

Tool 22: Intersectional challenge

This tool helps you challenge words and behaviours in the workplace that compound lived intersectional experience of oppression.

'When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.'

(Audre Lord)

1. Read the example.
2. Reflect on the questions and discuss these with colleagues.

Elizabeth is the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead for her adult social care service. She volunteered for the role alongside her senior practitioner role because she wanted to help the organisation take action to embed anti-racist practice. Elizabeth is invited to predominantly white leadership meetings to advocate for change. She isn't paid extra for the role. Elizabeth is Black British, of Nigerian descent. She knows that she stands out and wants to be a role model for her colleagues.

At the leadership team meeting, there are six senior managers present in person, one is the head of service. There are four senior managers online on the big screen at the end of the meeting room.

Elizabeth is reporting on the staff survey about experiences of minority ethnic staff in the organisation. She notices that two of the managers online are messaging each other in the chat about something else. The chat is visible on the big screen.

Elizabeth loses the thread of what she is saying. One of the managers who is there in person with her notices what she is looking at. The manager says 'don't mind them, they are always busy with something.' There is a short silence. Nobody else says anything. Elizabeth carries on with her report.



Reflective questions

- > What is the responsibility of the different people in this situation?
 - Elizabeth.
 - The managers who are messaging.
 - The manager who notices.
 - The other managers in the meeting.
 - The head of service.
- > What does allyship look like in this situation?
- > What can be learned from this situation?
- > How could similar situations be avoided in future?

You may find these thoughts from those who took part in the Change Project helpful:

- > *'The tool provides an opportunity to practise raising the issue.'*
- > *'It gives you a chance to explore this in an open arena without attributing blame.'*
- > *'Think about something hypothetically so it is possible to talk about it.'*
- > *'If you can see that something is going on and that others aren't confident to address this, you need to speak up on their behalf.'*
- > *'To speak up and speak out is all about confidence.'*
- > *'This reflection helps increase empathy and confidence.'*
- > *'It starts a conversation about privilege.'*