

SUMMARY EVALUATION REPORT

Gender Equality and Mental Health (GEMH) Summer Institute

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Sponsored by the Centre for the Study of Gender, Social Inequities
and Mental Health (CGSM)

1. PREAMBLE

The summer institute was held at the Simon Fraser University, Harbour Centre Campus 22-25 June, 2010. It was delivered as a 4-day training event by Dr Jennie Williams. This report is based on 12 completed evaluation questionnaires, and is illustrated throughout with comments from the participants.

2. EXPECTED GAINS

Participants were asked to describe what they had initially hoped to gain from the Working with Women with Mental Needs course: The following comments were made:

- *'I really wasn't sure what to expect!'*
- *'to get an idea of the practical issues of gender in social inequalities in mental health care'*
- *'to learn about how to be more gender informed in my work'*
- *'I thought there would be more focus on the trans community'*
- *'to confirm my understanding of gender equality in regards to my work. To clarify if I am using it appropriately on a daily basis. To obtain more information and insight into providing better support for our clients'*
- *'a better understanding of gender informed practice that is applicable to my work'*
- *'gain knowledge and share info on a gender informed practice and mental health, how gender shapes mental health'*
- *'info re women, men and LEBT inequalities in mental health and how can we do it differently'*
- *'how best to introduce gender informed care to our health care system'*
- *'a better understanding of the intersection between gender and mental health'*
- *'an idea of views and opinions of people working in different areas of mental health'*
- *'a practical understanding of how to incorporate a social inequities/gender lens into my work'*

Participants were asked whether they got what they had hoped for; 4 respondents answered this question with 'yes and one added 'and much more'. The other comments were:

- *'it was tremendous to be in conversation with so many experiences people including Jennie's wealth of knowledge, it exceeded my expectations'*
- *'yes, this training has really drawn my attention to importance of talking about gender informed practice and looking at changes that need to be made'*
- *'I was hoping there would be more sophisticated level of information, however, these materials would be good to share within my work place'*
- *'I received confirmation that I am aware of the affect of gender equality on people using the mental health system. The sessions were packed with information and had numerous points to talk back and think about'*
- *'yes, I hoped you would have some secret recipe for convincing politicians to take this sort of thing up but alas grass roots organising remains the best route to go!'*
- *'absolutely'*

- *'yes and more discussion about how to effect change at a policy level would have been useful, as individuals we only have so much power to effect change, although we did this on the last day'*

3. ASSESSING THE TRAINING

Most useful aspect of training

Answers to this question were very diverse, most mentioned group work/discussion. Other comments made were:

- *'discussion, rooting present day mental health problems in past trauma yes focus on re framing how men and women's behaviour is interpreted, shared focus on men's experiences and the way they are also damaged by gender inequality'*
- *'the discussions; practical application of what gender informed care looks like, activities*
- *'listening to the experiences of the participants, the materials provided were excellent, the case studies were great'*
- *'the small group exercises were very useful'*
- *'I have enjoyed the dialogue between everyone and hear their perspectives and things that they have encountered in the workplace. I enjoyed the shared experiences of people in this course'*
- *'enjoyed both the content and the resulting discussions'*
- *'group discussion/group tasks, Jennie's skilled facilitation (great to watch!), handouts'*
- *'the way it was structured, it is information I can use and pass on, the conversations and discussions'*
- *'group wisdom, having time to think through those issues again both personally and professionally'*
- *'examples of how to bring a gender informed approach to practice'*
- *'I found the use of discussion and the recognition of the value of knowledge of each person to be very useful'*
- *'the last 2 days were very useful, lots of practical exercises/handouts to think about how we provide services, also links between trauma and mental health were very illuminating'*

Least useful aspects of training

2 respondents answered 'none'. Other comments were:

- *'not sure, found it all useful'*
- *'I would have liked to have heard more about the experiences of the instructor*
- *'some of the intro information was a bit too basic for me'*
- *'everything was good, it would have been good to have a Canadian statistics side by side those in UK'*
- *'can't think of anything!'*
- *'I would like to have had more discussion and info on LGBT (parental issues, view, vision, hopes), a more equitable mix of male participants'*
- *'having the boys leave! It was all really good, nothing struck out as needing a change'*
- *'definitions and basic concepts (only because the group was fairly well versed in them)'*
- *'some of the exercises were geared more towards service providers, which I found less personally useful'*
- *'I found the 1st day and half was not particularly new for me (though recognise that it is for others)'*

4. MOST ENJOYABLE AND LEAST ENJOYABLE ASPECTS OF THE TRAINING

Most enjoyable

All answered this question and respondents stressed group work/discussion, meeting/working with my colleagues to be the most enjoyable aspect of the training. Comments made were:

- *'discussion, instructor sense of humour and easy relaxed style- thank you; that we talked about protective factor and styles, stories of people we had worked with, your inclusion of trans people's realities, thank you for challenging 'diagnosis'*
- *'small group activities also liked the small size'*
- *'I liked how practical the examples were and applicable to working in the health sector meeting other participants and hearing about their experiences'*
- *'the most useful part has been some of the collateral information on terms, questions and data'*
- *'the discussions and interactions with others'*
- *'great discussion, wonderful group members', amazing and inspiring facilitator (Jennie)!*
- *'the conversations, getting to know others working in a variety of settings, doing interesting work, exercises to break up info'*
- *'discussion format, relaxed ambiance, informal'*
- *'group discussions were the most helpful, I liked hearing everyone's experiences and working it through for ourselves'*
- *'again, I'd have to say the discussion, many of the exercises (particularly the creative ones) were also excellent'*
- *'small group discussions, also large group discussions, slides were very well done and useful I will go back and read them later'*

Least enjoyable

One said 'none', other comments made were:

- *'there was nothing that I didn't enjoy but I think there are ways that trans people can be incorporated throughout the training otherwise there can be contradictions like the assumptions (that most people make) that men have been born male and had a boyhood and vice versa for women, that same with intersections of race and culture'*
- *'maybe a bit too much discussion on some exercises'*
- *'having the only Asian male leave the group, it would have great to have had his input throughout the course'*
- *'the length, it would be interesting to split it up and go back to work with the knowledge and info and gather again to discuss, not practical however'*
- *'windowless/airless room w/fluorescent lights; maybe have some stretching breaks!'*
- *'room without natural light'*
- *'hard to sit still for so long, day after day, droopy comes to mind!'*
- *'4 days in a row, would have liked more time between sessions to digest ideas and information'*
- *'some of the real life stories while extremely useful - helpful were difficult to hear'*
- *'I'm not crazy about case studies, although I understand their importance'*

5. A DIFFERENCE TO UNDERSTANDING AND ATTITUDES

The respondents were asked to assess how the training made a difference to their understanding and attitudes. Comments made were:

- *'it made a real difference to the way I thought about how men and women present in services and get needs met'*
- *'brought attitudes and thoughts etc I had more into my conscious thinking'*
- *'it drew my attention to the impact gender has on services response to services and the impact on one's mental health'*
- *'really made an impact in how impactful gender is on all levels personal/systems/society'*
- *'it confirms the work I am doing and why I am doing it, the connection between mental health and trauma'*
- *'reinforced that men are also affected negatively'*

- 'no difference but lots of great reminders, I especially liked the info on how mental health and other systems re-traumatise – really important reminder!'
- 'deeper understanding of how attitudes become part of our being'
- 'helped me to integrate my beliefs back into practice, practical exercises very useful for this, helped me to clearly see role of socialisation in my parents life and how that has played out in my life/socialisation/parenting'
- 'framing of men's behaviour with a gendered lens really helped my understanding'
- 'I have a better understanding of how systematic barriers play a role in the efforts of even the most well meaning practitioners'
- 'I enjoyed the practical tools e.g. how do we make space safe? How do we ask these questions? Very useful, I wish we'd talked about this in school, and also my attitude towards the roots of mental ill health'

6. ACHIEVING LEARNING OUTCOMES

This is a summary of the respondent's ratings of how far the training had achieved its learning outcomes.

I have increased my understanding of	Not at all				
	1	2	3	4	A lot 5
The ways gender and other inequalities impact on mental health			3	5	4
The ways gender shapes the coping and survival strategies employed by women experiencing mental distress			3	5	4
The ways gender shapes the coping and survival strategies employed by men experiencing mental distress			1	4	7
The lives and experiences of LGBT people and the common challenges they encounter when using mental health services		1*	3	7	1
The potential of mental health services to re-traumatise patients and contribute to their difficulties		1	1	7	3
Ways the gender system has affected, and is affecting, my life, attitudes and values			2	8	2
I have increased my					
Knowledge of gender informed practice				6	6
Knowledge of facts and figures about the gendered lives and backgrounds of people with mental health needs			2	6	4
Confidence and competence in working from a gender informed perspective with people who have mental health needs			3	5	3
Respect for the patients/clients with whom I work			3	4	4
Optimism about my ability to support positive change in individuals and services			2	5	3

* Not because the content wasn't good... I just have less learning to do in this area than other areas'

7. TRAINING METHODS AND CONTENT (multiple answers)

Training Approach

One did not answer this, others stated:

- *'great balance of facts, figures together with discussion and room for our own personal reflections'*
- *'awesome'*
- *'I liked the flow of the training, the examples used were very practical'*
- *'enjoyed the mix of group work and lecture'*
- *'I enjoyed the interactive approach I enjoyed learning about the research Jennie is working on'*
- *'loved it, very laid back, inclusive and interactive approach!'*
- *'loved the emphasis on dialogue and group work'*
- *'excellent, I like the use of modules, sessions, I would suggest 2x2 day courses with time between'*
- *'good combination of lecture and letting us get on with it'*
- *'it's worth repeating the focus on discussion is very useful'*
- *'lots of small group work, good, very interactive'*

Atmosphere

One person did not answer this and others described the atmosphere as very good, excellent, friendly, lovely and relaxed. Comments were:

- *'great atmosphere – instructor creates an excellent environment'*
- *'very positive'*
- *'the participants in the course were very knowledgeable and were eager to discuss and exchange ideas'*
- *'welcoming; all of the participants were well informed; great group'*
- *'everything was good, great facilitator'*
- *'very safe space, conducive to sharing and participation'*
- *'room' could have been better (a view, fresh air) but great safe space created by group and facilitator'*
- *'I found the atmosphere safe, respectful, fun. Great presenter thanks Jennie!'*
- *'very good and supportive, would almost have liked some dissention so we could have had examples of arguments against e.g. Biology'*
- *'very open and often fun'*
- *'at first it seemed as though our group comments were not well integrated with the slide content, that is to say we were not adding so much as having side conversations, but this changed'*

Reading material

Most said it was either excellent or informative and interesting. Other comments were:

- *'did not read it yet but glad to have it'*
- *'I haven't looked at it yet'*
- *'useful to use in my own work place'*
- *'haven't read through it yet, but looks good if based on slides'*
- *'much appreciated'*
- *'great, I can use this material as a guide line to teach others'*
- *'haven't read them yet, but I will!'*
- *'very comprehensive, I think I'll keep it for some time'*
- *'very good and many of the exercises really gave me a lot to think about'*

Suggestions for improving the course

One respondent answered 'none' and others listed the following needs:

- *'future incorporating of race and culture'*
- *'little more content re other social inequalities'*
- *'I would have liked a bit more content in the course'*
- *'more relevant perhaps to bring working peers... together as a group'*
- *'a bit more discussion including culture and ethnicity barriers in conjunction with gender'*
- *'including a more fluid definition of gender'*
- *'more of a diverse group (more practitioners, men, people of colours etc)'*
- *'make it a 2 part course 2 x2-day course'*
- *'spread it out time wise and give homework to encourage further reflection'*
- *'in a Canadian context, there would need to be a more multicultural focus – particularly in addressing the needs of aboriginal populations'*
- *'more of a focus on the ways in which different inequalities intersect/compound with gender, gender is not primary inequality, for everyone. For many people, their experiences of racism supersede their experiences as a woman or man'*

Future training needs

5 respondents made no comment. Other comments were:

- *'would like to be part of the Train the Trainers in some way'*
- *'great training, you are doing excellent work and I would recommend this training to my colleagues'*
- *'try to keep informed about where this area of research is heading'*
- *'I would be great to have a Train a Trainer session so the trainers can support the various teams that work with this population'*
- *'on mental health specifically on trauma'*
- *'more on designing a more gender equal mental health service but never mind you did this!'*
- *'more practical training instead of theoretical'*

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