

Module 6: Overcoming Personal Challenges

Time Required

2 hours, 15 minutes

Purpose

To encourage participants to recognize and challenge their own stereotypes, biases, and attitudes toward people who are not like themselves.

Lessons

1. Effects of Privilege and Prejudice (45 minutes)
2. Value Systems and Attitudes (45 minutes)
3. Self-Awareness Inventory (45 minutes)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- Recognize how privilege and prejudice affect attitude.
- Recognize how their own value systems influence their attitudes and impacts their work.
- Explain the importance of self-reflection, especially as it applies to supporting crime victims with disabilities.

Instructor Worksheet

- Instructor Worksheet Module 6, Welcome to Burgville.

Participant Worksheets

- Worksheet 6.1, Friends and Neighbors
- Worksheet 6.2, Self-Awareness Inventory

Equipment and Materials

- Materials needed for the “Welcome to Burgville” activity are listed on the Instructor Worksheet Module 6, Welcome to Burgville; and following the matrix in the Overview of the Instructor Manual.

Preparation

- Set up the room for the “Welcome to Burgville” activity. Instructions are included on the Instructor Worksheet Module 6, Welcome to Burgville; and following the matrix in the Overview of the Instructor Manual.

Instructor Note:

Before the break preceding this module, select or ask five volunteers to be “workers” in the “Welcome to Burgville” activity. The workers must return to the training room 5 minutes before the break is over.

Prepare the room during the break. Conduct the “Welcome to Burgville” activity immediately after the break.

All instructions for setting up the room and conducting the activity are on Instructor Worksheet Module 6 in the Instructor Manual; they are also included after the matrix in the Overview section of the Instructor Manual.



Show Visual 6-1.

Introduce Module 6 by **explaining** that the purpose of this module is to encourage participants to recognize and challenge their own stereotypes, biases, and attitudes toward people who are not like themselves.



Show Visual 6-2.

Review the learning objectives.

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- Recognize how privilege and prejudice affect attitude.
- Recognize how their own value systems influence their attitudes and impacts their work with people with disabilities.
- Explain the importance of self-reflection, especially as it applies to supporting crime victims.

1. Effects of Privilege and Prejudice (45 minutes)



Show Visual 6-3.

Introduce the activity.



Activity: Welcome to Burgville (40 minutes)

- 1. Set up the room and assign “worker” participants as described in the Instructor Worksheet Module 6, Welcome to Burgville. Have the workers in place before you allow the other participants to enter.**
- 2. As participants enter the training room, give each person a badge with a color dot on it. Do not tell participants what any colors or symbols mean.**
- 3. Explain to participants that they have just moved to “Burgville.” Post the tear sheet you prepared, and tell participants that they must, in this order:**
 - a. Find a job
 - b. Find a house
 - c. Take out a mortgage for the house

4. *When they are finished, they are to go to the Finish Line.*
5. *Allow participants about 30 minutes to go through the activity. There may still be some participants who have not reached the finish line because they have not been able to find a job or a house or get a mortgage.*

Debrief the activity by telling participants to remove their badges and **acknowledge that everyone was playing a role and that this is now the end of the activity.**

Ask each participant to tear up their badge with the dot on it. **Pass** around the trash can or another receptacle so that participants can throw away their badges.

Discuss the activity with a focus on these questions:

1. For those of you who were not “workers,” could you tell – from the way you were treated – what your nametag indicated? If so, what gave it away?
2. When did you first notice that the workers’ reactions to you were different than people with other nametags?
3. For those of you who were “workers,” how did it feel to have control over another person’s future?
4. Did your role playing remind you of poor service you’ve received in the past? If so, can you describe a situation?
5. How would you characterize the people who finished first? What type of people do you think they would be in real life? Why do you think that?



Show Visual 6-4.

Paraphrase:

This activity illustrates the concept of privilege. A privilege is essentially a right or advantage. Privilege isn’t necessarily bad, at least when it’s earned. If someone wins an “employee of the month” recognition and as a result, receives the privilege of a prime parking spot for that month, the employee has *earned* that privilege through hard work.

However, *unearned* privilege isn’t won through talent or skill or hard work – it’s the result of advantages given to someone not because of what they’ve done, but by virtue of birth, social position, or concession. Unearned privileges may be very subtle and individuals who have them often are completely unaware of having the privilege. On the other hand, those *without* the privilege are often *very* aware of the difference.

The awareness of unearned privilege is essential because its presence in diverse environments can create tension, stress, and frustration. Many of the unearned privileges are reinforced by societal laws and practices. Consider a Hispanic person not being able to get bank loans/other groups getting bank loans easier or a police officer pulling over African-American drivers more frequently than white drivers.

2. Value Systems and Attitudes (45 minutes)



Show Visual 6-5.

Paraphrase:

Values are an integral part of every culture. People congregate because of shared values. Over time, shared values evolve into traditions that groups of people find important, and they become cultural values. Being part of a culture that shares a common core set of values creates expectations and predictability that holds the culture together and gives its members a sense of identity and worth.



Show Visual 6-6.

Paraphrase:

As adults, our value systems are not only a product of our culture; they're a reflection of our backgrounds – how we've been raised, what we've been taught, who we've met, and many other experiences. Along with beliefs and worldview assumptions, values guide our behaviors and form the foundations for our attitudes. Values identify, for each of us, what is good, important, appropriate, beautiful, and so on. Values also determine a person's actions. Values can be positive or negative; some are destructive.

In living our lives, we tend to seek out people who share our values. When people share values, they tend to mirror another in how they live, where they live, and who they live with.



Show Visual 6-7.

Introduce the activity.

 **Activity: Friends and Neighbors (15 minutes)**

1. **Refer participants to Worksheet 6.1, Friends and Neighbors, in the Participant Manual. Tell them to work alone to answer questions on the worksheet, which are designed to characterize their lives.**
2. **After all participants have finished, ask volunteers to share information. Participants do not have to share if they are not comfortable doing so.**

Instructor Note:

You may want to complete the worksheet for yourself in case no participants volunteer.

Debrief the activity by explaining that more than likely, most of us live in neighborhoods of people much like themselves, and belong to clubs or organizations where members are much like themselves. There is nothing wrong with this, but if we become too isolated from other communities, and too comfortable within our own way of life, we become suspicious and fearful of those who live differently, as we'll discuss next.



Show Visual 6-8.

Paraphrase

People in general are most comfortable around others who are a reflection of themselves. When confronted with change in their neighborhood, for example, existing residents sometimes react by avoiding the newcomers or moving out of the area. What often happens when one ethnic group moves into a neighborhood occupied by another ethnic group? Or if a group home for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities opens in a neighborhood?



Show Visual 6-9.

Paraphrase:

Many of us remain in our own comfort zones all our lives. But when something happens to change that – for example, we lose a job, or become a victim of a crime, or acquire a disability – we find we're not among "people like us" anymore. We're *different*. It can be an awkward and unpleasant transition, but ultimately we develop a new image of ourselves. Then we may begin to seek out people who mirror our *new* image.

Ask: Is this wrong? Why do we do it? **Allow** a few responses.



Show Visual 6-10.

Paraphrase:

If we are only around reflections of ourselves, we will never be truly comfortable with those who are not like us. Furthermore, we miss opportunities to learn about the experiences of others.



Show Visual 6-11.

Paraphrase:

The problem with interacting only with people like yourself is that you miss out on that “enlightening journey” with the “breathtaking views.” We miss out on tremendous opportunities to learn about the experiences of those who lead lives that are not like ours. We miss out because we don’t know anything about those lives. And we *fear* the unknown.

Ask: How can we learn not to fear the unknown, so we can take advantage of that “enlightening journey?”

If participants do not do it themselves, **guide** the discussion toward the realization that the best way to address those fears is to get to know the people who live their lives in a different way. **Emphasize** that becoming acquainted with people who do not mirror us can help us eliminate stereotypes and reduce our fears.



Show Visual 6-12.

Paraphrase:

It’s important to understand that even if you are experienced working with diverse populations, including people with disabilities, there may be times when you’ll be surprised by your own reactions. You may feel anxious – unsure what to say or how to say it. You may feel resentment – the crime victim with a disability may require more time, attention, and/or support. Or you may feel pity – you don’t see the skills and talents of the whole person; instead, you are focused on the disability. In other words, the *disability* becomes the center of attention, rather than the *person*.

When this happens, you lose an opportunity to expand your knowledge about the whole person. Furthermore, you marginalize the crime victim with a disability by not offering comparable supports and services.

3. Self-Awareness Inventory (45 minutes)



Show Visual 6-13.

Paraphrase:

Crime victim service providers are often ill-equipped to deal with crime victims with disabilities, either because of personal stereotyping based on their set of values and attitudes, because of lack of knowledge, or a combination of both.

Until fairly recently, children and adults with disabilities were often separated from people without disabilities – first at school, then at institutions or group homes. The attitude was that they “couldn’t adapt” or they “didn’t fit in,” or “needed special care.” People *without* disabilities had few chances to become acquainted with people *with* disabilities. They were “different” simply because they were unfamiliar to those without disabilities. And for many of us, until the unfamiliar becomes familiar, we react with awkwardness, discomfort, and even fear.

Some advocates for people with disabilities may feel the same way about crime victims, especially victims of domestic and sexual violence. Or, they may not even recognize signs of violence perpetrated on the people they support. Behavioral changes in a person who has been a victim of a crime are similar for crime victims with and without disabilities. However, sometimes a behavioral change in a person with a disability may be overlooked or dismissed because family members and/or staff don’t see the behavioral change as a result of crime victimization, but as a new manifestation of the disability.

Professionals in both the victim and disability services – as well as those in allied professions such as law enforcement – would benefit from broadening their comfort zone. This means we need to start thinking about the people we support in a different way. It’s important to remind ourselves that we don’t need to be experts in everything. We just need to know what we *do* need.

The self-awareness inventory you’re about to take is meant to help you reflect on situations outside your comfort zone. Some elements are adapted from the *Cross Training Workbook: Violence Against Women with Disabilities in Wisconsin*, developed by a work group of the Violence Against Women with Disabilities Project of Wisconsin.



Show Visual 6-14.

Introduce the activity.

 **Activity: Self-Awareness Inventory (30 minutes)**

- 1. Refer participants to Worksheet 6.2, Self-Awareness Inventory, in the Participant Manual. Tell them to work alone to answer questions on the worksheet, which are designed to make them think about how they would feel if exposed to a situation outside their comfort zone. Emphasize that honesty is important; no one will be judged by how they respond.**
- 2. Explain that there are questions specifically for crime victim service providers and questions specifically for advocates for people with disabilities. Participants should skip sections that are not applicable to them.**
- 3. After all participants have finished completing their surveys, ask them to select one or two items that were important to them, and to discuss their responses with participants at their table. Allow 15 minutes for the discussion.**
- 4. Tell participants that although this activity is about expanding one's comfort zone, there may be participants who are reluctant to share personal thoughts and feelings. Do not force anyone to participate.**
- 5. After the group discussion, ask two or three volunteers to describe some of their responses and the discussion with their table groups.**

Debrief the activity by explaining that whenever we encounter the need to make a change, we also encounter challenges. Expanding your comfort zone is one of those challenges.

Ask: Why is change so difficult? Responses may include:

- Change disrupts the status quo.
- Reaction to change creates resistance.
- The effects of change usually require relearning.
- Change creates tension and uncertainty.



Show Visual 6-15.

Paraphrase:

Discomfort is often good. It's a signal that something needs to change. To make the personal change to provide better services and supports to crime victims with disabilities, you need information, time to process it, and time to become accustomed to it. You may not be able to do that overnight. Being aware of your feelings about crime victims with disabilities – which was the point of the self-awareness inventory – is a good place to begin. So is being honest with yourself.



Show Visual 6-16.

Review the learning objectives and **ask** whether these were met.

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- Recognize how privilege and prejudice affect attitude.
- Recognize how their own value systems influence their attitudes and impacts their work.
- Explain the importance of self-reflection, especially as it applies to supporting crime victims with disabilities.



Show Visual 6-17.

Ask if there are any final questions before moving to the next module.