

Shelter Tas Inc.
Workforce Development Strategy 2015/16

Evaluation Report #2
Anti-Discrimination and Gender Awareness
1 December 2015





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Supported by the Crown through the Department of Health and Human Services.

Background

Shelter Tas has received funding from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) for the development and implementation of a Workforce Development Strategy (WDS) for Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS), the purpose of the WDS being 'to support SHS's in developing their workforce to meet the current and future service delivery demands in a changing environment.' (Workforce Development Strategy, page 9).

In order to ascertain the sector's main priorities for training, data was collected through surveys and interviews with Tasmanian SHS organisations. The need for this training was identified by several services who highlighted an issue they face around transgender clients presenting at emergency accommodation and the best way to address their needs and safety. The Workforce Development Reference Group suggested including some general training around anti-discrimination in order to broaden the topic for attendees.

The training was held on 1st December in at the Hotel Grand Chancellor in Launceston. Equal Opportunity Tas (formerly Anti-Discrimination Commission) presented the first session (1 hour), providing a general overview and responsibilities under discrimination law and Working it Out delivered more interactive training (2 hours) aimed to raise awareness around gender identity.

Training Overview

Of the total 32 participants, 23 evaluation forms were received. 20 respondents rated the training as good – excellent, which is approximately 87%.

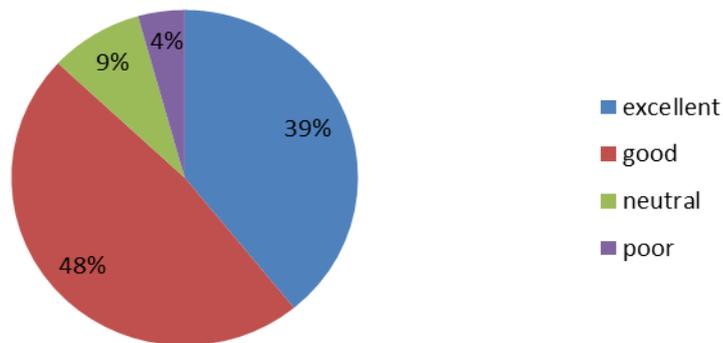
This event achieved priorities 1 and 2 of the WDS recommendations.

1. **Increasing the skills and competencies of the SHS workforce.**
Attendees reported an improvement in their ability to deal with gender and discrimination issues.
2. **Increasing the accessibility of training and professional development to the whole of the sector.**
Training was provided in the north of the State, and attendees came from all regions, which provided training opportunities to workers State-wide. This training was offered at no cost.

Almost all attendees commented that they enjoyed the first session presented by Equal Opportunity Tas, including clarification that no overarching policy around gender issues is the best practice and to seek advice on individual cases. Comments indicate that some participants felt the second session by Working it Out was pitched at a lower skill level than many attendees required, the presentation appeared to be developed for school-age participants, not skilled professionals (although Working it Out had been made aware of the backgrounds of attendees before the training). Working it Out seemed a little under-prepared and following a routine presentation without taking into account the specific needs of the homelessness sector.

Reference Group members had developed a list of specific questions relevant to the training and forwarded to Working it Out prior to the day, although these questions were not utilised by the trainers. As a result, the opportunity to address the questions and concerns of sector participants was not taken up and some attendees felt that the training was not relevant to them. Despite this, the training was still deemed valuable by workers with less experience in the homelessness sector.

Overall rating of gender awareness/anti-discrimination training

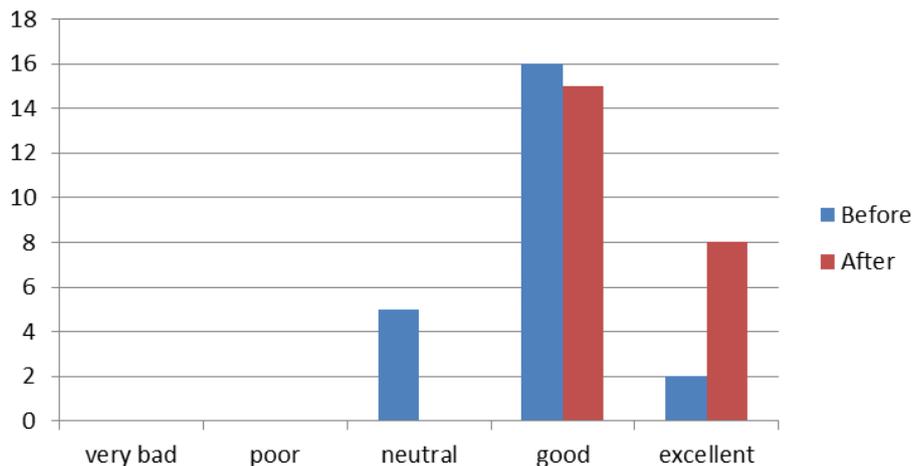


Participant Evaluation

Evaluation questions were rated on a scale of 1 – 5.

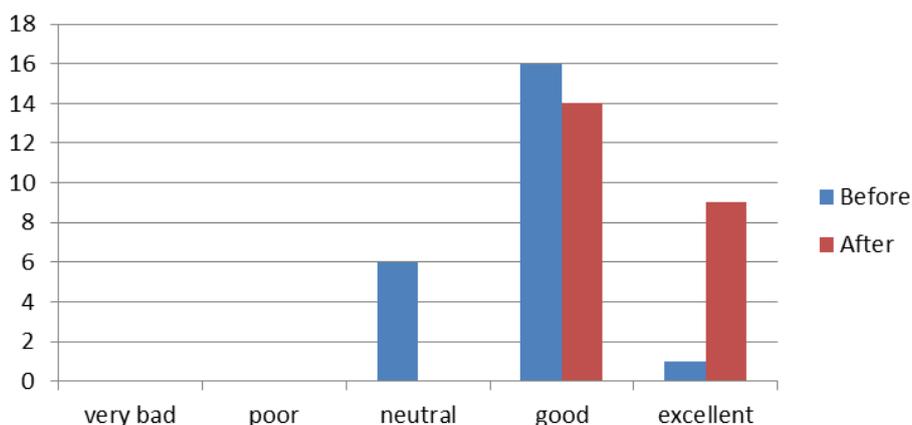
1. Rate your knowledge about discrimination/gender issues before the training session
2. Rate your knowledge about discrimination/gender issues after the training session
3. Rate your ability to deal with discrimination/gender issues at work before the training
4. Rate your ability to deal with discrimination/gender issues at work after the training
5. Overall, how do you rate both the sessions at today’s training?
6. Do you have any comments about this training session?
7. Please note any suggestions you may have for future training topics.

Knowledge before and after training



Question 1 & 2: Rate your knowledge about discrimination/gender issues before and after the training. The graph shows that all of the people who rated their knowledge as neutral before the training felt their knowledge improved to a rating of good or excellent. The number of people rating their knowledge as excellent increased from 2 to 8 after the training.

Ability to deal with related issues before and after training



Question 3 & 4: Rate your ability to deal with discrimination/gender issues at work before and after the training. This graph shows a similar pattern to the results of question 1 and 2 above. People rating their ability to deal with discrimination/gender issues at work improved their rating to good or excellent after training. A slightly larger increase of people rating their knowledge as excellent before (1) and after (9) training is displayed here.

Question 6: Comments from evaluation forms included:

- 'well presented and kept everyone's interest'
- '(Second session was) very low level'
- 'I know now there is more info to better assist in these areas'
- 'I liked the exercises and questioning the way we think'
- Discrimination 9/10, Working it Out 2/10'
- 'All very good'
- 'great content, excellent presenters'
- 'It was ok. The second session was a bit patronising'.

Organisations/programs represented at training.	
6 Anglicare	2 Launceston City Mission
1 Annie Kenney	2 Magnolia Place – Launceston Women's Shelter
1 Bethlehem House	2 Salvation Army
3 CatholicCare	3 Shelter Tas
2 Hobart Women's Shelter	2 Warrawee
2 Jireh House	3 Youth, Family and Community Connections
1 Karinya	2 Youth Futures

Recommendations for Future Training

Actions for implementation by Shelter Tas:

1. When more than one group provides training at the same event, we need a separate evaluation for each trainer, to enable attendees to provide individual feedback. As in this case, when the two sessions were rated very differently by attendees, separate evaluations would be useful for reporting.
2. Need to ensure that trainers are aware of the skill level of attendees, so they can tailor the content appropriately. This may help to avoid mismatched training in future. Although the audience is always explained to trainers, stressing that attendees are skilled professionals and service managers may help avoid mismatched content in future.
3. Shelter Tas will attempt to resolve the questions which were provided to Working it Out before the training and were not addressed on the day. These questions were the basis for holding this training specifically, and so it is important to have them answered adequately. Shelter Tas will seek an alternative contact to provide feedback on the list which was developed by the Reference Group in response to concerns of the sector.

Broader Considerations:

4. Requesting feedback for 'future development' promoted more constructive feedback on training sessions. As a result, a short follow-up on gender awareness will be held at an upcoming SHS forum to address the unanswered questions from the training with Working it Out.
5. There were some challenges with this venue and catering and it will not be used again. An event checklist has now been developed to help promote improved efficiency around event planning.