



**Bournemouth  
University**



# Tools and strategies for working with students

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# Outline

- Explore the implications of unconscious bias
- Consider placement and student issues
- Consider the tools and strategies for working with BU students who undertake social work placements

# Ice breaker

- Pair up with someone you do not know well
- Decide who is A and who is B
- A - You have no spoken or written language skills.  
You can 'sign' (not by drawing out letters)
- B - You have 90 seconds to guess A's mother's first name

# Ice breaker

- Without any adjustment or forewarning, the placement experience can be difficult for disabled people
- Is this fair?
- If the 'A's had been forewarned of this activity a week ago, what could they have done to prepare?
- What could you have done to be prepared if you were going to work with disabled people within a social work setting?

# Why is equality and diversity important...

## Theory...

- *“In a multicultural society, social workers are expected to recognise diversity in their practice and actively tackle oppression.” Community Care , 2011*
- Equality and Diversity **is** reflected in the 9 core standards for practitioners...
- Can we always reflect the theory in practice?

# Why is equality and diversity important...

- Challenges/opportunities in the placement setting...

# Exploring our biases...

- **Unconscious bias** refers to a bias that we are unaware of, and which happens outside of our control
- It is a bias that happens automatically and is triggered by our brain making quick judgments and assessments of people and situations, influenced by our **background, cultural environment** and **personal experiences**  
(ECU: 2013 Unconscious bias in higher education)
- [What is unconscious bias and why does it matter?](#)

# Types of characteristics that might elicit a response

Gender

Ethnicity

Caring responsibilities

Religion/belief

Perceived sexual orientation

Attractiveness

Age

Disability

Haircut

Hair colour

Body language

Accent

Personality

Friends/family

Clothing

Piercings/tattoos

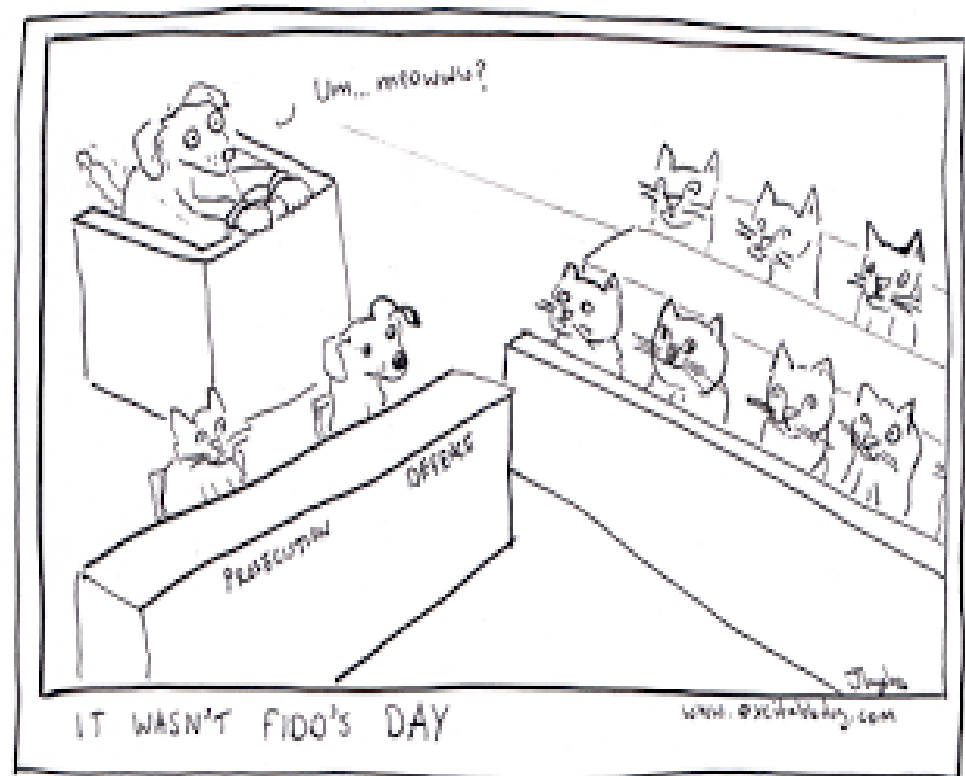


# In-groups and out-groups

- We have natural tendencies to prefer people who are like us
- **In-groups** are people that we feel safer and more comfortable around and who we may treat more favourably
- **Out-groups** are people that we feel less safe and comfortable around and who we might treat dismissively or disdainfully

# In-groups and out-groups - factors of influence might be:

- physical characteristics
- shared interests and hobbies
- similar lifestyle
- similar background



# Confirmation bias

- You meet someone and unconsciously judge them
- You notice and remember information in keeping with your original judgement
- You don't notice or remember information which contradicts your original judgement of them

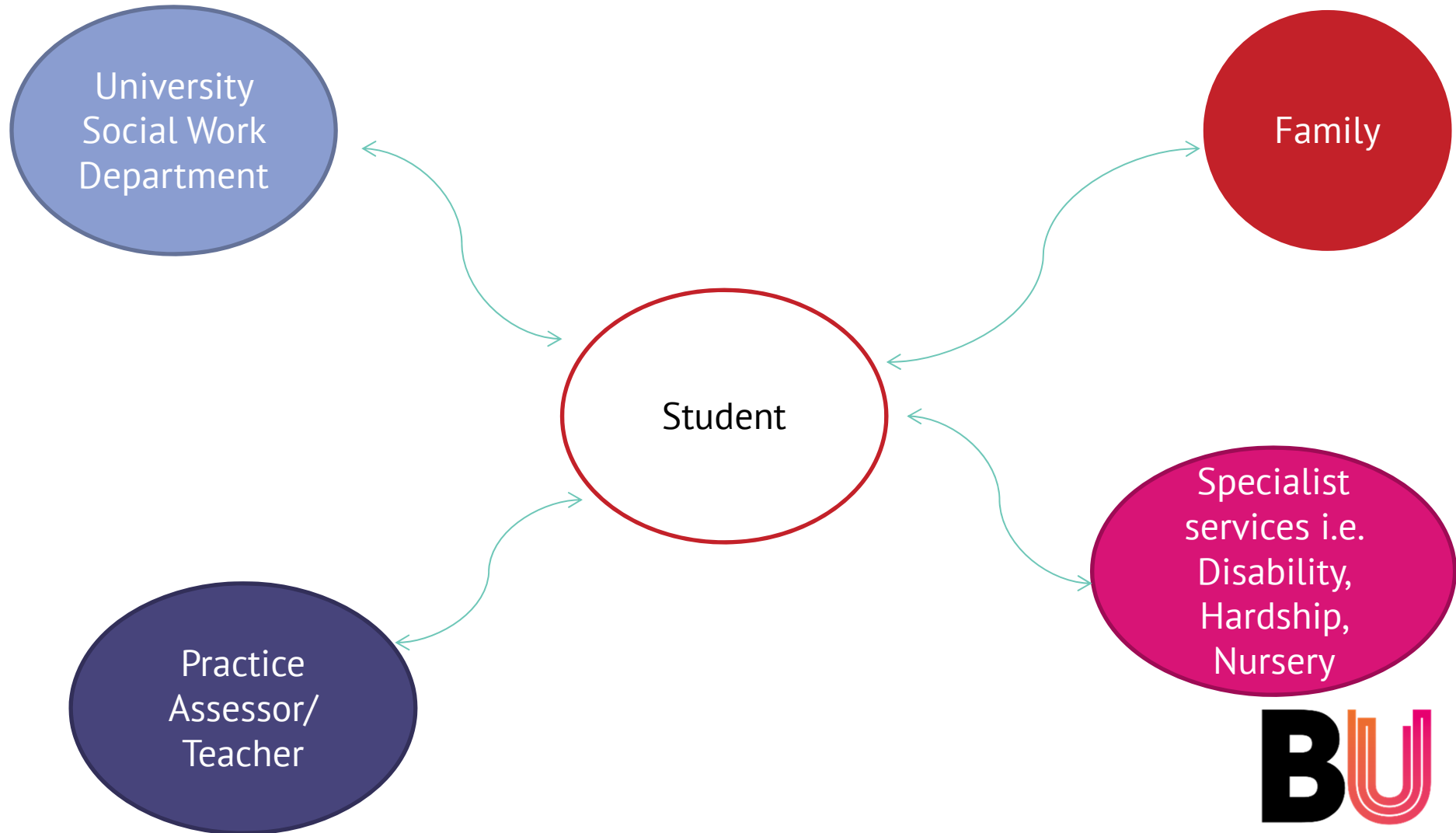


# Who are we talking about?

	HESA		Internal data		
	All HEI's	BU	BU	BU	BU
	2013/14	2013/14	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Age (21 and under)	35%	39%	70%	68%	67%
Disability	12%	13%	13%	14%	13%
Black Minority Ethnic	20%	12%	15%	15%	16%
White	78%	87%	83%	83%	82%
Female	56%	56%	55%	55%	56%
Male	44%	44%	45%	45%	44%
Religion and belief	0%	0%	0%	18%	22%
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender	0%	0%	0%	2%	2%

**Table 1: BU student profile 2011-15**

# Students and Social Work placement partners



# Equality and Diversity issues before, during and after placement

- What are the equality and diversity placement issues you need to consider?
  - Break into groups
  - 10 mins
  - Feed back
- What tools/strategies could you use to address the issues?

# Tools/strategies – before, during and after placement

- **Before**

- Put equality and diversity issues on programme/ placement agendas
- Understand the equality and diversity profile of students going out onto placement
- Clarify the position to students about what disclosure means for placement
- Talk individually to prospective students about their specific requirements (support/funding/ location)

# Tools/strategies – before, during and after placement

- **Before**

- Alert students to employer equality and diversity policies/schemes
- Ensure there is adequate planning/preparation time for student placements
- Consider appropriate language
- Ensure student placement application forms include equality and diversity questions
- Check student understanding of equality and diversity issues in a placement setting



# Tools/strategies – before, during and after placement

- **During**

- Provide placement inductions (covering equality and diversity)
- Organise opportunities (seminars/presentations) during and after placement for students to provide feedback
- Clarify relevant health and safety issues and consider what this means for the placement student
- Set assignments where students identify what they have learned and how they have tackled problems

# Tools/strategies – before, during and after placement

- **During**

- On-going communication between University, practice assessors and placement provider
- Access equality and diversity development opportunities provided by BU and other agencies
- Clarify who are the key placement contacts
- Offering a mentoring scheme to students on placement
- Reflect on equality and diversity issues with placement staff

# Tools/strategies – before, during and after placement

- **After**

- Use monitoring feedback forms with specific questions about barriers or challenges (cover different groups – race, disability, gender, sexual orientation)
- Share monitoring and feedback data between all agencies
- Feed back any constructive suggestions about changes
- Collate/share case studies of supporting students (positive/negative)

# What can you do to support students

- Accept we are all biased (positive/negative implications)
- Decide what we will do about it individually
- Ensure you are familiar with relevant policies and processes
- Using context to explain a situation
- Allocate appropriate time to prepare and support students on placement
- Challenge stereotypes and counter stereotypical information (take the [Project Implicit test](#))
- Being an active bystander
- Continually reflect on practice...

**Questions....**

# References...

- Best Practice Guide: disabled social work students and placements (2005)
- Maintaining Standards: Promoting Equality – Professional regulation within nursing, teaching and social work and disabled people’s access to these professions (2007)
- Work placements in the arts and cultural sector: Diversity, equality and access (2010)
- Work placements in the creative industries: good placements for all students [Staff toolkit], (2010)

# Putting ideas into specific actions...

- Break into groups and consider what might be your specific actions at these 3 stages:
  - Pre-placement
  - During placement
  - Review placement
    - Midway
    - At the end
- Feedback provided by each group