



## Defining Social Exclusion

*The original workshops hosted by AHC had the aim of supporting the participants to come to a common understanding of social exclusion, its causes and effects. To read more about the original workshops see the Workshop Memories linked to this chapter.*

*Workshop 1 – Defining Social Exclusion (Lucenia Ortiz)*

Key themes that will be explored in this workshop:

Reflecting on ways people are excluded

Defining Social Exclusion

Reflecting on personal experiences of social exclusion

Reflecting on personal experiences of belonging

Time:

3 - 4 hours

Supplies:

Flipchart with paper

Markers

Overhead projector and gels (optional for displaying handouts)

Handouts

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ACTION FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES  
SOCIAL INCLUSION CURRICULUM

9:00 am – 9:15 am

Introductions and Housekeeping

Allow participants to introduce themselves

Identify smoking areas, bathrooms and break times for the group

9:15 am – 9:30 am

Icebreaker

Examples of icebreakers are included in the Main Appendix.

9:30 am – 10:15 am

Reflecting on ways people are excluded in our community

Breaking into small groups, provide the learners with questions that allow them to explore their own feelings about certain groups and labeled populations.

Here are some questions the groups can discuss:

(Dialog 1, Handouts I)

(It is helpful to have these questions displayed on an overhead or a flipchart)

How inclusive are we when we are recruiting staff or group member?

Are there members of any groups that you would not invite into your home?

Are there individuals that you avoid eye contact with in public places? Under what circumstances?

Are there racial, religious or cultural groups you prefer to associate with?

What groups do you perceive as the most different from yourself? Why?

Is it realistic for people with disabilities to expect to be treated just like everyone else?

Should people with developmental disabilities be allowed to vote?

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Facilitator Note:

The small groups should be asked to report back, though they may prefer to keep the reporting broad and general to avoid having participants feel 'held up' in front of the larger group. The facilitator should attend briefly at each small group discussion to get a sense of the themes in the discussion.

10:15 am – 10:30 am

Coffee Break

10:30 am – 11:15 am

Defining and Discussing Social Exclusion:  
(Dialog 1, Handout II)

Definition 1:

Social Exclusion is a process whereby individuals and groups and the environment in which they live are excluded from the resources and opportunities that are considered the norm in a society. (World Health Organization, 1999)

The four aspects of Social Exclusion:

Exclusion from social goods

E.g.: No access to for physically disabled people

Exclusion from Civil Society

E.g.: Muslim women unable to access public swim facilities (co-ed)

Economic Exclusion

E.g.: Poor recognition of foreign credentials

Exclusion from social production

E.g.: Exclusion from the job market (people with developmental disabilities)

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Definition 2:

Social Inclusion is described as a feeling of belonging, acceptance and recognition and is intertwined with issues of diversity, equality, opportunity and democratic participation. (Edmonton Social Planning Council, 2004)

Facilitator Note:

Have the participants discuss the two definitions and the aspects of exclusion and provide their own opinions about the two definitions. Do they resonate? Does the group have other ways of describing being excluded? Record peoples thoughts on a Flipchart for placement in the minutes.

11:15 am – 12:00 pm

Reflecting on personal experiences of social exclusion

By this time the group should have a relative level of comfort in discussing challenging issues. Keep the participants in the same small groups as they will have established a certain level of comfort in discussing the issues. Ask them to provide an example of a time when they felt excluded within the community and to discuss the feelings they had at that time. Have the groups report back on what types of experiences they have had and the feelings associated with that experience.

Facilitator Note:

Typical reporting will include feelings of anger, anxiety, powerlessness, etc. Draw connections between the groups where there is crossover, identify that people of diverse backgrounds often experience exclusion in the same way.

Keen observation of the group dynamic by the facilitator is important at this time. Given the diversity of participants there may be times when individual participants may become upset, even cry. Prepare the room with a place to withdraw and keep Kleenex etc on hand. It can be helpful to have more than one facilitator present during the dialogs

12:00 pm – 12:30 pm

Reflecting on personal experiences of belonging

Using the same small groups, ask the participants to document with a flipchart times that they felt included and what were the feelings they had about those experiences.

Facilitator Note:

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Have the small groups report back to the larger group. Draw connections between the groups where there is crossover, identify that people of diverse backgrounds often experience inclusion in the same way. i.e. it is not an experience exclusive to people with disabilities or any other group.

Using this technique supports the group to be ready for the conversation in the second dialog.

12:30 pm – 1:00pm

Expectations and Debriefing

After a discussion such as this it is likely the group will feel the need to look for solutions and practical approaches to addressing the issues.

At this time, ask the participants to provide you with a list of their expectations on learning about social inclusion. Itemize the list on a Flipchart for placement in the meeting minutes.

Provide the group with the complete agenda for the series of dialogs. This will allow the group to compare their expectations with the upcoming dialogs. Any areas of learning that are requested but not covered within the dialogs may have to be researched by the facilitator, left out of the dialogs or a guest speaker with expertise in that area may be found to assist the group. See Handout B for information on finding local speakers.

Facilitator Note:

For facilitators of these dialogs an expectation that there will be a diversity of opinion on the issue is helpful. At the end of the curriculum are links to studies and research papers that can provide various definitions/additional information if participants are interested in more information. It may be helpful to create space for candid conversation about this issue and to allow for the group to move forward with an acceptance that a spectrum of opinions will exist within the group