of working with this group around these issues. Empowerment is the place to start, and this involves a willingness to listen and work from where people are. This is best summed up by the participants themselves, when they said:

“R-E-S-P-E-C-T: Find out what it means for me”

6 Recommendations

6.1 Community Harmony

- That CIP consider celebrating *Harmony Day* annually.
- That a sub-committee made up of residents and staff be established to support the implementation of *Harmony Day* celebrations.
- That CIP support residents to access opportunities to meet people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to talk and share experiences of disability and diversity.

6.2 Training

- That CIP consult with, and provide support to, residents to access training relevant to their needs regarding community harmony.
- That orientation of new staff includes consideration of the diversity of residents and their individual care needs.
- That residents are consulted about, and potentially included in, staff orientation processes to ensure diversity issues are considered from the residents’ perspective.
- That all staff are trained to respond to racism within the workplace

6.3 Participation in decision-making

- That the RRCS Board reflects community diversity in its membership by facilitating inclusion of clients/residents on the Board.

6.4 Whole of organisation

- That RRCS undertake a clearly time-framed whole of organisation cultural competence audit to identify opportunities and constraints in working with community diversity.
- That all policies and procedures be reviewed to ensure the principles of social justice, access & equity, and community harmony are reflected.
- That the *Client Accident Incident and Near Miss* policy and procedures are reviewed to enable incidents involving racial vilification to be documented objectively.
- That the *Accident/Incident & Near Miss Report Flow Chart* be reviewed so that it includes a clear process for responding to incidents that are racially motivated.

7 Appendices

7.1 Figure 1 References

- | | |
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"It's Okay to be Different"

Diversity Awareness Training Resources

Prepared by
Ursula King and Maria Katrivesis

October 2003

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Introduction

These training resources were developed in response to the outcomes of the “*It’s Okay to be Different*” Project, a joint initiative of the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW (MDAA) and the Royal Rehabilitation Centre’s Community Integration Program (CIP). The Project was funded by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) under the Australian Government’s *Living in Harmony* initiative.

The aim of the “It’s Okay to be Different” Project was to address the vulnerability of people with cognitive disabilities to simplistic and stereotypical messages about race and ethnicity. This aim arose from the experience of workplace racism exhibited by people with cognitive disabilities towards CIP workers who were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The following exercises are examples of activities suitable for working with people with a cognitive disability around diversity awareness. It is important to note these exercises do not constitute a training program in and of themselves, rather they are offered as possible entry points for discussion and exploration of diversity issues.

1 What’s in a Name?

Description:

Our name constitutes a central part of our identity. Names often have a family or social history that helps locate us in the world. The meaning or origin of a name can be a useful learning tool for highlighting the cultural aspect of our identity.

Objectives:

- To get to know each other and facilitate group cohesion and rapport.
- To develop an appreciation of the importance of names in a person’s identity.

- To introduce the concept of diversity.

Resources:

Name tags, butchers' paper, markers

Process:

Introduce the exercise by explaining that we are all given a name at birth, or several names. Our names have meanings – social, cultural, familial. Where we come from/our family comes from will often influence the name we have. By discussing the origins and meanings we attach to names, participants are able to explore issues of their own and others' identity. Sharing this enables the issue of diversity to be introduced.

Distribute name tags. Facilitator then invites each participant to state their name, identify where it comes from and what it means to the participant.

Time:

Allow five minutes to introduce the exercise to participants, then 3-5 minutes per person.

2 Colours and Sounds

Description:

This exercise is a simple yet powerful way of introducing the concepts of similarities and differences. It is also a non-threatening way to introduce conflict resolution principles.

The exercise can be used with people with any type of disability. However facilitator needs to consider sensory impairments and modify exercise accordingly.

Objectives:

- To creatively explore individual preferences.
- To promote acceptance of difference.
- To identify ways of dealing with difference.

Resources:

Paper and (coloured) pens can be used if participants are able to write, otherwise, can be done as an oral exercise.

Process:

Part One: Ask each participant to identify their favourite colour or sound. Ask participants to:

- Identify why they like that particular colour or sound.
- How does the sound or colour make you feel?
- What would the world be like if that colour or sound was no longer in it?

Divide the participants into pairs if you are working with a large group. Facilitator may need to support some participants. Discuss the similarities and differences between participants' preferences.

Part Two: State that people's preferences regarding colour or sound are unlikely to lead to a world war or violence. However, some differences can lead to this. Ask participants to identify what kinds of differences can cause conflict. Prompt if necessary by referring to the breadth of diversity, i.e. class, ethnicity, race, sex, sexuality, disability, language, religion/spiritual beliefs, etc. This section can then lead into an exploration of diversity on a broader scale.

Time:

Part One: Allow each participant about 10 minutes, with 2–5 minutes to feedback to the group.

Part Two: Allow about 30 minutes.

3 Language is Power

Description:

Drawing from people's direct experience of language-based discrimination, this exercise provides the opportunity for participants to be heard. These experiences can then be translated into positive language to describe diversity.

Objectives:

- To promote positive language around diversity, including disability.
- To explore issues/feelings around participants' own diversity, especially as it relates to their disability.
- Personal empowerment through reclaiming language.

Resources:

Butchers' paper and pens

Process:

Divide a piece of butchers' paper in half. On one side write '*positive language*' on the other write '*negative language*'.

Starting with the issue of disability, ask participants to brainstorm both negative and positive language they have heard used to describe disability. Write up responses and discuss. This discussion focuses participants on the power of positively reframing language as a strategy for promoting diversity. Choose another area of diversity (eg ethnicity, sexuality, youth, etc), and repeat above process. Larger groups can be broken into small groups, each of which are given the task of discussing a different type of diversity.

Time:

Allow 10-15 minutes for generation of ideas and 15-20 minutes for discussion.

4 Catchphrase

Description:

This is a fun brainstorming exercise that encourages participants to explore the issue of diversity from a popular culture perspective and can be used to develop resources for use in participants' immediate environment. It can be conducted as a single exercise or in two parts.

Objectives:

- To encourage development of positive messages about diversity.
- To facilitate personal empowerment.
- To develop resources that promote diversity.

Resources:

- Butchers' paper and pens
- If second part undertaken, resource as appropriate (eg, t-shirts, tape-recorder, digital camera, screen-printing materials, etc)

Process:

Part One: Ask participants to imagine themselves as advertising executives. They have been given the job of selling 'diversity'. The brief is to use existing songs or catchphrases to sell the idea of diversity to the community. Facilitator can use some examples of catchphrases or popular songs to initiate discussion, eg:

- "R-E-S-P-E-C-T: Ask what it means for me"
- "Try a little kindness"
- "Step into my shoes/spend a day in my wheelchair"
- "Take a *wheel* on the wild-side"

Part Two: Participants can be encouraged to use the catchphrases and/or popular songs identified in the first part of this exercise to develop resources that can be used to promote the concept of diversity. This material can be on paper, t-shirts, posters or tape. For example,

encourage participants to use fragments of popular songs as the basis for a taped message/sound-scape about diversity or encourage participants to design a t-shirt or poster using the 'catchphrases' developed earlier.

Time:

Part One: Allow up to one hour

Part Two: Timeframe is open.

5 Living in Harmony

Description:

This exercise starts from participants' own experience of sharing a space, eg house, work, or school. Through exploring the co-habitation/shared-space experience, issues relating to similarities and differences form the basis of a discussion around conflict resolution.

Objectives:

- To introduce the principles of conflict resolution.
- To validate existing problem solving and conflict resolution skills.
- To explore issues of harmony in the face of difference.
- To acknowledge participants' own preferences and their impacts on others.

Resources:

Butchers' paper and pens

Process:

Ask participants to think about where they live/share a space. Initiate discussion around "*what are some of the things that make it easy to share a space with other people?*" Then, "*What are the things that make it difficult to share a space with people?*". Encourage people to use real

examples. However, caution participants to be respectful of others' feelings when retelling stories.

Facilitate discussion around working through the differences encountered when people share a space. Ask participants "*How do you manage conflict/differences of opinion/different preferences (eg what to watch on telly tonight)?*" Validate positive skills in negotiation and facilitate reworking of confrontational approaches.

Time:

Allow 10-15 minutes for initial brainstorm and 15-20 minutes for discussion.

6 Life Story

Description:

'My Story' uses the narrative to explore and document key life events. This exercise enables people to have their stories heard in a focused/structured way. It provides a framework for discussion of diversity using the participants' lived experiences as the backdrop.

In undertaking this exercise, facilitator must be prepared to negotiate emotional territory with participants. It is recommended that this exercise be done only after trust has been established within the group. This exercise works best in small groups of six people or less.

Objectives:

- To facilitate the building of trust and rapport within the group.
- To validate participants lived experience.
- To explore diversity beyond personal experience.

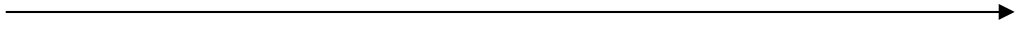
Resources:

Pens and paper and/or tape-recorder

Part Two will require additional resources depending on approach taken, eg photos, old magazines, found objects, digital camera, music, taped sounds, tape-recorder, etc.

Process:

Part One: Draw a line across a piece of paper. On the left hand end of the line write the word 'birth' and on the right hand end, draw an arrow pointing to the edge of the page, like so:

Birth 

Ask participants to mark along the line key life events that they feel have shaped who they are as people. Participants can choose to include or omit specific events according to their comfort levels/what they want to share with others.

Use your life experiences to generate an example.

Participants can then choose to take their story in its totality or to focus on one or two experiences. Ask participants the following questions:

- Why was this experience important in your life?
- What did it teach you?
- How did it impact on how you see the world?

Part Two: This part can be done in a subsequent session. Encourage participants to bring to the session: images, objects, taped sounds, music, etc that describe the key events/bring life to their story.

Participants are encouraged to develop a collage – sound or visual or both – that encapsulates key life events as identified in *Part One*.

Time:

Part One: Allow 10 minutes to introduce the exercise. 10-20 minutes to draw the life-events line.

Part Two: Timeframe is open.

CDDS

Centre for

Developmental

Disability

Studies

"It's Okay to be

Different"

Diversity and Awareness Training Evaluation

By

Noel Atkinson and Roger J. Stancliffe

Centre for Developmental Disability Studies

December 2003

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1 Evaluation of Diversity and Awareness Training

The Centre for Developmental Disability Studies (CDDS) was engaged to report on the evaluation component of the “It’s Okay to be Different”, a training program for residents of the Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney’s Community Integration Program (CIP). This was a joint initiative between the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW (MDAA) and CIP. Funding for this project was received from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) under the Australian Government’s Living in Harmony initiative.

1.1 Background

People with disability living in CIP accommodation support services receive support from staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Problems of work place racism have been exhibited by people with disabilities toward staff in CIP services. The provision of *Diversity Awareness Training* is an attempt to assist residents to be better informed of the issues of race, culture and language so they can make informed decisions about their interactions with staff from diverse backgrounds.

1.1.1 Aim of Project

The project was divided into four objectives, three objectives being undertaken by the independent consultants who were involved in developing training materials, delivery of training and modification to the training package. Training was delivered to residents who consented to be involved in the program. The Community Grants Application stated that the training program was specifically developed for people with cognitive disability⁵.

⁵ Current anti-racism training is not appropriate, as the content does not specifically support the specific learning and development needs of people with cognitive disabilities. This project aims to work with service users and provide anti-racism training which specifically supports and is based on the learning needs and abilities of people with cognitive disabilities (*Living in Harmony*, Community Grants Program, 2002, Application Form, p.8)

1.1.2 Delays in Commencement of Training

It was envisaged that the evaluation of the anti-racism and awareness training would review the existing CIP records of relevant incidents and complaints prior to and following the delivery of training. However, delays were incurred in the delivery of training due to misunderstandings that ethics approval was required for recruitment and training prior to the commencement of the pilot project. This delayed the project for six months and training did not commence until August 2003.

The evaluation component was dependent upon ethics approval and this was received by CDDS on September 17th 2003. A preliminary meeting was held with CIP Management and the researchers from CDDS on 18th of September to clarify recruitment, consent processes for staff and residents and information relevant to the pilot project so interviews could commence as soon as possible.

1.1.3 Aim of evaluation

The evaluation aim was to examine the impact of the *Diversity Awareness Training* which was tailored to the needs of people with disabilities, specifically residents with an intellectual disability supported by the Community Integration Program (CIP).

1.2 Methods

The evaluation method incorporated information gathered from relevant documentation which examined the:

- Anti-discrimination environment within CIP
- relevant incidents and complaints for periods prior to and following the delivery of training
- training content and process.

Secondly, views on the anti-racism awareness training were collected through semi-structured interviews with key informants, including participating CIP residents, direct support staff and management. This involved the

- development of interview schedules
- processes for participant recruitment

- analysis of the data.

1.2.1 Documentation

1.2.1.1 Policy documentation

Anti-discrimination policy documents were requested from CIP Management that were relevant to their accommodation services, as well as the reported incidents of racism within CIP services. Documentation on the content of the *Diversity Awareness Training* was requested from the consultants and the relevant documentation was received by e-mail.

1.2.1.2 Documentation on incidents and racism complaints

Incidents considered to be overtly racist, as well as indirect comments regarding a staff member's ethnicity, were reported for the period, January 2003 through to October 2003.

1.2.1.3 Training content and processes

The Diversity Awareness Training Resources document was obtained via e-mail from the consultants as well as the final report of *Its Okay to be Different* project.

1.2.2 Data Collection:

1.2.2.1 Interview schedule for Semi-structured interviews

Interview schedules were constructed for both staff and clients for the semi structured interviews (Appendix 1). Photographs of the consultants were obtained with their permission and used as identification as a memory aid for the clients and to ensure those interviewed were those who participated in the *Diversity Awareness Training*.

The client interview schedule contained questions with relevant prompts to help with information gathering. These questions sought client views on (a) the content of the *Diversity Awareness Training* and how they felt about participating, (b) the comprehensibility of training and its relevance to their living situation, (c) whether they (or other clients) would now do anything differently when interacting with staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, (d) whether they would recommend *Diversity Awareness Training* to other clients, (e) what characteristics they like or

dislike in staff who work with them, (f) whether training made any difference to their views about staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and (g) their knowledge of any other steps being taken by CIP to help clients and staff to get along harmoniously.

The staff interview schedule contained questions seeking their views about (a) the content of the *Diversity Awareness Training*, (b) the comprehensibility of training and the relevance to clients, (c) the effect of training on client attitudes and behaviour when interacting with staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, (d) their knowledge of any other steps being taken by CIP to help clients and staff to get along harmoniously, (e) how well the *Diversity Awareness Training* complemented other workplace policies and practices to diminish workplace racism, (f) suggestions regarding additional steps that could be taken to deal constructively with this issue, and (g) their views on the training being provided solely by outside consultants.

One of the consultants was interviewed and the following three questions were presented for comment: (a) would you do diversity awareness training differently following your experience with this project; (b) were there any differences between the three training groups and (c) recommendations that have arisen from this project. The consultant directed these questions to their final report to further inform these issues.

1.2.2.2 Participant recruitment

Through the Management team of CIP fifteen staff members were given an information sheet about the *Its Okay to be Different* project and asked if they wished to participate in the evaluation. Eleven staff consented to be interviewed, six of whom provided a suitable time for interview at the office of CIP services. The five remaining staff elected to be interviewed by telephone. Consent was obtained from all staff members prior to interview either verbally, followed by signed documentation or signed consent at time of interview. One staff member withdrew consent following interview. Of the staff members interviewed, six were from the management team and five were direct support workers who supported participating clients who had agreed to undertake the training. Four staff who did not participate in interviews, one was on leave, two did not return calls and one support worker had been on sick leave and had no awareness of the training program.

The twelve clients who had participated in the diversity and awareness training were approached by a team manager from CIP who obtained consent from eight persons, which represented participants across the three focus groups. The time restrictions placed on this evaluation allowed for six interviews which represented participants from two of the focus groups. Of the remaining four participants, one person had only attended one session, one was on holidays and two were unable to be contacted. Five interviews were completed; one person failed to attend the arranged meeting withdrawing consent for interview. The interviews were arranged with participants and conducted in their homes. Five participants interviewed, two women and three men, did not have cognitive disability. All those interviewed had physical disabilities reflecting the composition of the clients who participated in the training.

One of the consultants was interviewed by telephone to enable comments on their experience of the *Diversity Awareness Training Project*.

1.2.2.3 Analysis of the data

The delay in commencing the project and the misunderstandings of the need for ethics approval restricted the time allocated for interviews. Responses were not tape recorded and the data reflects notes scribed at interview of the participant responses to the questions. Each participant was given a coded number and their responses collated together under each question from the interview schedule. Interpretations were extracted from the data to provide broad information on the Diversity Awareness Training Project. This cultural studies methodology locates the interpretation of data within an analysis of broader social and cultural process (Ezzy, 2002, p. 103).

1.3 Findings

1.3.1 Anti-discrimination environment within CIP

Anti-discrimination policy relevant to CIP services is encompassed in the broad policy document covering all the services of the Royal Rehabilitation Centre, Sydney (RRCS). The framework reflects the anti-discrimination laws and the Equal Employment Opportunity legislation applicable within the State of New South Wales and the Commonwealth which supports the notion that workers are entitled to a racism-free work environment. In support of the anti-discrimination legislation CIP services have developed

three plain English brochures entitled *Client Responsibilities*, *Guidelines to Maximise Client-Staff Communication*, and *Working Together*.

Client Responsibilities addressed client rights, identifying self-determination, respect, freedom from abuse, privacy and confidentiality, complaints and safety. These issues were further discussed in terms of client responsibilities. For example, it is stated that *...As your home is also a workplace for staff, you also need to provide as far as reasonable, a safe working environment for staff*. In this brochure clients were also informed that clients treated staff with courtesy and respect, and aggression towards staff is not acceptable. Second brochure *Guidelines to Maximise Client-Staff Communication* addressed the issues of maximising participation by clients, their family, significant others, advocates and guardians in decision making. The final brochure *Working Together*, presented protocols for mutual respect and courtesy, stating that staff members are professionals and should be treated as such and that the organisation did not tolerate aggression or disrespect to staff. There was also an emphasis on the fostering of partnerships with families, significant others, advocates and guardians. There are no specific references to racism in these documents.

1.3.2 Incidents and complaints records

Incidents and complaints records were available for eight incidents of verbal and/or physical aggression involving six clients. Of the six clients two were described as having an intellectual disability, one of whom had additional psychiatric disability and the remaining four clients were identified as having physical disabilities. The group consisted of two female and four male clients. The incidents formally reported occurred from January 2003 through to October 2003. These suspected racist-based incidents were gathered from formally reported incidents from client files and de-identified so that anonymity was protected. Five incidents reported occurred in the 7 months prior to training, two occurred in the 1-2 months post-training and the one remaining incident was not time identified except by year. **This small number of formally reported incidents could not be used to meaningfully determine pre and post training effects.**

The CIP complaints documentation indicated there were no clearly stated criteria for identifying race-based complaints. It was suspected that incidents that could be racist based were subsumed within reports of physical or verbal aggression. There were three incidents reported for one client which contained statements of verbal abuse that was expressed in

racist terms. One incident reported that a client refused to allow a person of colour to feed or wash him. On this occasion the staff person had been employed through a relief staff employment agency to fill a weekend shift. In reporting these incidents, the manager made the comment that, although there was no actual description of racism by the reporting staff, it was known that racist terms had been expressed against this staff person. The incident documentation noted that some clients preferred staff from a particular relief agency where the staff was predominantly of Anglo-Saxon ethnicity. Evidence of this preference came from the feedback given to the employment relief agency by their staff who had been vilified by CIP clients. CIP management was asked if contact had been made with some relief employment agencies to clarify if complaints against CIP clients by their staff had been made. Sensitive negotiations had occurred with some relief agencies in an attempt to minimise such incidents in the future regarding the behaviour of some clients. Comments on other incidents showed it was difficult to determine if the comments or observed behaviours were racist based.

Though the number of incidents formally reported was small it can be concluded that there is evidence of racist behaviour and verbal racist abuse from some CIP clients towards staff from culturally different backgrounds.

1.3.3 Training content and process

From the Training Resources document the training contained exercises that addressed identity reflected in one's name; the concepts of similarities and differences including the principles of conflict resolution. Exercises were presented to the participants to develop awareness of language-based discrimination and how this can be translated into positive language to describe diversity. Life stories and lived experiences provided a framework for discussions of diversity within a community.

The consultants had requested de-identified information about incidents involving racial vilifying of staff by clients with a cognitive disability in CIP services but this had not been received. Without this specific knowledge the training was generically based and presentation became dependent upon the issues raised by participants during the training process on race and cultural diversity. Following the introductory training session with the first group, content and strategies for training were reviewed by the consultants. Based on the premise that *...diversity awareness training must work from where people are now*; the intended direction of the

training, (that is identifying and redressing participants' views regarding race, racism and racial discrimination) required review (King & Katrivesis, 2003, p.20).

1.3.3.1 Changes to content of the awareness training

Following the first training session the consultants considered that the participants' own disability related experiences so dominated their lives it made it difficult for them to consider the oppression of others. Consultant comments and discussion in the final report stated that two focus groups disregarded anything other than their disability-related needs and expressed strong feelings of disempowerment. These considerations changed the focus of the workshops from anti-racism/cultural diversity awareness to providing participants an opportunity to *...express and explore their own diversity, starting with disability* (King & Katrivesis, 2003, p.23). The major focus of the training then became issues of empowerment, providing the opportunity for the participants to have their disability experiences validated. The revised training content addressed the themes of respect, empowerment, and finding a voice within their own dependent care environment. Participants in the third focus group, who lived independently on their own, did not have cognitive disability and it was suggested were able to discuss at some level the issue of cultural diversity. The revised and original training for this third group was considered not to be suitable, for their world view extended beyond their disability experience.

1.3.4 Staff interviews

1.3.4.1 Reporting and identifying racism

There were ten consenting participants who were interviewed and provided information on incidents of racism that they had either experienced themselves or had heard of racist incidents directed at staff members in the workplace. The majority of staff (8) had raised the issue and discussed racism in the workplace at combined management meetings. Two respondents stated they had not experienced or observed racism in the workplace. One person had requested to be moved to another location due to racist comments.

The majority of staff had verbally discussed issues of racism, but few were inclined to make formal or written complaints. As one staff member stated *...I do not think writing it out is a good idea – better to deal with it directly*

with the people concerned. Anecdotal evidence was the preferred means of identifying incidents believed to be culturally discriminatory towards staff and this evidence was often provided within a risk assessment context or critical incident report. A staff member indicated that the incident report format did not specifically identify incidence of racism, and as a consequence behaviours that could have a racist base would be seen as aggression. The difficulty in identifying racism was reflected in the comment that there was a *...fine margin between what is and what isn't racism. It goes unseen or recognised belatedly.* Another respondent was ambivalent about identifying racist situations stating that *...In the beginning I thought I observed racism but discovered it not to be the case – sometimes it is a preference for a particular person.* This made data collection difficult and one staff member stated that people with developmental disability were not immune to stereotypic responses, and went on to suggest that clients could be responding to staff change not necessarily to cultural difference.

1.3.4.2 How racism was expressed

Two staff members had experienced discriminatory comments directly from clients, mainly through verbal abuse. Five staff had heard anecdotal evidence of racism expressed through derogatory language towards other staff members from varying ethnic backgrounds. Language abuse targeted cultural differences of colour and included reference to sexual orientation and gender. Physical aggression, as well as more subtle behaviours expressed through body language, had also been observed by staff. A number of direct support workers commented that they had observed and experienced subtle racism from other support staff in the work place. In one workplace situation a client had directly insulted a staff member from a different culture and the comments were ignored by the other support worker. Following this incident the staff member observed that *...Anglo workers need to have training to respect other cultures – to understand that some cultures like Indian is a collective culture compared to Anglo culture where the emphasis is on independence.* Comments were made that racist attitudes had been observed from other staff in CIP as well as in the community. This had also extended to an advocate for a client who put in writing their views on the difficulty of understanding a staff person from another culture and the impact this would have on their friend (This incident was mentioned by more than one staff member and presented across questions as an exemplar of endemic racism).

1.3.4.3 Staff understanding of the Diversity Awareness Training

Staff were in agreement that the intention of the training program was to facilitate awareness of cultural difference. The training was about attitude change by giving clients awareness training so they could develop *...appropriate interactions towards people from different cultural backgrounds*. The training was to generate a level of awareness where clients and staff could self monitor their own behaviours.

A number of staff commented that this was just a beginning and it would take years to effect attitude change. Two staff expressed the view that it was wonderful the organisation (CIP) was addressing the issue of racism. Arising from these comments staff stated that the training should be broadened to include all personnel in the organisation as well as community members.

The awareness training package was for clients who had an intellectual disability. A number of staff raised the issue that those who attended the training did not have an intellectual disability and that *...everyone* (training participants) *was well aware of what the training was all about and that the training was really not for them*. A comment was made that clients who had an intellectual disability found it difficult to attend meetings as there were some difficulties for staff in organising suitable transport.

A number of staff discussed the change in focus of the training program, suggesting that as the training was based on identity issues it became an empowerment exercise, *... a whingeing session*. One comment stated that the *...training provided by the consultants did not align with the original project brief*. It was acknowledged that the consultants had provided reasons for the change in training focus which had been explained in the final report *It's Okay to be Different*.

1.3.4.4 Staff comments on how well the clients understood the content.

Comments on the level of participant understanding varied. A distinction was made between those who had a cognitive impairment being less likely to have understood the content of the training program compared to those with a physical disability. Some staff had received direct feedback from the participants, whereas others commented that those in one particular focus group were very secretive providing no feedback on the meetings with the consultants. A number of staff commented that the feedback from participants was positive. Clients were very interested and happy about

the session as shown by comments heard from the clients, such as ...*we were told not to use bad words and be kind to everyone*. One person stated that the training was just a bit of an orientation but most participants would not have understood the intention of the training.

1.3.4.5 Staff comments on the relevance of the training

Seven staff stated that the training was relevant and that the information had the ...*potential of providing benefits to anyone*. A staff member indicated that the topic of racism was not addressed as the agenda had been waylaid by one particular group of clients. Another comment stated that the meetings were ...*a power game which exposed the hidden bullying culture of some clients*. Other comments raised on the issue of relevance stated that the training was based on the personal experiences of the clients and it was socially right for this time bringing racial awareness formally onto the agenda of the organisation.

1.3.4.6 Staff comments on the effects of the training.

The majority of staff found it ...*hard to say* if any change in attitude or behaviour had occurred. Some staff commented they had not witnessed any effect of the training or received any feedback; one commenting that their experience is that people who are ...*aggressive pick on other peoples weaknesses couched in racial terms*. A staff member commented that they had not observed any immediate change and no change in management attitudes. However, two staff indicated they had noticed greater awareness of language and some indication of self-monitoring behaviour. For a group of clients the staff commented that ...*(I) have to keep reminding them they cannot speak or behave this way. A positive effect in some behaviour – respect of others around her, especially with the person she is sharing*. Another comment reflected the same observations ...*I can tell you for a couple of days they were wonderful – self-monitoring, kind to each other and staff, saying things like ‘one should not use words like that’*.

1.3.4.7 Staff comments on policy alignment and practices

Seven staff positively responded to this question stating that the training was consistent with the policies of CIP and reflected the anti-discrimination legislation. Some staff indicated that the organisation (CIP) had relevant written policies but practices did not reflect the intentions of anti-discrimination legislation. In practice staff needed to implement consequences for racist client behaviour. Generally, there was agreement

that the training given to clients by the consultants supported the written policies of the organisation. The consultants understood the policies and CIP staff role-modelled good practice that reflected the anti-discrimination policies. Racism and diversity was a huge subject and as one staff member commented, the feedback received from the three focus groups was that *...there was a focus between independent views and the group view – one group introduced empowerment as an issue.*

1.3.4.8 Staff comments on CIP's efforts in addressing the issue of workplace racism

Majority of staff were positive in their response though comments were made that the issue of racism was embedded in aggressive behaviours and addressed through behaviour plans. The subtle practices of racism were not formally reported by staff making it difficult to address this issue in the workplace. A further comment indicated that avoidance by staff of confronting the issue of racism in the workplace resulted in making this issue less of a priority for management. Explanations for this situation appeared to be based on the assumption that *...Staff working in CIP reflect multicultural diversity and this helps to make everyone aware.* Two staff commented they were not aware of other training or how this issue had been addressed. They were supportive of the policy to employ multicultural workers but stated that *...there is nothing to take care of the workers when they are faced with racism* and continuing to comment that *...training should be happening all the time.*

1.3.4.9 Suggestions from staff in addressing racism in the workplace

The suggestions in addressing racism in the workplace covered the following:

- Incident reporting policy needs to be clarified to include racism in the definition, differentiation between aggression and clients being 'bossy'.
- Strategies in awareness training to be implemented that incorporate positive personal connections resulting in positive experiences for clients. This is based on the assumption that *...change occurs at the personal level and training needs to reflect this.*
- Training and free counselling for staff as *...some staff don't know how to handle it (racism) and it can hurt them emotionally ...affect their private lives.* Training could be achieved through role

modelling sessions at staff meetings ...*for staff can bring a lot of experience to the group.*

- Staff and clients need to mix together to encourage personal connections. This arose from a staff comment ...*CIP needs to recognise that people leave because of stress, staff need something to keep them motivated- there is no incentive to keep carers and the job is very isolating and demotivating – don't know when I will see the team leader.*
- Training needs to be ongoing for all from the management down – ... *we need to plan the next step, it is on the agenda and is now open to discussion.*
- Clients need to be informed behaviour is not acceptable and will not be tolerated by CIP/RRCS.

1.3.4.10 Staff comments on the training intervention solely in the hands of outside consultants

Five staff responded to this question and expressed the view that external consultants provided independence and legitimacy to the training. The following comments reflect this view that *consultants ...provide 'fresh eyes' no corporate baggage...clients may respond more effectively to perceptions of 'expertise'*. Though agreeing with the above view, one staff member suggested that training might be more effective if it was done through strategies in-house for this would address the issue immediately. The use of consultants would be dependent upon their understanding of the learning needs of people with disabilities.

1.3.4.11 Staff comments on the ethics of requesting /requiring participation by residents.

Five staff responded to this question, four indicating it did not seem to be applicable and should be considered a normal part of service provision.

Rather than obtaining formal ethics approval and written consent for participation, the key issue was seen to be confidentiality. This issue was considered important to ensure that researchers/ consultants and trainers understood and respected client privacy. No concerns were reported in this regard.

Based on the information provided in the final report from the consultants, on comments by participants in the evaluation, and on our own analysis of

the situation, gaining formal ethics approval and written informed consent for training was considered to be unnecessary.

1.3.4.12 Conclusion from Staff interviews

Reporting and identifying racism presented difficulties for staff. Racist incidents were reported where clients abused the CIP staff from culturally different backgrounds, but incidents also included staff-to-staff discrimination and discrimination by advocates towards staff. There was reluctance by staff to formally complain of racist incidents to management and it was suspected that racism in the workplace was under-reported. One factor identified that related to this under-reporting was that there was no criterion for identifying racism and suspected incidents were subsumed under aggressive behaviour. Difficulties in identifying racist incidents by staff varied. Client discriminatory actions could be attributed to staff changes, personal preferences for a staff member, and 'bullying' strategies by some of the CIP residents.

The organisation was complimented on the multicultural composition of the CIP staff. Staff members who had been exposed to racism in the workplace needed support from other staff members and management.

Staff viewed the Diversity Awareness Training to be relevant to the lives of the clients but acknowledged that those with an intellectual disability may have had some difficulties in comprehension. As the majority of clients who participated were those who had physical disability they were aware that the training program was to address the issues of racism. The training was regarded as a positive first step in addressing racism in the workplace and reflected the policies of the organisation. However, there were some negative and ambivalent responses to the translating of anti-discrimination legislation into practice.

There were mixed responses to the effect of the training on client behaviour, a small number of staff indicated they witnessed some improvement. Most staff reported that the cultural awareness training should be ongoing. The majority view was that training by external consultants was appropriate.

Suggestions by staff to alleviate racism in the workplace included, guidelines for reporting behaviours to management, implementing strategies to improving relationships between staff from ethnically diverse backgrounds and those clients who were considered troublesome,

recognition by management of staff stress arising from a racist environment, diversity awareness training to be ongoing and to include all employees of the CIP, and finally to inform clients strongly that racist behaviour was not acceptable.

1.3.5 Client Interviews

1.3.5.1 Client views on how they felt about the Diversity Awareness Training

The five clients who were interviewed attended the three sessions and all indicated they thoroughly enjoyed the meetings, finding them interesting. These views were expressed in the following comments. *It was fun and enjoyable – love having people coming to the house.* Other comments referred to content stating that they *...found the meetings very interesting and would recommend others to go –we had a good conversation and a committee should be formed so we can celebrate harmony day once a year.* One client indicated that he did not learn anything, stating *...mostly I knew.* Four of the five clients indicated they would tell others to attend meetings, one stating that this training should be ongoing.

1.3.5.2 Client views on the content and understanding of the program

Comments by clients on the content and understanding of the material presented at the three training sessions, indicated that they understood the material and found it relevant. One client had difficulty but generally understood the content of difference, stating that *...It was OK to talk about (anti-racism) but making people do it is another thing – this is the hard bit. We live in a multicultural society – lots of people are different.* Another client stated that they *...went into all of it,* and then proceeded to specify the content of the sessions. First meeting they discussed racism, second meeting talked about disability in Australia and overseas, and final meeting discussed disability overseas and the consultants recommended that *...we stay in Australia for wheelchair access was a real problem in other countries.* Another client was well versed in the anti-racism and disability literature stating that good advocacy was needed and this issue had been discussed with the consultants.

1.3.5.3 Client understandings of being different in the context of cultural difference.

Being different was explained in broad terms such as *...Australia had a lot of cultural diversity – and differences in ...colour, religion and disability*, were discussed in the sessions and the material had been presented very clearly. Two of the clients indicated that the sessions only touched the surface and more time was needed for this issue. One client when asked if they had heard racist comments stated clearly *...My goodness yes – from both staff and clients*. Extending this further the client was asked how they responded to this situation, and they replied... *Best to speak to the person directly*. Another client acknowledge it was *OK to be different* but then added *...I just need them (staff) to care*. One client when asked if they had experienced racism respond in the affirmative *...Once a staff member called me an Aussie bitch...I probably am for I don't take any garbage*.

1.3.5.4 Client comments on staff differences

The client comments over all were positive and accepted that people were different and that they were exposed to a multicultural workforce. As one client stated *...we enjoy different accents, ...good to have them in the house and some agency staff seem to be more willing and pick up things quicker*. Difficulties had been experienced with language differences but this was resolved by clients asking the staff person to repeat something. Another difficulty was when staff liked to do things *...their way*. The examples given were when clients asked for a baked dinner and the person tried to bake the food in the griller and when pumpkin seeds were cooked which were impossible to eat. Another incident concerned health issues when the client asked that no salt be added in cooking as this was a risk for the person's high blood pressure and cholesterol problems. Following a comment on difference that all staff were *...human beings* the client indicated what they disliked about staff stated...*when they get impatient*. One client raised the issue of the... *rules of care imposed by CIP*. Their concern was that the rules stipulated that clients were not to get too close to carers. Carers could not be friends and the dilemma was for this client that *...when they get used to us (carers) ...then we become friends. In my position I rely on them (carers) for everything*.

1.3.5.5 Client response to being asked if they had heard racial comments and understanding of racism.

Two clients reported they had not heard racial comments in the workplace. Five clients provided comments indicating they understood the meaning of racism *...it is not OK to call people names... Yes, I have heard verbal comments and seen racist behaviour over the years – we all know it happens.* One client indicated that at times they have joked about other cultures with staff; another client stated that when a racist incident occurred they try to alleviate the situation by attempting to mediate for those involved. Mediation strategies were reminding people that they should be kind to each other.

1.3.5.6 Client response to being asked if racial incidents were discussed with the consultants.

The discussions with the consultants were described as covering *... the whole gamut of difference and we learnt to deal with it (racial situations) straight away.* Talking about cultural differences was considered to be a *...good thing* and had helped some clients to act differently towards staff. One client commented that *...I observe more – more evenly balanced and now fit easier with everyone from other cultures.* Other clients commented that they agreed with what the consultants discussed, one stating they had come from the same knowledge base of disability as one of the consultants was in a wheelchair. The final comment from one client was that though they had talked about racism with the consultants, at a broader level *...the government doesn't care, they are bored with disability...*

1.3.5.7 Client comments to raising issues/complaints of racism with CIP management, discussed /or read policies on racism and discrimination.

Three clients stated they have never raised the issue of racism or discussed this with CIP management. Four clients indicated they had seen the racism and discrimination policies and the three information sheets developed by CIP and understood the gist of the policies. One person stated they had talked about racism with other clients in the house, but not with management. Following this comment it was stated that there was a need to *...communicate more on this issue.* No one had made a complaint about a racist incident.

1.3.5.8 Client comments on developing better relations between support staff and clients.

The clear message from clients was that more training was needed, *...more face-to-face discussion to discuss the issue more broadly and in depth*. One client stated that there was a need for *...better communication, ...to learn to listen better and learn to say the right words*.

The following suggestions concerned staff changes and relief staff from agencies arising from comments such as the *...need for more stabilised staff – agency staff not good and we sometimes don't know who is coming and ...some agency staff are excellent, others need to learn more about us*.

- Organisation (CIP) and agency (relief employment agency) need more training and need to develop better lines of communication
- Better communication between team leader and direct care staff

Commenting on the training one client commented that it was a *...good thing to have outside consultants but there would have been a better balance if a CIP manager or staff member had been at the sessions*. The final comment from this client indicated that possible racist situations were *...more than just colour, staff need to listen and observe and understand that behaviour is communication*.

1.3.5.9 Conclusion from Client interviews

The five clients interviewed indicated they understood in varying degrees the content of the anti-racism and diversity awareness training presented by the consultants. Some of the clients indicated they had a clear conception of racism and the meaning of racist language and aggression, one person had experienced racist comments. Racism as an issue was acknowledged, one person stating that racism was not only associated with clients of CIP but also some staff were culpable. Racism as a discussion topic was not high on the client's agenda; one person had discussed racism with other members of the household but no one had discussed this at management level. One client's comment on racism could be interpreted as dismissive and unimportant to their circumstances. However, the majority, including the above client, indicated they had seen the relevant policies presented in the three brochures developed by CIP which had been explained to them or they had read the policies

themselves on racism and anti-discrimination. Some clients had viewed other relevant policies of the organisation.

One client brought an understanding of the complexities of racism in stating that some perceived racial situations were not only about colour or difference but could indicate other issues. Staff needed to listen and observe before making possibly unqualified racial judgements. Training was recommended across the organisation, including employment agencies that provided relief staff.

Changes in staffing, through relief agencies was raised by the group in the context of cultural diversity. One of the major concerns was the limited amount of disability knowledge agency staff brought to the workplace, and specifically the knowledge relating to personal care. Some instances of cultural misunderstandings occurred during the preparation of food.

Suggestions made by clients focused on communication and good listening and this was paramount in improving racism in the workplace and creating greater harmony between clients and staff.

A number of clients suggested that the training by the consultants had resulted in greater awareness of the issues of racism and cultural diversity and this had a positive effect on attitudes and behaviour. The training needed to be ongoing and would have been more effective if CIP management had assisted in the sessions and provided some input into the process.

Dealing with racism in the workplace client comments indicated that some had learnt to handle the racist situations directly.

It is important to note that none of the clients interviewed had an intellectual disability or cognitive impairment, so the conclusion presented above may not apply to such individuals.

1.3.6 Consultant interview

The three questions presented to the consultant were referred to their report *It's Okay to be Different* and are presented below.

1.3.6.1 On reflection would you do the Diversity Awareness Training differently for these groups?

The consultant responded in the affirmative and commented that the groups who had participated in the training were not the intended target, which were people with cognitive impairment. The majority of the participants had physical disability and the consultants did not have input into the recruitment process or groups. Information to the clients of this project was the celebration of Harmony Day which was organised by CIP⁶. The three groups varied in size and functional ability this made an inclusive learning approach difficult. The first group was the largest and most diverse and this placed constraints on the original training program. As the consultant stated ...*The rate, style, preferences and baseline for learning were so different between the participants that an inclusive approach was not possible* (King & Katrivesis, 2003, p.24). The consultants, as discussed on page 7 changed the focus of the training program following their experiences with the first group of participants. The experience of the singular mindset of this particular group of participants who concentrated on their disability-related experiences of marginalisation and disempowerment, influenced the consultants to the view that the starting point for racism awareness training was to first address the clients ...*own disability-related marginalisation* (King & Katrivesis, 2003, p.20). The conclusion for the consultants was that ...*regardless of disability, the training had to start from where people currently were in relation to diversity* (King & Katrivesis, 2003,p.23). For this group of people the training then commenced by providing participants with the opportunity to express and explore their own diversity, starting with disability.

The consultants in their report described the process of training across the three groups of the CIP participants noting that the first two groups did not respond to attempts to broaden the discussion of difference to cultural issues. As the consultants stated ...*their (clients) disability experience...became a dominant and unmovable focus for the first two groups* (King & Katrivesis, 2003, p.26). Thus, it was concluded that to be effective, the first necessary step in providing anti-racism and diversity awareness training for this group was to start with the issue of empowerment, involving discussions of ...*respect, empowerment, finding*

⁶ King & Katrivesis (2003) *It's Okay to be Different* Anti-Racism Training and Awareness Project, p.18. Harmony Day was established by the Australian Government to celebrate and promote community diversity and is held annually on the 21st March.

a voice and working within existing constraints (King & Katrivesis, 2003, p.23).

1.3.6.2 Were there any differences between the three training groups?

There were differences between the groups and the consultants were of the view that it would have been helpful if they had been given information prior to the training on the individual needs of the participants. This would have enabled the consultants to form groups with similar abilities so strategies in learning could have been applied more effectively (King & Katrivesis, 2003, p.24).

1.3.6.3 Recommendations that have arisen from the project

The consultants acknowledged that some people with disability do express racist attitudes, similar to those in the general community and this issue needed to be addressed. The project indicated that working at the individual level was insufficient to redress the problem and a whole of organisation approach to diversity awareness and anti-racism training needed to be adopted.

The recommendations (Appendix 2) presented by the consultants reflect the above and cover the broad issues of Community Harmony, Training, Participation in decision making, and Whole of organisation issues.

1.4 Discussion and Recommendations

This evaluation showed that racism is an issue in CIP services and needs to be addressed at all levels of the organisation. The clients who participated in the evaluation were involved in the first and second focus groups. Some possible short-term effects of the training were reported by both client participants and support staff. Acknowledging this positive outcome, it is important that direct support staff be informed in detail about the interventions. Staff play a vital day-to-day role in following up the anti-racism message and in reinforcing the concrete strategies possibly implemented by the consultants. This will help staff and clients to avoid racism and assist them in responding to racist incidents.

Both clients and staff concurred with the consultants that an holistic approach to diversity awareness training needed to be implemented to enable the organisation to respond to racism at the individual as well as the systemic level.

The following recommendations reflect the above issues:

1. Development of anti-racism and awareness training to include management, support staff, clients and the employment agencies from which relief staff are drawn⁷.

2. Management, staff and clients develop awareness of 'bullying' tactics and intimidatory⁸ actions by both clients and staff in the home setting.

3. Staff and client training involving protocols for handling racist incidents when they occur.

Another issue was that the training program was targeted to people with intellectual disability but few if any participated. In the circumstances the training resources could not be evaluated for effectiveness for this population. Further work will be needed on developing and evaluating effective interventions for clients with cognitive impairments.

However, the views expressed by the clients indicated that they were aware of the anti-discrimination and racism focus of the training and a few clients expressed views of becoming more aware of cultural differences. In their report, the consultants stated that the first two groups of participants could not move beyond their disability experiences of institutionalisation and on this basis anti-racism awareness training was not possible. There appear to be some contradictions in comparing the consultant assessment of the situation stated in their report to the responses and views expressed by client participants in the evaluation interviews.

Diversity awareness is a complex issue, but there is a danger in accepting the premise that training had to commence from where the clients were in

⁷ A resource worth considering in developing training for managing cultural diversity in disability services is the work of Lilah Morton Pengra Ph.D. See references

⁸ Verbal abuse, physical aggression, body language displayed by clients and staff displaying subtle body language and '*doing it their way*' contrary to client requests.

relation to their diversity. This could stultify the implementation of training as it could drift into a 'readiness' model of disability. An alternative approach would be to focus diversity training on specific incidents familiar to clients so they can easily see the relevance to their lives. Focusing on concrete, familiar examples may also assist clients with cognitive impairments who have difficulty dealing with abstract discussions.

Communication was a key focus of many of the client responses and this could be the key in explaining, in part, the contradiction mentioned previously. The consultants were not given personal profiles of the participants and did not have knowledge of individual learning orientations. Another factor was that the consultants were not provided with information on the specific incidents of racism that had occurred. This information could have afforded the consultants the opportunity to raise specific racist situations making the training more concrete. The following recommendation reflects these issues.

4. CIP should implement strategies that improve communication between all parties which include developing good listening and interpreting skills of client behaviours.

5. CIP should provide opportunities for staff to be given training in learning styles to improve communication with clients.

The consequences of racism in the workplace were also an issue raised by some staff and CIP management needs to address this issue strategically. The following recommendations need to be considered by the organisation.

6. Provide feedback to clients and counselling about alternative responses to their frustrations and needs.

7. Provide debriefing for staff following racist incidents.

Documentation on anti discrimination policies for the CIP services needs to be reviewed to include recognition of racism and appropriate strategies that address incidents within the service. It is recommended that

8. Policy documentation be reviewed to include references to anti-discrimination practices in the workplace.

Seeking formal ethical approval and written consent for participation in training before commencing the program of *Diversity Awareness Training* was unnecessary in our view. This activity is part of normal service delivery and does not require formal ethics approval or written consent.

A question was presented by the consultants in their report ...*How should the impact of power relations in care settings be acknowledged and addressed?* This question needs to be given serious consideration by CIP management, for it contains empowerment issues which were raised by clients in this evaluation. The present trend towards continuing risk assessment needs to be reviewed in relation to the impact of these practices on the care relationship, the concept of home compared to a safe working environment and the development of friendships for this group of people who are solely dependent upon carer support for their personal well-being. The following recommendation reflects growing disquiet in the disability community on the application of risk assessment in supporting vulnerable groups of people in community accommodation settings.

9. Develop a framework for decision-making that maximises client rights in having a meaningful life and the implementation of health and safety issues for direct support staff.

The Royal Rehabilitation Centre's Community Integration Program, and the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association need to be commended for addressing this issue of workplace racism exhibited by people with disabilities towards staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Caveat.

Interpreting the views presented in this evaluation a number of limitations need to be stated. The limited time for the evaluation restricted the number of people interviewed who were involved in the project. Not all clients who participated in the training program were interviewed and similarly not all staff of CIP who were supporting participants in their home environments. The views expressed in this document are therefore limited to those who were interviewed.

1.5 References

Ezzy, D. (2002). *Qualitative Analysis*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin

King, U. & Katrivesis, M.(2003). *It's Okay to be Different – Anti-Racism Training and Awareness Project*, Report prepared for Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney, Community Integration Program

Pengra, L.M. (2000). *Your Values, My Values*. Baltimore, Maryland: Paul H. Brookes

1.6 Appendix 1:

CLIENT INFORMATION COVER SHEET

Evaluation of Diversity Awareness Training

This personal contact information will be used to check responses from the interviews if required by the research team from CDDS.

On completion of the project *Evaluation of Diversity Awareness Training* this personal information will be destroyed.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Mobile: _____

Length of time living in the community: _____

CLIENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Evaluation of Diversity Awareness Training

1. Did you go to the barbecue on Saturday? (Present pictures of Ursula King & Marie Katrivesis)

- *Did they talk to you about this evaluation of their training meetings?*

2. Are these the people who came to talk to you?

- *Do you remember how many meetings you attended?*
- *How did you feel about going to these meetings?*
- *Would you tell other people to go to these meetings*

3. Do you remember what they talked to you about?

- *"Its OK to be different"*
- *Did it make sense to you?*
- *Did you understand what they were talking about?*

4. `When you talked about being 'different' can you explain this to me/ tell me what you mean.

- *What being different means to you*

5. The staff that work with you would you say some of them are ‘different’?

- *Different in what way – the way they walk, talk, look –walking frame, wheel chair, wear glasses, hair colour, eyes, skin.*
- *What do you like/dislike about staff?*

6. Picking up on response given – Does ????? make a difference to the way this person helps you in your home?

- *Have you heard people talk about racism?*
- *Do you know what this means?*
- *Do you think it is OK to call people ‘names’*

7. Did you talk about these matters with Ursula & Maria at the meetings?

- *Talking about these issues-cultural differences, has it helped in making staff and clients get on better?*

- *Has this helped you in acting differently towards staff?*

8. Have you talked to CIP management /or a friend / others in your house about these issues?

- *Have you been shown the house policies /making a complaint?*

- *Have you had explained to you the policies on racism and discrimination?(information sheets developed by CIP – Client Responsibilities, Guidelines to Maximise Client –Staff Communication & Working together).*

9. What would you like to see happen to make it better between the staff who support you and all the other clients in their home?

- *More training sessions*
- *Find another way to understand – help to write policies*
- *Help interview new staff – ask them questions about the type of support you want*

STAFF PARTICIPANT INFORMATION COVER SHEET

Evaluation of Diversity Awareness Training

This personal contact information will be used to check responses from the interviews if required by the research team from CDDS.

On completion of the project *Evaluation of Diversity Awareness Training* this personal information will be destroyed.

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Mobile: _____

Length of time working for CIP: _____

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE –STAFF

Evaluation of Diversity Awareness Training

Section 1: Participant Information:

1. Position held in CIP:

1. Management:
2. Team Leader:
3. Direct Support staff:

2. Did you formally (fill out an incident report) raise the issue of racism/vilification with management?

- Have you personally experienced or observed racism from residents?

3. How was racism expressed by the client - verbal/physical behaviour?

Section 2: Views on the Diversity Awareness Training

4. What is your understanding of the Diversity Awareness Training given to clients?

5. Do you think the clients understood the focus/content of the training sessions?

WHY?

- *The content*
- *The focus of the training*
- *The way it was presented*

6. Do you think the content was relevant to the clients who attended the sessions?

- 7. In your view has the training had an effect on clients' attitudes and behaviour?**
- Have you noticed changes in attitude or behaviour since the training.

- 8. Did the training complement the policies and practices of CIP?**

- 9. Beside the training has CIP taken steps to address workplace racism?**

- 10. Have you any suggestions that may assist management and staff to address this issue of racism in the workplace?**

11. Do you think in retrospect it was a good idea to leave the intervention solely in the hands of outside consultants?

Would you like to consider the ethics of requesting – even requiring participation by the residents – rather than involving those who consenting –

1.7 Appendix 2. Recommendations Presented by the MDAA Consultants

Community Harmony

- That CIP consider celebrating *Harmony Day* annually.
- That a sub-committee made up of residents and staff be established to support the implementation of *Harmony Day* celebrations.
- That CIP support residents to access opportunities to meet people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to talk and share experiences of disability and diversity.

Training

- That CIP consult with, and provide support to, residents to access training relevant to their needs regarding community harmony.
- That orientation of new staff includes consideration of the diversity of residents and their individual care needs.
- That residents are consulted about, and potentially included in, staff orientation processes to ensure diversity issues are considered from a residents' perspective.
- That all staff are trained to respond to racism within the workplace

Participation in decision-making

- That the RRCS Board reflects community diversity in its membership by facilitating inclusion of clients/residents on the Board.

Whole of organisation

- That RRCS undertake a clearly time-framed whole of organisation cultural competence audit to identify opportunities and constraints in working with community diversity.
- That all policies and procedures be reviewed to ensure the principles of social justice, access & equity, and community harmony are reflected.

- That the *Client Accident Incident and Near Miss* policy and procedures are reviewed to enable incidents involving racial vilification to be documented objectively.
- That the *Accident/Incident & Near Miss Report Flow Chart* be reviewed so that it includes a clear process for responding to incidents that are racially motivated.