



**BME Input into
Social Work Training
BSc (Hons) Social Work**

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ARC Conference 2005




Introduction

- Disabled from birth
- Was an accountant (worked with money)
- 1998 voluntary organisation – Independent Living Advisor
- 2001 working with people with learning disabilities
- 2005 Service User Development Worker at UCE Birmingham




BSc (Hons) Social Work

- 2002 people using services must be included in the training of future Social Workers
- The new degree is now in its third year
- Our service user colleagues helped write the degree before it was approved
- The service user colleagues interview students and read application forms before a person is accepted




BSc (Hons) Social Work (c'td)

- The University employed me in February 2005 to support people to take part in the teaching and checking of students work
- In February 2005 there was no one with a learning disability teaching at the University
- We now have 2 people plus an organisation of people with learning disabilities working with us as well as other people using services
- Our aim is to ensure inclusion of different groups to give students better understanding




**The benefits to
social work students**

- Receiving first hand information
- Service user perspective
- Knowledge 'what is in place'
- Partnership
- Empathy (put themselves in your shoes)
- Safe environment (safe place to learn)
- Breaking down stereotypes (what people think and feel at first meeting)



**The benefits to
social work students (c'td)**


- Building Trust
- Realistic input (the real views)
- Positive influence (positive effect)
- Encouragement/confidence
- Experiential/Real (learning from real experiences)


Barriers to attracting people with learning disabilities

- Involving service users in teaching is not easy and is a long term relationship ---NOT a one day event
- People do not know why they are attending
- Feel it is not important and runs against other priorities
- People want to talk about their own problems which may not be what we are teaching them that day
- Feel it is not important


Barriers to attracting people with learning disabilities (c'td)


- Access needs
- Language
- Understanding
- Fear
- Payments
- Transport
- Trust/Confidence
- Pressures
- Time


Barriers to attracting people from BME groups

- Different languages
- Culture
- Beliefs
- Trust and initial contact
- People protect their own people
- Knowledge and awareness
- Stigma (worry about what people think)
- Different kinds of pressures
- Time


The way forward

- Offer support and advice
- Help people get together to talk and share ideas
- Listen to what people are saying
- We work with people to train them to speak to students
- We talk to people and find out how we can make things better and easier
- Produce jargon busters
- Briefing pack


Challenges

- Making sure everything is produced in simple language especially academic work
- Training university lecturers to understand how to work with people with learning disabilities
- To ensure that people are not invited in a 'tokenistic' way.
- Not to 'box' people
- Red tape
- Lack of money