

Learning Points for a community course from the Inspiring Unity Programme

Recruitment

- It can take time to recruit a group able to commit to a course that lasts over several weeks. Expect that it may not come off first time.
- What helps: a local champion, introductory taster session, flexible approach to delivery (times and place)

Timing

- A regular time works best, for example weekly. However it is also valuable for participants to have time to reflect between sessions. Where there is a gap between sessions it could be suggested that participants meet up themselves.

Participation

- Not everyone is equally comfortable sharing in a group. It works well to have some exercises where everyone is asked to contribute briefly (e.g. by sharing one word)
- It is important to stress commitment to the full course. However it is inevitable that due to health, family or other commitments some participants may miss a session. Another participant can be asked to catch them and they should be sent the materials.
- The course is more than the sessions. Having a booklet to summarise each session is valuable to enable participants to continue to reflect on the material.
- Providing participants with a notebook and encouraging them to keep their own reflections helps to reinforce learning.

Preparation

- Hospitality is important; facilitators need time to set up (room and materials)
- Even once the course is designed, time is needed for facilitators to meet prepare and debrief between sessions.

Delivery of the sessions

- Sessions need to allow for group work and quiet time in addition to a reflection/opening orientation and inputs. It may be necessary sometimes to reduce content to make this possible.
- Learning from each other is really important for participants in terms of increasing understanding. Time needs to be allowed for this.
- Having several facilitators can be helpful in a number of ways. It enables there to be multiple roles at any one time (delivery, note taking, listening etc) and also gives a variety of voices and perspectives for the group to engage with.