

OVERVIEW

This activity is carried out as a group. It enables participants to discuss what dignity means both generally and in a particular community food context. It provides a safe space for the group to build a shared understanding of what dignity means for their context and what this means in practice. As well as increasing people's awareness of dignity in practice, it helps to identify what could undermine someone's dignity.



AIMS

To encourage participants to share their thoughts about dignity and build a shared awareness of how a person's sense of dignity might be promoted or undermined in particular contexts.

MATERIALS

- Sheets of paper and pen to note outcomes of discussions for the group.
- *Mentimeter* is recommended to gather everyone's thoughts and contributions.

PARTICIPANTS

Running the activity online provides flexibility in terms of numbers of participants as responses are mainly shared via *mentimeter*. However, a smaller group allows for each participant to contribute to the conversation more fully.

PREPARING FOR THE ONLINE CALL

Ensure everyone has access to the online platform and knows how to use it. If a participant doesn't have access to a computer, consider whether there are any actions you can take to provide them with one. If any of the participants is not comfortable with using technology, maybe someone else in the household can support them.

INSTRUCTIONS

Get *mentimeter* ready and make sure people have access to the webpage and code. Alternatively, people can share via the chat or share a response out loud with the group.

Step 1: What does dignity mean to you?

Ask participants to take a couple of minutes to reflect on the words that come to mind when they think of dignity. Encourage participants to share their responses via *mentimeter*, chat or by saying it out loud to the group. Once everyone has contributed, read out loud the list of words.

WHAT DOES DIGNITY MEAN TO YOU?

Step 2: Has your dignity ever been undermined?

Ask participants to think about a time when perhaps their own dignity has been undermined. Ask them to silently reflect on how this made them feel. If it's a small group, you are engaging with and if participants are comfortable to do so you can welcome them to share any experience and/or feelings with the rest of the group. Make sure you do not put pressure on anyone to share anything. If you would like to share a personal experience yourself, you could do so as a way to start the conversation. As the conversation evolves, keep note of the feelings mentioned. Once the conversation has ended read out loud the list of feelings or use *mentimeter* to help keep the responses anonymous, if that suits the group better.

Step 3: What do we think dignity means as a group?

Reflect on how both lists show the extent to which people share similar definitions of dignity, bearing in mind there might be differences, considering their background and personal circumstances. You can emphasise the degree of similarity by drawing attention to words that come up more than once.

Step 4: Summary and reflection

Take a few minutes to summarise and reinforce the idea that someone's experience and sense of dignity is affected by small, detailed gestures that impact on how they feel. You can read the quote below.

“Putting dignity into practice requires us to think carefully about all of the factors that affect how someone feels when they visit a community food project. The decisions we make, small or large, as both staff and volunteers, will have an impact on how someone feels about the space, situation or the way they are treated. Therefore, it is important to recognise that dignity is in the detail.”

You can also emphasise how from our own personal experiences, this activity underlines that:

- a. **we all know what feels like to have our dignity undermined**
- b. **when this happens, we do not forget and can impact the rest of our lives**
- c. **we can be left in a position of vulnerability and lack of control.**

Therefore, as community service providers, we have a responsibility to ensure that the way we run our services do not undermine people's sense of dignity.

Step 5: How can we embed dignity in our practice?

Introduce the *Dignity in Practice Principles* and link these with participants' responses. The Dignity Principles in Practice ask participants to consider how the project supports people to feel:

- + a sense of control
- + able to take part in community
- + nourished and supported
- + involved in decision-making
- + valued and able to contribute

Optional: You may decide to follow this activity up with the Dignity Spectrum: *Dignity is in the Detail*, designed to review organisation's practice.