

Module Number	3
Title of Module	Addressing Prejudice in Vocational Settings
Description of Module	This module aims to raise awareness about the impact of prejudice and discrimination in vocational environments. It fits into the broader course by equipping learners with practical strategies to foster inclusive workplaces. The module covers topics such as recognising unconscious bias, addressing microaggressions, and developing anti-discrimination policies. Through interactive activities, learners will reflect on their own biases and learn how to challenge discriminatory behaviours in professional settings.
Learning outcomes	K3: Recognise the impact of prejudice and discrimination in vocational settings. S1: Apply strategies to address prejudice and discrimination. C1: Reflect on personal biases and their impact on workplace interactions
Inclusive Localisation and Accessibility Measures	The module includes diverse scenarios and case studies relevant to vocational fields, ensuring relatability across cultures. Handouts and videos are provided to support different learning styles. Activities are designed to be adaptable locally, also allowing learners to engage in ways that suit their needs, such as written reflections or group discussions. Psychological safety is prioritised, with options for private journaling or opting out of sensitive discussions.
Innovation in Teaching Methods Applied in Activities	The module uses interactive pedagogical methods like role-plays, reflective journals, and policy analysis to deepen understanding. Activities such as the "Privilege Walk" and "Vocational Pyramid of Exclusion" employ experiential learning to highlight systemic biases. Real-world scenarios and group discussions encourage collaborative problem-solving, while multimedia resources (e.g., videos) enhance engagement. The focus on practical strategies, such as responding to microaggressions, ensures learners can apply their knowledge in vocational contexts.

Activity No.	Activity Title	Brief Description
1.	Exploring Personal Biases	Learners identify and reflect on their unconscious biases through guided exercises and paired discussions, focusing on how these biases might affect workplace interactions.
2.	Circle of Influence	Participants map the societal and personal influences shaping their beliefs about vocational roles, critically examining how biases limit opportunities for marginalised groups.
3.	Vocational Pyramid of Exclusion	Groups analyse how workplace bias escalates across five tiers (e.g., jokes → discrimination) and develop interventions to address early-stage prejudice.
4.	Privilege Walk	A simulation activity where learners step forward/backward based on systemic advantages/disadvantages tied to fictional identities, fostering empathy and awareness of inequities.
5.	Perspectives in Conflict	Learners analyse a workplace conflict scenario twice—first with limited information, then with full context—to recognise how incomplete facts fuel prejudice.
6.	Why-Why-Why Chains	Groups trace the root causes of workplace discrimination using evidence-based analysis, distinguishing between verified facts and assumptions.
7.	Understanding Microaggressions	Participants define and identify microaggressions in vocational settings, analysing gaps between intent and impact through real-world examples.
8.	Responding to Microaggressions	Learners practise a 3-step framework (Identify → Reframe → Educate) to address microaggressions constructively, using role-plays and vocational scenarios.
9.	Policy Reform Simulation	Small groups critique sample workplace policies (e.g., dress codes) for hidden biases and propose inclusive reforms grounded in anti-discrimination laws.
10.	Politics of Emotions	Groups apply a values-based framework (Values → Statistics → Action) to challenge prejudiced

		statements, focusing on dialogue rather than confrontation.
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Activity number	1
Activity Title	Exploring Personal Biases
Duration	60 minutes
Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Define unconscious bias and identify 3 common types relevant to vocational contexts ● Recognise how personal biases might influence future workplace interactions ● Reflect on the origins of one self-identified bias
Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pens ● Unconscious bias exploration handout ● Reflection exercise handout
Methodology and Guidance	Begin by establishing a psychologically safe, non-judgmental learning environment, explicitly framing unconscious bias as a universal human trait shaped by cultural and societal influences, not individual failing. Consistently emphasise the session's exploratory purpose: identifying patterns, not solving problems or assigning blame. If discussions veer into defensiveness, refocus learners on systemic awareness (spotting patterns, not blaming individuals). Rigorously anchor all reflections to vocational contexts by redirecting abstract exchanges to concrete trade scenarios
<p>Detailed Activity Description:</p> <p>1. Introduction (10 mins)</p> <p>Facilitator introduces the topic that we all carry hidden biases, automatic thoughts about people shaped by our upbringing, media and culture. Today, we'll gently explore these without judgment. This isn't about guilt, but about preparing for fair workplaces.</p> <p>Example: Imagine you're a construction supervisor. You might unconsciously assume older workers can't use digital tools. How might this affect team dynamics?</p> <p>2. Individual Exploration (25 mins)</p> <p>Distribute Unconscious Bias Exploration Handout and Reflections Exercise Handout. Learners work silently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read the information ● Complete reflection exercise handout <p>3. Paired Sharing (20 mins)</p>	

- In pairs, discuss:
Which bias feels most familiar? How might it show up in your field of work/trade?

4. Peer-to-Peer Testing (10 mins)

After paired sharing, learners remain in pairs. Each learner takes turns testing their partner's understanding of the three bias types most relevant to their vocational field. For example:

"Give me an example of confirmation bias in a construction workshop."

"How might affinity bias affect shift assignments in healthcare?"

The listener provides feedback on accuracy and suggests one real-life scenario where that bias could appear. Partners swap roles. This peer-testing step reinforces learning and builds collective accountability.

5. Group Harvesting (5 mins)

- Volunteers share anonymous insights:
"One thing I realised..."
"A question I now have..."

Transition: *Next, we'll see how small biases grow into bigger problems.*

Handout

What is Unconscious Bias?

Unconscious bias occurs when we make judgments or decisions based on our prior experiences, deep-seated assumptions, or personal interpretations without realising we're doing it. These automatic mental shortcuts help us process information quickly but often lead to unfair conclusions. Ironically, this prejudice is a by-product of our brain's efficiency. We are wired to favour familiar patterns while overlooking contradictions.

Research shows we all believe we're fairer than others, but this is itself a bias! We naturally trust people from our "ingroup" (those similar to us) while feeling uncertain about "outgroups" (those different from us). This leads us to unconsciously redefine merit to match our biases.

How Unconscious Bias Manifests:

Our biases begin in childhood, shaped by cultural messages from family, media, and society, leading our brains to constantly seek patterns. When we repeatedly see certain groups in specific roles (e.g., "men as engineers", "women as nurses"), we internalise these as "normal". Unfamiliar combinations then trigger harmful patterns: **lazy stereotypes** ("Older

workers can't learn new tech"), **unequal opportunities** (assigning tasks based on gender/age), and **microaggressions** (backhanded comments like "You're articulate for an immigrant"). In vocational settings, this manifests concretely as overlooking qualified candidates for promotions, delegating high-skill tasks only to "familiar" groups, and dismissing ideas from colleagues who don't "fit the mould" ultimately undermining team performance and fairness in trades from construction to healthcare.

Common Bias Types with Vocational Examples:

Bias Type	What It Is	Workplace Example
Confirmation Bias	Seeking evidence that supports existing beliefs	<i>Ignoring a refugee electrician's qualifications because "foreign certs are weak"</i>
Affinity Bias	Preferring people similar to you	<i>Choosing lunch partners only from your own culture on a construction site</i>
Age Bias	Judging ability based on age	<i>Assuming young apprentices won't follow safety protocols</i>
Gender Bias	Linking skills to gender	<i>Excluding women from plumbing tasks "because they lack strength"</i>
Halo Effect	Letting one trait override all others	<i>Promoting a charismatic but unqualified worker</i>

Reflection Exercise: Exploring Bias in Learning Environments

Reflect on an experience from your vocational training, placement, or community where diversity played a role (e.g., related to race, gender, age, disability, or cultural background). This could include a conversation intended as a joke, or not, where you later reflected and wished that you had spoken up.

- 1. What happened? Who was involved?*
- 2. What did you do/say in the moment? If you stayed silent, what held you back?*
- 3. What biases might have influenced this situation? (Refer to handout: confirmation, affinity, gender bias etc.)*

4. *How might this affect (the targeted person's confidence or the team dynamics)*

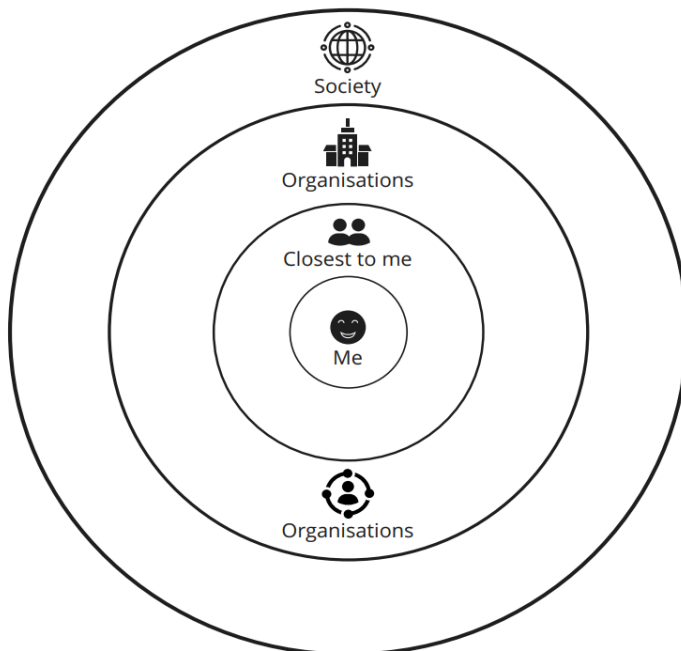
Activity number	2
Activity Title	Circle of Influence
Duration	60 minutes
Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify key influences shaping their beliefs about vocational roles, industries, and workplace norms. ● Critically reflect on how societal biases may limit career opportunities for marginalised groups.
Requirements	Flipchart paper, markers/pens, printed 'Circles of Influence' templates
Methodology and Guidance	Clarify that this activity explores beliefs, not personal attacks. Participants may pass on sharing if uncomfortable. Offer alternative reflection methods (e.g., private journaling). Ask learners to present examples without judgement. Use phrases like, some people experience... instead of generalisations.
Detailed Activity Description:	
<p>1. Introduction (10 minutes)</p> <p>Begin by explaining that our views about careers are shaped by various influences around us. Use a flipchart to draw the 'Circles of Influence' model.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draw a small circle in the middle of a flipchart page and put the word 'me' inside. ● Draw a circle around this and explain that between these two circles are those who are closest to them. E.g. friends/ family/ etc. ● Draw a bigger circle outside of this to represent their community. Explain that this circle represents those in their community not already mentioned. E.g., school/ work/ faith/ health professionals etc. ● Finally draw an outer circle to represent wider society. <p>2. Personal Mapping (30 minutes)</p> <p>Discuss with the learners the concept of 'these are the people who have influenced what we believe today.' Ask them to give a few examples. For example; 'My parents taught me that education is the most important thing in life.' Below are some links that provide videos that explain how social conditioning reinforces assumed norms. You can play these to learners to support their learning and awareness of how we think about what is the 'norm'.</p> <p>What is social conditioning? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAoOUn1lIdo How the media shapes the way we view the world - BBC REEL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVAztNx0rHQ How to Follow Your Heart Beat Social Conditioning: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1J6RGYFRN3Y</p>	

3. Small Group Discussion (20 minutes)

Divide into groups of 3–4. Participants share:

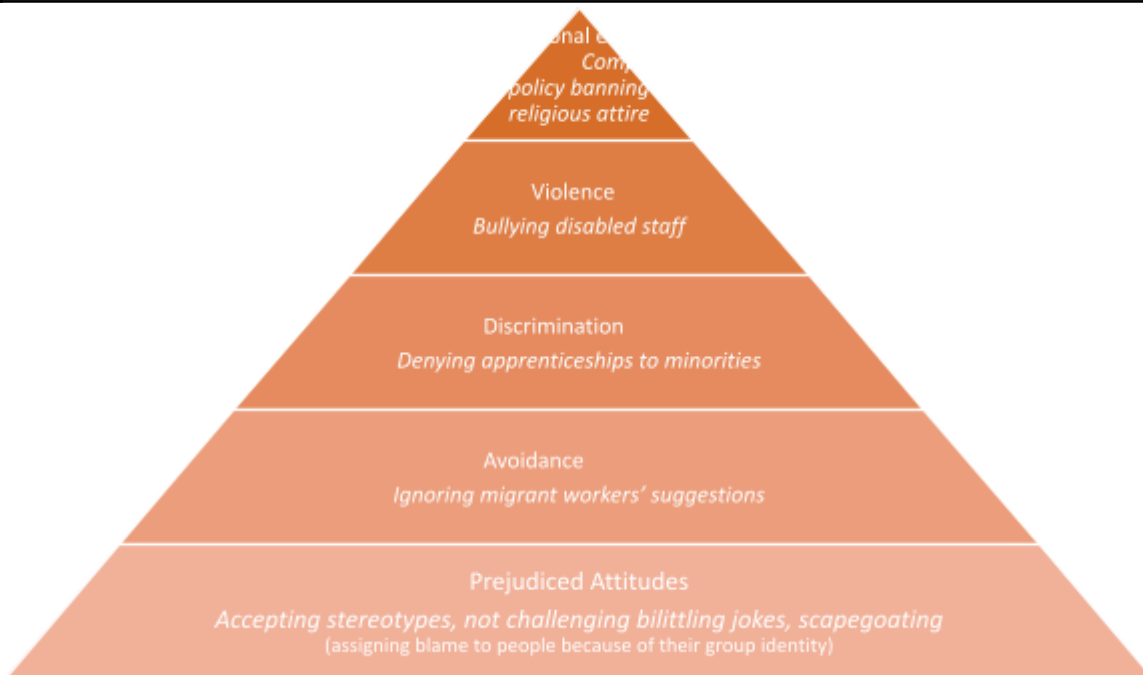
- One key influence from their map.
- How this belief helped or limited their career choices and whether it matches reality.
- Encourage questions like: *Did anyone challenge these beliefs?*
- How have the messages from media (e.g., news, ads, movies) shaped your personal beliefs or behaviours in ways you may not have realised before watching these videos?
- What's one step you'll take to question biased assumptions?

Circle of influence



Activity number	3
Activity Title	Vocational Pyramid of Exclusion
Duration	60 minutes
Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify 5 stages of bias escalation in workplaces • Develop interventions for early-stage prejudice
Requirements	Vocational Pyramid of Exclusion and Scenario cards
Methodology and Guidance	<p>Explain that workplace bias peaks at institutional exclusion (Tier 5), not genocide. Explain that it is adapted version of hate pyramid: https://www.holocaustcenterseattle.org/images/PDF/pyramid_of_hate.pdf</p> <p>Acknowledge potential discomfort and allow opt-outs silently. Prioritise Tiers 1-3 (jokes → avoidance → discrimination) where vocational education learners or workers can intervene. Constantly link scenarios to the relevant occupation field of the learners.</p>
Detailed Activity Description:	
<p>1. Intro (10 mins)</p> <p>Display the Pyramid Poster (see handout). Explain the pyramid by giving examples of hate at each level and describe how each level is dependent on the one before. Tell your group you will be focusing on the bottom two levels as this is the area where they can have most impact in bringing about change (i.e. by undermining and taking away the support on the bottom level it collapses the hate on the upper levels).</p>	
<p>2. Scenario Sorting (35 mins)</p> <p>Split the group into 4 smaller groups and ask each group to place 3 to 4 scenario cards (see handout) on the pyramid. Encourage the groups think of examples of hateful words and behaviours they see or hear focusing on examples of hate from the lower tiers of the pyramid – i.e. jokes, rumours, stereotyping, non-inclusive language, name-calling and isolating or avoiding groups. Discuss could this happen in a workplace/your workplace/in our college and what harm would result. You can also further discuss that how does this policy exclude people? Is it legal? Give reference to Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC) which is part of a series of measures aiming to prevent and combat discrimination in Europe https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/rights-work/tackling-discrimination-work/legislation-employment-equality-directive-200078ec_en</p> <p><i>Note: It is important to highlight the intersectional aspects of discrimination (meaning that people can belong in more than just one identity group and face multiple layers of discrimination).</i></p>	
3. Intervention Planning (15 mins)	

Ask the groups to add sticky notes to Tiers 1-3 with actions taken



Vocational Pyramid of Exclusion

Scenario cards

Tier 1: Biased Attitudes (Stereotypes/Jokes)

1. "Older workers can't learn new technology"
2. "People from [Country X] are lazy workers"
3. "Disabled colleagues slow down productivity"

Tier 2: Avoidance

4. Team members consistently exclude migrant workers from lunch breaks
5. Supervisors avoid giving challenging tasks to workers with accents
6. Colleagues refuse to partner with apprentices from certain backgrounds

Tier 3: Discrimination

7. Company pays workers from minority groups lower wages for same work
8. Training opportunities only offered to employees from specific regions
9. Performance evaluations penalise workers wearing religious attire

Tier 4: Harassment/Violence

10. Workers mock a colleague's disability behind their back
11. Someone damages equipment belonging to a foreign worker
12. Team members threaten a worker who reports discrimination

Tier 5: Institutional Exclusion

13. Company policy requires "native-level" language skills for manual jobs
14. Workplace dress code bans cultural/religious clothing items
15. Building design lacks accessibility for workers with mobility needs

Activity number	4
Activity Title	Privilege walk
Duration	60 minutes
Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify how systemic privilege and barriers (e.g., ageism, ableism, sexism) impact career progression in vocational fields. ● Develop empathy and actionable strategies to challenge inequities in their workplaces or training environments.
Requirements	Identity cards and scenario cards
Methodology and Guidance	<p>Psychological Safety: Before commencing the activity, explain that all identity cards represent fictional vocational roles. Participants may discreetly exchange cards if their assigned role causes discomfort. Afterwards, allocate five minutes for silent reflection and provide exit passes for those needing space.</p> <p>Neutral Facilitation: Read scenarios impartially without commentary. Refrain from labelling forward/backward movements as "positive" or "negative". Maintain a factual tone to encourage objective reflection.</p> <p>Timekeeping: Strictly adhere to time allocations, particularly during the reflection circle. Conclude discussions promptly after 15 minutes to prevent emotional fatigue and maintain focus.</p> <p>Inclusive Language: Integrate terms from the glossary (pp. 64-68), such as intersectionality (overlapping disadvantages) or ableism/disablism (prejudice against disabled people). Clarify concepts if needed using the definitions provided.</p>
Detailed Activity Description:	
<p>Step 1: Setup & Student Design Input (10 mins) Gather participants in an open area. Instead of the facilitator distributing pre-written identity cards, learners work in small groups to create one additional identity card based on real barriers they have observed in their vocational placements. Each group writes a short fictional identity (e.g., "Part-time apprentice who is a single father") and one corresponding advantage/disadvantage scenario. The facilitator then shuffles all cards (pre-written + student-generated) and distributes them randomly. This student-led design element increases ownership and relevance.</p> <p>Step 2: Student-Led Simulation (25 mins) Instead of the facilitator reading all scenario cards, learners take turns reading the scenario cards (including those they designed). Each learner reads one card aloud, and the group steps forward/backward as before. The facilitator only steps in to clarify rules or manage time. After every 3–4 cards, pause for 30 seconds and ask a different learner to summarise observed patterns ("Who moved most? Least?"). This shifts facilitation to participants.</p>	

Step 3: Reflection Circle (15 minutes)

Form a seated circle. Begin by asking participants to observe patterns: Who moved farthest? Least? Note trends like repeated disadvantages for certain identities. Next, discuss real-world parallels in vocational fields, and ask everyone, where have you observed similar scenarios in your vocational field? Finally, brainstorm policy changes to reduce inequities (e.g., flexible hours for parents). Chart ideas on a board. Acknowledge emotions neutrally (e.g., Frustration is common when recognising unfair systems).

Step 4: Closing (5 minutes)

In the bigger group, ask these debrief questions

- Were you aware how significantly vocational experiences differ based on identity?
- What surprised you? Has this altered your view of societal inequities?
- How did roles with layered disadvantages (e.g., a working-class wheelchair user) experience greater setbacks?
- How could vocational initiatives (e.g., skills grants, anti-bias training) mitigate these barriers?

Debrief

Ask a question about the student-designed cards: "Which student-generated identity surprised you most and why?"

Reinforce the message that awareness of privilege fosters collective responsibility, not guilt. Encourage the group to identify one barrier a class fellow/colleague might face during the week.

Identity Cards

Older Construction Trainee (55+): Employers assume you lack tech skills. Rarely offered training.	Migrant Nurse: Home-country credentials unrecognised. Limited to low-wage roles.
Single Mother (HVAC Tech): Paid less than male peers. No childcare support for shifts.	Wheelchair User (Auto Mechanic): Workshop inaccessible. Self-funds adapted tools.
Electrician from the Roma community/ethnic minority worker: Clients cancel upon learning your ethnicity. Enduring workplace mockery.	Deaf Graphic Designer: Employers deny sign-language interpreters for meetings.
Muslim Chef (Hijab-Wearing): Barred from kitchens for "hygiene reasons."	Welder with previous convictions: Apprenticeships denied due to background checks.
Young Female Engineer (22): Assigned admin tasks, not technical projects.	Dyslexic Apprentice: Denied extra exam time.

Scenario Cards

<p>1. Employers fund professional qualifications. <i>Forward:</i> Subsidised workers. <i>Back:</i> Self-funded/low-income workers.</p>	<p>2. Training requires relocating cities. <i>Back:</i> Parents/disabled workers (unable to relocate).</p>
<p>3. Client refuses you after meeting. <i>Back:</i> Ethnic minorities/visibly disabled workers.</p>	<p>4. CVs with 'foreign-sounding' names rejected. <i>Back:</i> Migrants/ethnic minorities.</p>
<p>5. Networking event in inaccessible venue. <i>Back:</i> Wheelchair users/chronically ill workers.</p>	<p>6. Promotion requires university degree. <i>Back:</i> Working-class/older workers (limited access to education).</p>
<p>7. No quiet rooms for neurodivergent staff. <i>Back:</i> Dyslexic/autistic workers.</p>	<p>8. Religious holidays not accommodated. <i>Back:</i> Non-Christian workers.</p>
<p>9. Overtime mandatory with 24-hour notice. <i>Back:</i> Single parents/carers (unable to secure childcare).</p>	<p>10. Safety training only provided in English. <i>Back:</i> Non-native speakers.</p>

Activity number	5
Activity Title	Perspectives in Conflict
Duration	60 minutes
Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise how incomplete information fuels prejudice. • Practice perspective-taking in workplace conflicts
Requirements	Character cards, story, paper and pens for participants
Methodology and Guidance	Facilitators demonstrate how partial information breeds bias using a vocational conflict story. Participants analyse characters' actions twice: first with limited facts, then with full context. Discussions focus on workplace pressures (training gaps, cultural barriers) rather than blaming individuals. Debrief extracts "pause questions" to prevent snap judgements in real vocational settings.
Detailed Activity Description:	
<p>Step 1: Initial Ranking (10 mins)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Part 1: Initial Story aloud. 2. Groups rank characters from 1 (most responsible) to 4 (least responsible) for the conflict. <p>Step 2: Context Reveal & Re-Ranking (20 mins)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distribute Revealed Truths cards. Ask the groups re-rank characters using new information. Discuss: <i>'How did context change your judgment of George's anger or Tom's demand?'</i> <p>Step 3: Vocational Policy Workshop (30 mins)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Small Group Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>What hidden pressures exist in our field? (e.g., language barriers in healthcare, certification deadlines in construction)</i> ○ <i>How might rumours like 'new workers are careless' start from partial facts?</i> 2. Draft 3 Pause Questions: Using the template, create questions like: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>What critical information might be missing?</i> 2. <i>Could training gaps explain this behaviour?</i> 3. <i>What workplace pressures is this person facing?</i> 	

Story Resource: The Training Deadline Conflict

Characters:

- **Lisa:** New care worker from Nigeria
- **Martin:** Senior supervisor
- **Tom:** Safety trainer
- **George:** Support worker

Part 1: Initial Story (Given to Participants First)

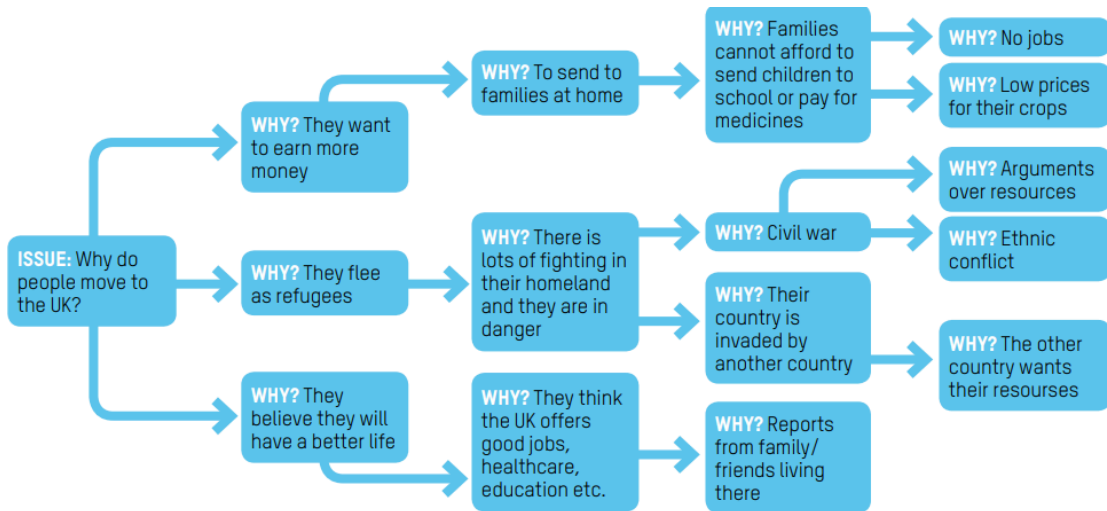
Lisa needs Martin's signature on a client safety report by 3 PM. When she approaches Martin, he says, "Not now, I'm busy." Desperate, Lisa asks Tom for help. Tom replies, "I'll only help if you stay late tonight." Lisa agrees. Later, Martin finds errors in the report and shouts, "This is unacceptable!" George shoves Martin and yells, "Stop bullying her!"

Part 2: Revealed Truths (Distributed Later)

- **Martin** was in an emergency meeting about a client's missing medication.
- **Tom** required Lisa's late stay to complete mandatory safety certification.
- **George** witnessed a client injury caused by rushed paperwork last month.
- **Lisa** misunderstood "signature" as approval (not verification of accuracy).

Activity number	6
Activity Title	Why-Why-Why Chains: Uncovering Workplace Bias
Duration	60 minutes
Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Distinguish between factual and opinion-based questions in vocational contexts ● Trace the root causes of workplace conflicts using evidence-based analysis ● Challenge assumptions about colleagues' behaviours
Requirements	Scenario cards, flip chart, pens, sticky notes
Methodology and Guidance	Intervene only to clarify when reasons are assumptions rather than facts. Ensure all voices contribute, and keep discussions focused on workplace systems, not individual blame. For sensitive topics like discrimination, redirect to structural solutions ('How could policies prevent this?' rather than 'Who was wrong?')
Detailed Activity Description:	
<p>Provide each group with a large sheet of paper, coloured pens, and one workplace scenario card (e.g., "Experienced workers refuse to share skills with new apprentices"). Write the scenario in a box on the far left of the paper.</p> <p>Step 1: Identify Direct Causes (15 minutes) Ask learners to brainstorm immediate reasons for the problem. These should be written in boxes in the first column to the right of the main issue, connected by arrows. For example, if the scenario is "Apprentices from minority groups get fewer mentoring opportunities", direct causes might include "Supervisors assume they'll leave the job soon" or "Language barriers make communication difficult". Encourage learners to focus on observable behaviours rather than opinions.</p> <p>Step 2: Trace Root Causes (30 minutes) For each direct cause, prompt learners to ask "Why does this happen?" and record answers in subsequent columns moving right. A direct cause like "Language barriers exist" might connect to root causes such as "No funded ESOL classes" (factual, with evidence) or "Managers think translation isn't worth the cost" (needs verification). Continue adding columns until the group agrees they've reached fundamental causes, distinguishing between evidence-based factors (mark with tick) and unverified assumptions (mark with ?).</p> <p>Step 3: Develop Solutions (15 minutes) Focus attention on the rightmost boxes containing root causes. Pose two key questions: First, "Is this situation fair to all workers?" Second, "What one practical change could</p>	

address this?" For instance, if a root cause is "No diversity training for supervisors", solutions might include "Mandatory inclusion workshops" or "Mentoring partnerships across different age groups". Each group shares their most actionable solution with the class.



Activity number	7
Activity Title	Understanding Microaggression
Duration	60 minutes
Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Define and identify three common types of microaggressions in vocational settings. ● Recognise how everyday statements can carry unintended negative meanings.
Requirements	Handouts, video
Methodology and Guidance	Begin by introducing microaggressions as subtle, often unintentional behaviours that marginalise others, emphasising their workplace impact. Show the BBC Ideas video segment, then discuss how even "harmless" comments can exclude colleagues. For the matching activity, have learners analyse statements by connecting them to potential interpretations and intents, using the handout. Stress that this exercise focuses on recognising patterns, not assigning blame. Guide discussions to explore gaps between intent and impact, and relate findings to vocational settings. Conclude by linking this awareness to the next session's focus on response strategies.
Detailed Activity Description:	
<p>1. Input: Understanding Microaggressions (30 mins)</p> <p>Discuss what are microaggressions, how do they occur, types, and why does it matter. Refer to handout below (see handout). Show this short video:</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wh8Gf18eNzw</p> <p><i>(First half: How Racial Microaggressions Manifest).</i></p> <p>Discussion Questions After Viewing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Which microaggressions stood out to you? 2. How might someone rationalise these comments as "harmless"? 3. What long-term effects could these have on team dynamics? 	
<p>2. Unpacking microaggressions (30 mins)</p> <p>Read each statement in Column A. Consider, how might someone feel put down by this comment. Draw a line to match it with the most fitting interpretation in Column B. In</p>	

Column C, write what you think the speaker's intent might have been. (see handout and facilitator's answer key)

Key Discussion Points:

1. Notice how seemingly positive comments can carry negative implications
2. The gap between speaker intent and listener impact
3. How these occur daily in workplaces, often unintentionally

Understanding Microaggressions in the Workplace Information sheet

What Are Microaggressions?

Microaggressions are subtle, often unintentional comments or actions that communicate bias towards individuals based on characteristics such as race, gender, sexual orientation, or other aspects of identity. Unlike overt discrimination, they are indirect and may not meet legal definitions of harassment, but they still create a hostile or unwelcoming environment.

How Do They Occur?

- **Forms:** Passive remarks, backhanded compliments, exclusionary language, or even non-verbal cues (e.g., ignoring someone in meetings).
- **Implicit Bias:** These behaviours often stem from unconscious assumptions, which can appear in written communication, imagery, or workplace policies—not just face-to-face interactions.
- **Impact:** Though the person may not intend harm, microaggressions can make individuals feel undervalued, stereotyped, or alienated.

Types of Microaggression

Type	Definition	Workplace Example
Microinvalidation	Dismissing someone's experience	"Don't be so sensitive, it's just banter!" (Construction)
Stereotyping	Applying biased assumptions	"Older nurses won't understand this software." (Healthcare)
Othering	Highlighting someone as "different"	"Where are you really from?" (IT office)

Why Does This Matter?

We address microaggressions not for legal compliance, but to foster a workplace built on **respect, inclusion, and psychological safety**. Even well-meaning people can unintentionally perpetuate bias—awareness is the first step toward change.

Learner Worksheet: Unpacking Microaggressions

Column A: Statement	Column B: Possible Interpretation	Column C: Possible Intent
You're so articulate for a [racial/ethnic group].	I expect people like you to be less educated.	I'm giving a compliment.
No, where are you really from?	You don't belong here.	I'm curious about your background.
All [racial group] people are good at [skill].	You're only valued for stereotypes.	I'm acknowledging a pattern.
You don't act like other [racial group] people.	You're an exception to negative stereotypes.	I'm trying to praise you.
I don't see colour.	Your racial experiences are irrelevant.	I believe in equality.
Your name is too hard; I'll call you [nickname].	Your identity is inconvenient.	I want to make things easier.
You must be here on a visa. (to non-white colleague)	You don't truly belong here.	I'm making conversation.
You people are so resilient.	Your struggles are expected/normalised.	I'm admiring your strength.
Can you teach us about [cultural holiday]? (to only minority colleague)	You're responsible for representing your culture.	I'm being inclusive.

Column A: Statement	Column B: Possible Interpretation	Column C: Possible Intent
You don't sound Black on the phone.	Black people have a specific way of speaking.	I'm surprised in a positive way.

Facilitator Answer Key

Statement	Best Interpretation	Common Intent
You're so articulate for a...	Expectation of lower education	Giving compliment
No, where are you really from?	Othering	Showing curiosity
All [group] are good at...	Reduction to stereotype	Noticing patterns
You don't act like other...	Token exception	Attempting praise
I don't see colour.	Erasure of identity	Promoting equality
Your name is too hard...	Disrespect of identity	Seeking convenience
You must be here on a visa.	Questioning belonging	Making small talk
You people are so resilient.	Normalising struggle	Paying compliment
Can you teach us about...	Cultural burden	Attempting inclusion
You don't sound Black...	Racial expectation	Expressing surprise

Activity number	8
Activity Title	Responding to Microaggressions
Duration	60 Minutes
Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Define the 3-step framework (Identify → Reframe → Educate) for addressing microaggressions. ● Apply the framework to vocational scenarios through role-play. ● Reflect on the gap between intent and impact in workplace communication.
Requirements	3-step framework handout, scenario cards, flipchart
Methodology and Guidance	Allow participants to opt out of role-plays if uncomfortable. Use fictional and use neutral language. Allocate some time for debrief after the role-play.
Detailed Activity Description:	
<p>1. Video Analysis & Discussion (25 mins)</p> <p>The BBC video ‘Tips for dealing with microaggressions at work ‘ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wh8Gf18eNzw demonstrates a four-step approach to addressing microaggressions at 3:55 minutes (set up a situation, objectively describe the behaviour and ask for clarification, explain the impact and lastly work collaboratively to find solutions)</p> <p>Discuss the following questions with learners:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Which response strategy from the video resonated most with you, and why?</i> 2. <i>How could the "institutional change" examples apply to our workplace?</i> 3. <i>What barriers might prevent someone from speaking up in vocational settings?</i> 4. <i>How realistic are these strategies in our daily work environments?</i> <p>2: 3-Step Response Practice (30 mins)</p> <p>Ask the learners to apply three step process through a role play. Trios practise the Identify → Reframe → Educate approach. And in the end compare the both approaches</p>	

Begin by clearly explaining the three-step process for addressing microaggressions: **Identify** the behaviour objectively, **Reframe** the impact respectfully, and **Educate** to foster long-term understanding. Distribute handouts outlining the steps with vocational examples, such as:

- *Healthcare*: "Let me check with a senior doctor" (said to a junior doctor of colour)
- *Construction*: "You're not what I expected" (said to a female electrician)

Divide learners into trios for role-play exercises. Each group practises applying the steps:

1. **Identify**: Calmly state what was observed ("*You asked to double-check with another doctor*").
2. **Reframe**: Explain the potential harm ("*This might imply you doubt their expertise*").
3. **Educate**: Suggest alternatives ("*Next time, could you ask for their assessment first?*").

Peer-to-Peer Testing of Response Skills (10 mins)

After trios finish their role-play, each learner individually writes down a new microaggression scenario relevant to their trade (e.g., hospitality, logistics, IT). They pass their scenario to a partner. The partner then writes out the correct 3-step response (Identify → Reframe → Educate) without looking at notes. The original author checks the response against the framework and provides **constructive peer feedback** using two sentence stems:

- "*You correctly identified the behaviour when you said...*"
- "*To strengthen the Reframe step, you could add...*"

This peer-testing activity ensures learners can apply the framework to novel situations, not just rehearse given examples.

Debrief

After the role-play, reconvene for a debrief. Compare the video's strategies with the structured 3-step approach. Discuss:

- *Which method felt more natural or effective in vocational settings?*
- *When might a different approach be needed?*

A Constructive Approach to Addressing Workplace Bias and Microaggressions

When witnessing bias or microaggressions in professional settings, this three-step method promotes understanding while maintaining workplace harmony. The approach balances immediate intervention with long-term education, recognising that most incidents stem from unconscious patterns rather than malicious intent.

Step 1: Identify the Behaviour

Begin by objectively naming what occurred, separating the observation from interpretation. For instance, if a colleague questions a foreign-born team member's origin ("Where are you really from?"), you might note: "You asked for their origin again after they answered." This factual framing avoids assumptions about intent while making the behaviour visible. In vocational contexts - whether construction sites, hospitals or offices - this step works best when delivered calmly and promptly after the incident.

Step 2: Reframe the Impact

Transition the conversation to explore potential harm, using open-ended questions. You might add: "When we revisit someone's background, they might feel their initial answer wasn't accepted. How could we phrase this differently?" This technique proves particularly effective in trade environments where direct communication is valued, as it educates without shaming. Remember that the speaker may genuinely not recognise how their words landed, especially in high-pressure work situations.

Step 3: Commit to Education

Transform isolated incidents into learning opportunities through various methods: one-on-one follow-ups with involved parties, team workshops on inclusive language, or incorporating bias training into apprenticeship programmes. For example, a healthcare team might review how assumptions about colleagues' language skills affect patient care assignments. Sustainable change comes from normalising these discussions as part of professional development, not as punitive measures.

Activity number	9
Activity Title	Policy Reform Simulation
Duration	60 Minutes
Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse existing workplace policies for potential bias or exclusionary practices. Develop inclusive policy recommendations tailored to vocational settings.
Requirements	<p>Sample workplace policies (e.g., dress codes, promotion criteria).</p> <p>Flipcharts, markers, and sticky notes.</p>
Methodology and Guidance	<p>Begin by explaining how policies can unintentionally marginalise groups, using real-world examples (e.g., rigid dress codes disadvantaging religious attire). Divide learners into small groups, assigning each a policy to critique. Encourage evidence-based analysis, for instance, questioning whether a ‘native-level language’ requirement for manual jobs is justified. Guide discussions toward actionable reforms, such as flexible uniform policies or anonymised CV screenings.</p>
<p>Detailed Activity Description:</p> <p>Step 1: Policy Analysis (20 minutes)</p> <p>1. Introduction (5 mins):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitator briefly explains how workplace policies (e.g., dress codes, promotion criteria) can unintentionally exclude marginalised groups. Distribute sample policies (real or fictional) to small groups. <p>2. Group Critique (15 mins):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Groups identify potential biases in their assigned policy using guiding questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Does this policy disadvantage any group?</i> <i>Is the requirement justified for the job?</i> <i>How might this policy be reformed to be more inclusive?</i> Groups annotate policies with two coloured sticky notes (fair, needs review). <p>Step 2: Reform Proposals (25 minutes)</p>	

1. Drafting Reforms (15 mins):

- Groups redesign their policy to remove barriers, referencing the Equality Act 2010 (e.g., "reasonable adjustments").

2. Gallery Walk (10 mins):

- Groups display revised policies on flipcharts.
- Participants rotate, leaving feedback on the flip charts.

3. Peer-to-Peer Testing of Response Skills (10 mins)

After trios finish their role-play, each learner individually writes down a new microaggression scenario relevant to their trade (e.g., hospitality, logistics, IT). They pass their scenario to a partner. The partner then writes out the correct 3-step response (Identify → Reframe → Educate) without looking at notes. The original author checks the response against the framework and provides constructive peer feedback using two sentence stems:

- "You correctly identified the behaviour when you said..."
- "To strengthen the Reframe step, you could add..."

This peer-testing activity ensures learners can apply the framework to novel situations, not just rehearse given examples.

Step 3: Debrief (15 minutes)

- Discuss:
 - *Which biases were hardest to spot?*
 - *How can we ensure policies are reviewed regularly?*

Note: Highlight intersectionality

Activity number	10
Activity Title	Politics of Emotions-Changing Prejudiced Views
Duration	60 Minutes
Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply a 3-step framework (Values → Statistics → Action) to constructively challenge prejudices in vocational/community settings
Requirements	Prejudiced statements (e.g., " <i>Immigrants take our jobs</i> "), Local statistics (can be organised by facilitator or researched by learners) and a timer.
Methodology and Guidance	The educator should circulate to guide discussions, ensure respectful dialogue, and help groups develop balanced, evidence-based responses that emphasise solutions over arguments while keeping the activity focused and time-bound. Provide printed statistical references (if possible) and encourage participants to frame their responses empathetically, focusing on changing perspectives through understanding rather than confrontation.

Detailed Activity Description:

Step 1: Context Setting (10 mins)

Educator starts by summarising all the learning during this module that learners have learnt how to define prejudice and recognise discriminatory behaviour, reflect on our own biases, deal with discriminatory remarks and behaviour, develop and reform policies to address systemic issues. Now as a conclusion, learners will practise influencing others by connecting to their values, using evidence, and proposing actionable solutions. Educator will explain that as you have learnt that prejudice often stems from fear or misinformation. Let's learn to respond in a way that opens dialogue, not shuts it down.

Educator will explain the 3-step framework that to effectively address prejudiced comments, we'll use a structured approach that reduces defensiveness and encourages reflection. Here's how it works:

1. Connect to Values: when someone passes a prejudicial comment, start by identifying a shared value behind the person's concern (like fairness, family, or job security). This shows you're listening, not attacking. For example, if someone says, '*Immigrants are taking our jobs,*' you might respond: '*It sounds like you value being able to provide for your family, that's important to me too.*'
2. Introduce Statistics: Gently counter misconceptions with local, credible data. Facts depersonalise the issue. For instance: '*Actually, here in Ireland, immigrants are*

15% more likely to start businesses, which creates jobs for everyone.' (Source: CSO Ireland).

3. Suggest Concrete Action

Propose an actionable step to humanise the issue. This shifts the conversation from blame to solutions. Example: *'Let's visit a migrant-run business together, I'll arrange a tour with the Local Enterprise Office. Seeing their impact might change your perspective.'*

Step 2: Group Activity Setup (5 mins)

1. Divide learners into 3 small groups.

Assign each group a prejudiced statement:

- *"Immigrants are taking our jobs."*
- *"Immigrants are causing the housing crisis."*
- *"Immigrants don't contribute to our community."*

Step 2: The 3-Step Framework (35 mins)

Group Task: *Develop a response to their assigned statement using the framework.:*

1. Connect to Values: *Identify a shared value behind the prejudice (e.g., job security to sustain a family, housing access).*
2. Introduce Statistics: *Use local data to challenge the misconception.*
3. Suggest Concrete Action (15 mins): *Propose an activity to humanise the issue and build empathy.*

Step 3: Group Presentations & Debrief (20 mins)

1. Each group presents their 3-step response.
2. Discuss:
 - *"Which part felt most challenging? Why?"*
 - *"How could this approach work in your workplace?"*