



BODY Culture, Body, Gender, Sexuality in Adult Trainings

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Critical Incidents

SEXUALITY

[English]

2013

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Quick summary of critical incidents related to SEXUALITY				
<i>Belgium</i>	<i>Denmark</i>	<i>France</i>	<i>Hungary</i>	<i>Italy</i>
Sleeping bag	Lesbian party	Nudity on stage	Lesbian privacy	
Satisfaction	Naked son in the garden	Transgender mirror	Coming out	
			Transgender authenticity	

CRITICAL INCIDENT: "SATISFACTION"

Collected by KVG, Belgium, 2012							
Professional domain of the narrator	Gender edu	Health edu	Sexuality edu	Training concerning disability	General intercultural edu	Physical edu / sport	Other
	x		x	x			
Sensitive zone	What do you think are the "sensitive zones" that are the key issues of this critical incident? (eg: sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication, Conception of body, sexuality, disability, gender relations, taboo of incest, boundaries of assistance						
Culture of the person experiencing the shock	What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.) Young woman, Belgian, catholic, heterosexual, no disability, open-minded						
Culture of the person "causing" the shock	What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.) Mother of a son living with severe physical disability, middle aged, catholic, open-minded, Belgian						
Describing the SITUATION							
<p>I'm at a course concerning handicap and sexuality. There is a mother of a boy of 28 years old with a severe physical disability. They live together with the father and the two brothers. The mother says that her son a few years ago had a need to be sexually satisfied. They invited several people offering sexual assistance, specifically people with a disability. But the boy never felt at ease, because he didn't know those women. They decided, after a consultation with the whole family (the family who lives together – so the brothers and the father), that the mother would carry out this task (hand job) and thus sexuality satisfy her son.</p>							
1. Elements of the SITUATION							
<p>We were with more than 200 people listening to the woman who told the story about her son. All of the participants were professionals. I just knew my colleague who was also there. I didn't know the mother. She told the story in a large auditorium. She was sitting in front. It was a learning course for professionals. The audience didn't know the woman in front, they just listened to the testimony. It was the start of the day, after this testimony, the audience was divided in groups to discuss and learn more about sexuality and</p>							



<p>disability. The audience didn't have to give a solution or their meaning. They could ask questions to the mother, what happened. One of the questions was how she feels by giving the hand job to her son and what she thinks about these questions in institutions – if this kind of service is a part of the job of people who work in institutions.</p>
2. EMOTIONAL REACTION
Surprised, uncomfortable.
3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?
Respect and integrity of the body, respect of the boundaries of assistance. The taboo of incest: in most cultures having sexual relations with members of the family is one of the strongest taboos.
4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image does the narrator have of the other person?
The mother wants to help her son no matter what, which one can only respect. The question here is whether this is a correct way of acting, even if the son also wants this and the rest of the family agree. The mother doesn't cause a negative image, but it's hard to accept.
5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience? (Hypothesis !)
Empathy, respect for the needs of the other. Sexuality is subordinated to human emotions and answering the needs for someone how is emotionally very close. Sexuality is treated as a body function, somehow independent from "romantic" emotions.
6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?
Sexuality and disability are still taboo. It's a very hard to discuss the topic. Training /information evenings for family, friends and assistants of people with a handicap <i>and</i> for those with a handicap should ensure that the importance of this matter is seen and perhaps people would be more open to communicate about this. Especially, because the definition of sexuality is completely different for people with handicap – professionals, caregivers should pay more attention to each person and family, and be able to neglect the traditional social conceptions of sexuality. It also raises questions on how far assistance can go. What boundaries are there. What is a person prepared to do without crossing his/her own values.



CRITICAL INCIDENT: "COMING OUT"

Collected by Ars Erotica Foundation, Hungary, 21 April 2012							
Professional domain of the narrator	Gender edu	Health edu	Sexuality edu	Training concerning disability	General intercultural edu	Physical edu / sport	Other
	x		x				LGBT
Sensitive zone	What do you think are the "sensitive zones" that are the key issues of this critical incident? (eg: sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication)						
	disclosure of one's sexual orientation - where, when and how, professional versus private personal social roles						
Culture of the person experiencing the shock	What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability particular subculture etc)						
	The reference frames of the two protagonists are more or less the same. The areas relevant to the incident include: sexual orientation, and how to disclose it; the limitations and framework of the disclosure. 34-year-old lesbian, middle-class, intellectual woman, LGBT activist, trainer, also a mother, living in a relationship						
Culture of the person "causing" the shock	What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability particular subculture etc)						
	31-year-old lesbian, middle-class, urban, educated woman						
Describing the SITUATION							
<i>Please give a short account (10-15 sentences) of a critical incident you experienced. Write from your own point of view. Include where and when the incident took place.</i>							
The incident happened a few days ago at a sensitisation and communication training for social care professionals, during a session on minority groups, in the warm-up exercise. We played the "Take a step forward" exercise where each participant gets a role card and has to answer questions about minority-related stereotypes from the perspective of the minority-character indicated on the card. In the evaluation part, I asked the participant holding the "lesbian" card what context she placed her character into. And she said she did not have to use her imagination very much as she was a lesbian herself.							
1. Elements of the SITUATION							
<i>What happened? Where did it happen? Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural)? Try to be as objective as possible.</i>							
The exercise is used to set the stage for the minority groups presentation and discussion. It serves to map out the relations (implicit or explicit prejudices) about minorities, where all the participants are asked (21 of them this time) what additional qualities she added to the 1-2 traits written in the role card to build up the character. And the trainer (the narrator) was asking them what they responded to the questions posed to their character. After the lesbian woman's coming out the evaluation went on in the usual way. But later when we discussed lesbians, this woman left the room and came back when the topic was finished.							
2. EMOTIONAL REACTION							
<i>How did you feel in this situation? The narrator is asking.</i>							
Two participants got homosexual role cards (one lesbian and one gay card). First I was shocked for a							

moment. First I feared for me then for them. Then I went on asking questions in the usual way, raising the question “who else got a homosexual character card?” (because up to that point she was the first) and I told them that the subject would be discussed later in more detail.

Fear, conflict > Why did I fear?

I feared because I started to feel the urge to come out (as an expression of empathy).

3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?

Empathy, empowerment of particular identities:

The question of the protection of privacy could be relevant. Is it part of the job description of a sex educator / intercultural trainer to unveil all aspects of their identity in an effort to promote those identities and contribute to their empowerment? Or should some level of privacy be preserved for the protection of the person of the trainer/researcher?

Separation of professional / private spheres, preservation of personal identity:

It is an important principle that in a training situation the narrator doesn't talk about his or her personal involvement in any minority groups, only about her professional involvement. A trainer should keep nearly equal distance from any minority group – we are outsiders /we must look outsiders. This is the only situation where to be an outsider is of value. In all the other walks of life, open disclosure is a positive value. These two approaches led to a serious conflict of values.

Professionalism?

Reacting well to the “coming out” of the participant. The narrator talks about her own urge to come out as a means of empathy with the participant. However, there may have been other means of endorsing the coming out of the participant that does not necessarily entail her own coming out. The embarrassment of the situation kept her from being able to find such a solution and she went on with the debriefing as usual. She may have felt the need to something.

4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image does the narrator have of the otherperson?

e.g. positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.

She was brave. The narrator admired how simply she said it. Although the narrator had liked her (Gaydar phenomenon, based on mere stereotypes), at that moment the narrator started to respect her. She had seemed a confident and healthy personality from the beginning, but the incident even reinforced the narrator's presumptions. Sense of community – not only because she was lesbian, but because she disclosed it.

5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience?

(Hypothesis !)

Mission to assume / promote particular identities

The fact that the a participant “came out” in a training situation in a completely natural and simple way made the narrator conclude that they had shared values. As a participant of a training, the narrator also normally reacts in a similar way.

6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

“This is primarily a professional issue. I was surprised by my own reaction: I saw a participant react in the



same way as I usually do, and funnily - as a recipient - I was shocked by it. I've got to do something about it, but for now I don't know what."

In general professionals involved in action research / training in the domains of interculturality or sexuality would easily face the tension between different values, needs, such as

- a) between the preservation of privacy and the promotion / empowerment of particular identities
- b) between the need of neutrality / objectivity and the need for sensitization and their mission in general
- c) between professional and personal spheres.

There may not be a general recipe, what's more drawing a general recipe may not even be a good idea. In fact punctually, depending on the case some movement between professional / personal spheres can be a resource in the training / research activities. In each case the trainer / researcher has to evaluate the conflicting values, and be prepared for the possible identity conflicts – threats.



CRITICAL INCIDENT: Sleeping Bag

Name of organisation: KVG							
Country: Belgium							
Date of recording the critical incident: 25/05/2012							
Professional domain of the narrator	Gender edu	Health edu	Sexuality edu	Training concerning disability	General intercultural edu	Physical edu / sport	Other
	x		x	x			
Sensitive zone	What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident? (eg: sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication,						
	Disability, sexuality, conception of body, gender relations						
Culture of the person experiencing the shock	What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)						
	Young woman (22 years old), doing educative studies, no disability, heterosexual						
Culture of the person “causing” the shock	What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)						
	Mental disability, young men (2) of 16 years old, sexual orientation not known, Belgian						
Describing the SITUATION							
<i>Please give a short account (10-15 sentences) of a critical incident you experienced. Write from your own point of view. Include where and when the incident took place.</i>							
I caught two men with a moderate mental handicap in the same sleeping bag. They were touching each other. Other people were also in the tent.							
1. Elements of the SITUATION							
<i>How many people were present? How many women / men?</i>							
<i>What did the space look like, how was it arranged? (sketch of the arrangement if relevant / possible)</i>							
<i>Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural)? Try to be as objective as possible.</i>							
<i>Relationship between the two groups (eg. colonial history, majority – minority)</i>							
There were 12 people in the room, but just two of them were awake. The supervisor came into the room alone. It was the tent on the camp.							
All people know each other. The supervisor is the person who supports and organizes the camp for people living with a mental disability.							
2. EMOTIONAL REACTION							
<i>How did you feel in this situation?</i>							
The attendance felt indignant and speechless. She was angry with these men because they didn't take account of the rules and the other people who were present in the tent.							
3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?							
Privacy, respect for the body, respect for others.							
For the narrator it was a norm, that any kind of intimate body contact between two people is not allowed where there are also other people are in a room – and they don't know about it. It was not because it were							



two men doing this, but overall that this happened between two people. These people don't really even know the consequences of this behaviour, because of their disability. And so it wasn't respectful for themselves, their own body, the body of the other person and the other persons in the tent.

4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image does the narrator have of the otherperson?

e.g. positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.

They didn't respect the rules and their mates.

5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the otherperson / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience?

(Hypothesis !)

No respect for one's own body, privacy isn't important.

They could feel a desire to be intimate with someone, like every human does.

6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

Privacy and respect for the body are important matters where assistants or parents have a prioritising role in teaching this. Assistants need to focus on this, but they should also realise how necessary it is to inform the people they help of this.

Besides this it does raise the question if two people with a mental disability should be allowed to be intimate with each other (in private). This is a basic desire of a human. The question is however if they understand it and what consequences it might invoke.

CRITICAL INCIDENT: Lesbian Party

Name of organisation: mht consult Country: DK Date of recording the critical incident: 2012							
Professional domain of the narrator	Gender edu	Health edu	Sexuality edu	Training concerning disability	General intercultural edu	Physical edu / sport	Other
	x		x				
Sensitive zone	<p>What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident? (eg: sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The preconceptions about the influence of sexuality on the general communication and contact. • The confusion of gender engagement and sexual orientation. • The exclusion of “the others” (in this case heterosexual women) and stressing of the “us-and-them” syndrome. 						
Culture of the person experiencing the shock	<p>What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)</p>						
	<p>The person is a Danish university female student, 28 years old at the time, being on a fieldwork in the UK as part of the studies of social science and geography. The person was part of a Danish group of around 14 students and teachers, visiting other researchers and students in Manchester, Liverpool and Sheffield. The main person – together with 3-4 of the other female students from Denmark - was deeply engaged in gender politics, gender division of labour and women’s societal possibilities etc. Thus, they had a strong wish to be presented for women within social science with the same gender interest. This was arranged as part of the fieldwork.</p> <p>As for family conditions and sexual orientation the person can be characterized as heterosexual and being part of a traditional nuclear family with one young child at the time.</p>						
Culture of the person “causing” the shock	<p>What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)</p> <p>The other person – “causing the shock” – is a British female student of social science in the mid-twenties with a similar engagement in gender politics and hereby one of the founders of a women’s house and women’s cultural activities in Sheffield at the time.</p>						
Describing the SITUATION							
<p><i>Please give a short account (10-15 sentences) of a critical incident you experienced. Write from your own point of view. Include where and when the incident took place.</i></p>							
<p>I was attending a university meeting in Sheffield as part of the fieldwork together with the whole Danish group and local teachers and students. We were exchanging experiences and approaches around actual tendencies in city planning and social development etc. – especially in the wake of Margaret Thatchers newly acquisition of political power in the UK. From the Danish group some of us especially stressed our</p>							

interest in the gender political approach to the general social development etc. This caused an invitation the very same evening to a local women’s party. Three of us from the Danish group – all female – were very pleased to attend the party, which was only open for women.

At the party I fell in deep talk and discussion with one of the British women, who had earlier that day been one of the most enthusiastic advocates of our participation in the women’s party. So, there was a great “chemistry” between the two of us, and we were both very engrossed in the conversation. After a while the British woman started asking me about my background, and I told her spontaneously about my little 1 year old daughter, whom I had left at home with her father and my parents. In the very moment I mentioned my family conditions the British woman was strongly dismayed and answered in an angry and reproachful voice: ...”Then, why on earth are you here...” And then she turned her back against me. I was very shocked, confused over her reaction - and completely lost my voice.

1. Elements of the SITUATION

How many people were present? How many women / men?

What did the space look like, how was it arranged? (sketch of the arrangement if relevant / possible). Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural)? Try to be as objective as possible. Relationship between the two groups (eg. colonial history, majority – minority)

In the situation the protagonists were surrounded by a lot of other women – approximately around 25-30 – all joining the women’s party. The protagonists were standing in a corner, while people were talking, laughing, eating, drinking and also dancing around them. But the protagonists were like in a “bell jar”, both very concentrated in the discussion.

The Danish woman noticed from the very arrival at the party that a lot of the women were probably lesbian.

2. EMOTIONAL REACTION

How did you feel in this situation?

In the very moment of the critical incident – when the British woman turned her back – the Danish woman (the narrator) felt a confusing mixture of embarrassment and anger, guilt, shame and unfairness.

The Danish woman felt unfairness and anger, being treated by the British woman, as if she was only worthy of the British woman’s interest and engagement, if she had been a lesbian as well.

The Danish woman felt – quite unreasonably – ashamed and guilty, as if she had given the British woman a wrong impression of being sexually interested in her. As if she – and the two Danish colleagues as well – had joined the party on somehow false premises.

3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?

The incident touched the dilemma that characterized many women’s organisations at that time – namely the question of lesbian and heterosexual women had equal positions in women’s liberation movement.

4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image does the narrator have of the otherperson?

e.g. positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.

The Danish woman – the narrator - had the impression that the British women “turned on a plate” and all of a sudden turned all her prejudices against the her. The narrator became the exponent of the less radical heterosexual women.

5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the otherperson / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience? (Hypothesis !)

The British woman in the incident was part of a larger movement, where women all over the world were

fighting for better personal and social possibilities. But she was also integrated in an environment, where lesbian and heterosexual women had some differences in defining the goals of the women's liberation. This was not only a political, but also a very emotional dilemma from time to time. Probably, the narrator just touched all these dilemmas in the British woman. But probably, her reaction on the personal and emotional level also expressed her attraction to the Danish woman, the narrator. Thus, the narrator disappointed the British woman on more than one level.

6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

From a professional point of view this critical incident may not be so clear. It did, indeed, involve professionals (social scientists debating on social and political problems etc), but the protagonists were professionals on an equal level, not a teacher towards a student.

Anyway, the incident may show the need for a more sensitive reaction and empathy in professional situations, where the professional/political discussion may also have a more personal/emotional and even sexual level. It reflects how the professional engagement and eagerness may be confused with personal attraction as well as sexual prejudices "behind the back" of the professionals. Therefore, the learning point may be that professionals should be able to reflect on both the personal and professional part of their identity. Professionals should also be able to sense the impact that both their personal and professional identity may have on other people in given situations – other professionals as well as adult students a.o.

CRITICAL INCIDENT: Naked Son in the Garden

Name of organisation: mhtconsult							
Country: DK							
Date of recording the critical incident: 2012							
Professional domain of the narrator	Gender edu	Health edu	Sexuality edu	Training concerning disability	General intercultural edu	Physical edu / sport	Other
			x				
Sensitive zone	What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident? (eg: sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication,						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear and prejudices around homosexuality. • Need of cultural conformity in a new country. 						
Culture of the person experiencing the shock	What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)						
	The narrator is a Danish male sexual therapist, 51 years old at the time for the incident. The narrator himself is born and brought up in Denmark. He is originally educated as a social pedagog with later training and certification within psychology and various forms of therapy. He has many years ago chosen to specialize in sexual therapy, engages among other issues in sexual deviations from a liberal point of view, being strongly defending people’s rights and possibilities to sexual diversity.						
Culture of the person “causing” the shock	What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)						
	The other protagonist in the incident is a father from the Philippines and secondly his son. The father was apparently around 42 years old at the time for the incident. The son was 16 years old. The family is living in DK for some years. The family seems to have been doing well economically in the Danish society, being able to buy their own house. This seems to indicate a high degree of integration – or at least assimilation – in the Danish society.						
Describing the SITUATION							
<i>Please give a short account (10-15 sentences) of a critical incident you experienced. Write from your own point of view. Include where and when the incident took place.</i>							
<p>I visited a Philippine family to help them with problems connected with the 16 years old son of the family. The problem was actually that the son went to school with lipstick and high heeled shoes.</p> <p>I myself became involved in this situation on request of the boy’s school. The teachers found it very difficult to cope with the son’s strongly sexualized behaviour and dressing. But at the same time they didn’t know how to react or perhaps to guide the young man in order to sort of conform his behaviour and appearance in the school’s environment.</p> <p>Therefore, I made an appointment with the family in order to investigate the problem and the son’s situation a little closer. When I arrived to the family’s house, the father invited me into the living room. I understood that the mother would be absent during our meeting.</p> <p>Immediately after, I also realized that the father had forced his son to stay naked in the garden as</p>							

punishment for his behaviour.
1. Elements of the SITUATION
<p><i>How many people were present? How many women / men?</i></p> <p><i>What did the space look like, how was it arranged? (sketch of the arrangement if relevant / possible)</i></p> <p><i>Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural)? Try to be as objective as possible.</i></p> <p><i>Relationship between the two groups (eg. colonial history, majority – minority)</i></p>
<p>The situation takes place in the family's home, where the narrator is welcomed. The mother is not at home at therefore not present during the incident. The narrator is invited into the living room of the family's house. When the narrator enters the living room together with the father, it occurs to him that the son is standing naked in the garden outside, while being banished to the garden from the father in order to learn to behave normally.</p>
2. EMOTIONAL REACTION
<p><i>How did you feel in this situation?</i></p>
<p>The narrator felt deeply shocked, while considering this treatment of the young man as strongly humiliating and unworthy. Even though the narrator came to the family as an experienced professional in the field of sexual advicement, he was deeply shaken and outraged in the situation.</p>
3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The individual integrity and dignity of the son was violated. • The son was deeply humiliated, and his needs were met by the father without any kind of empathy or attempt of understanding. • The son was in fact treated as a criminal and not as a child to be guided. • The son was treated as if he was threatening the dignity of the family and thereby also threatening the family's right to be worthy members of the Danish society. The son's sexual preferences are seen as a threat against the family's recognition in the new Danish society.
4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image does the narrator have of the otherperson?
<p><i>e.g. postive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.</i></p>
<p>According to the narrator the father in the incident emerged as a brutal patriarch without consideration and human feelings for his own son.</p> <p>This may also indicate that the father seemed to be more concerned about the family's status in the Danish society than the happiness of the son.</p> <p>In the light of the fact that the teachers in school actually reacted with serious concern about the son's behaviour and impact on the environments in the school – the father may have realized that the school really distanced from the son's behaviour and thereby more or less directly sent a signal that the school had to disapprove of this kind of behaviour.</p>
5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the otherperson / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience? (Hypothesis !)
<p>There may be various motives behind the strong reactions of the father in this incident:</p> <p>Firstly, there may behind the father's strong reactions be hidden a deep dread and disgust of homosexuality may be the motives behind the fathers strong reactions.</p>

Secondly, there may behind the strong reactions be hidden an idea that sexual behaviour – or “misbehaviour” – may be changed by punishment and humiliation.

Thirdly, there may behind the strong reactions be hidden the fear that the son’s deviant behaviour may lead to the schools strong disapproval and even a condemnation that may hinder the family’s recognition and integration in the Danish society.

6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

The incident shows how deep the dread of homosexuality can be in some cultures. It is important to notice that “culture” in this connection is not linked to nationality or ethnicity. This may arise in many different environments, but the punishment like in this incident may obviously differ.

The incident may also stress the fact that many immigrants hold a strong fear of any kind of disapproval of the institutions of the new society. This fear may be stronger than the fear of molesting Your own flesh and blood.

CRITICAL INCIDENT: Nudity on Stage

Country: France							
Date of recording the critical incident: 2012							
Professional domain of the narrator	Gender edu	Health edu	Sexuality edu	Training concerning disability	General intercultural edu	Physical edu / sport	Other
							Theatre/arts
Sensitive zone	What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident? (eg: sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication,						
	Difficulty of establishing physical contact during an artistic act. Understanding the meaning of this physical act: touching, manipulating, washing before the sacrifice. Difference in age and education between the actors.						
Culture of the person experiencing the shock	What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)						
	Hungarian woman living in France. She is married to a French man and has a command of the French language. She is a young director in the beginning of her career who loves the theatre and sees the body as a source of art. This is her first experience directing a play involving nudity.						
Culture of the person “causing” the shock	What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)						
	Young professional French male actor. Recently finished his studies. Has never been nude on stage before. Loves the theatre. Does volunteer work involving theatre at a men’s prison.						
Describing the SITUATION							
<i>Please give a short account (10-15 sentences) of a critical incident you experienced. Write from your own point of view. Include where and when the incident took place.</i>							
<p>The incident occurred in a small theatre in France during a series of rehearsals of the last scene between the two main characters of the play during the week before the first performance. In the scene, the female protagonist bathes the young male protagonist as he stands nude on stage. I was the director of the play. The young actor playing the role of the male character was very uncomfortable being nude on stage and did not want to do it. As we had a limited time period before our first performance, it was vital that I convince him of the artistic value of the nude scene. A third person, a cellist, was present during this scene at the end of rehearsals. He contributed to a rather positive resolution of the incident by illustrating the artistic value of the scene through his music. The resolution of the incident required negotiation.</p>							
1. Elements of the SITUATION							
<i>How many people were present? How many women / men?</i>							
<i>What did the space look like, how was it arranged? (sketch of the arrangement if relevant / possible)</i>							
<i>Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural)? Try to be as objective as possible.</i>							
<i>Relationship between the two groups (e.g. colonial history, majority – minority)</i>							
The incident took place during play rehearsals at a theatre near Paris. The actors had a positive relationship							



and had known each other for the three months they had been rehearsing for the play. The director had personally chosen the young lead actor and trusted him. He also had a positive image of the director. Because of the intimacy of the scene, no one was allowed to attend rehearsals except the occasional friend of the actors who came for support. The play was ultimately performed in front of 200 people. The nudity scene took place 2 meters from the front row of the audience. Altogether there were 5-6 people in the theatre when the incident took place: 2 actors, the director, the cellist anyone, and a couple of friends of the actors.

2. EMOTIONAL REACTION

How did you feel in this situation?

I felt inspired and eager to overcome the challenge presented of convincing the young actor to perform the required scene.

3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?

For the director of the play, the body of the actor is not a common body, but an expressive body that, bare or "dressed," is exposed to public view. The body and its movements have a clear meaning, often encoded in a theatrical language. Understand this language is to accept the body as a working tool.

The role of the director is not to take advantage of, abuse or expose the actor's body as a commercial object, but to show it as a bearer of meaning, a sign of beauty that is unique and irreplaceable.

4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image does the narrator have of the other person?

e.g. positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.

Positive; The narrator viewed the incident as a learning experience for her career.

5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience? (*Hypothesis !*)

The young actor may have had trouble moving past the typical meaning given to the human body and lacked the confidence to bare his body before a large audience. This could be because of representations of the body that are tied to its sexual/physical use rather than its role as an artistic tool.

6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

Yes. The issue of nudity comes up frequently in the world of acting. Actors and directors must negotiate when nudity is appropriate and be able to understand its artistic purpose. Communication, open discussion about the body and all its possible meanings, and trying to understand the participants' (actors, director) personal feelings and emotions are important in a rehearsal process.

CRITICAL INCIDENT: Transgender Mirror

Country: France							
Date of recording the critical incident: 2012							
Professional domain of the narrator	Gender edu	Health edu	Sexuality edu	Training concerning disability	General intercultural edu	Physical edu / sport	Other
					X		
Sensitive zone	What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident? (eg: sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication,						
	Non-verbal communication and a transgender woman’s relationship to her body						
Culture of the person experiencing the shock	What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)						
	Twenty-seven year-old Moroccan woman. Heterosexual. Left-wing. Studying intercultural communication. Working for an association specializing in interculturality, she co-led workshops on cultural differences surrounding the relationship to the body with people having an interest in these differences.						
Culture of the person “causing” the shock	What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability, particular subculture, etc.)						
	G. is a transgender woman, probably around 40 years old. From what the narrator was able to understand, her change in sexual identity from male to female is pretty recent.						
Describing the SITUATION							
<i>Please give a short account (10-15 sentences) of a critical incident you experienced. Write from your own point of view. Include where and when the incident took place.</i>							
<p>Since it was a workshop on the body, the plan was to do some warming up exercising which would allow the participants to channel their energy, promote concentration and give a bigger place to the body, which is often dominated by the intellect. We first organized a game in which each participant was supposed to give their first name accompanied with the gesture of their choice. This gesture was supposed to allow the participants to memorize each other’s names. I noticed then that G. hesitated longer than the other participants and that the gesture that she ended up choosing illustrated this indecision (she scratched her head, keeping her eyes to the ground with a nervous smile). As a facilitator, I then asked the participants to form pairs to do a number of fun activities, including a “mirror” activity. This activity consisted of imitating the gestures of one’s partner and vice-versa. The person being imitated was to move freely without any directions. My partner, the transgender woman, was incapable of making even the simplest gesture. She stood still with an embarrassed smile and her eyes fixed on the ground. She seemed to be thinking about the first gestures to make, but was visibly unable to find one that suited her. To reassure her, I told her that she was free to move in whatever way she wanted and that there was no need to think about it so long. After a few seconds, she began to make a few timid movements, broken up by small moments of reflection. She became more and more at ease, particularly when it was her turn to imitate my movements.</p>							
1. Elements of the SITUATION							
<i>How many people were present? How many women / men?</i>							
<i>What did the space look like, how was it arranged? (sketch of the arrangement if relevant / possible). Who</i>							

were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural)? Try to be as objective as possible. Relationship between the two groups (eg. colonial history, majority – minority)

The workshop on cultural differences in the relationship to the body took place in a large room of about 30m². The team of 3 facilitators had moved the tables and chairs to make a large enough free space for the exercises and interactions. The participants (about 6) had freely chosen to attend the workshop either because they worked in the diversity field or because they themselves represented a cultural diversity (in the broadest sense). The participants didn't know each other before the workshop. The age range of participants was from the late twenties to mid forties and they were all either French or had lived in France for a number of years. All of the participants were women (including 2 transgender women).

2. EMOTIONAL REACTION

How did you feel in this situation?

When I noticed the hesitation of the participant during the first exercise, I was a bit surprised, but since a lot of people hesitated during this exercise, it seemed rather understandable as it consisted of making a gesture that represented one's first name and thus identity. On the other hand, after the second hesitation (a lot longer, during the mirror exercise), I was very surprised by the participant's reaction because I thought that the first part of the exercise didn't seem to present any particular difficulties given that it consisted simply of moving freely. I felt the embarrassment that this woman felt and tried to reassure her and encourage her to continue the exercise. Then, I took the time to analyze the incident.

3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?

The narrator considers herself to be an open-minded person who is very interested in difference and intercultural communication. She is heterosexual and even though she doesn't have any prejudices against transgender people, she had never worked with one or met one before. She was thus happy to have this new experience, but she also had a few apprehensions about her own behavior. She was conscious of the fact that she had to pay attention to how the situation presented a different set of codes and that she must be careful to avoid breaking them to have a successful communication. Notably, she had to avoid referring to the transgender participants in masculine rather than feminine terms.

With regards to gender, she didn't have any idea what it meant for a man or a woman to become transgender. She didn't know that changing gender meant finding a deeper identity that had been hidden by biological laws and social conventions or that it meant identifying with a gender that one preferred to belong to for whatever reason. She thinks that the traditional man/woman distinction was far from taking into account the numerous cases that illustrated the complexity of gender and sexual identity. Basically, she doesn't think that one sub-group of human beings is 100% men and the other 100% women, but rather that there is a masculine and feminine part in differing levels in all of us. She also thinks that one's biological identity/appearance doesn't necessarily correspond with one's internal identity.

Regarding the workshop itself, she had adopted the vision of the association that the contribution of the body through physical exercises made sense during a workshop focused on the body. Basically, this method seemed the most efficient because it allowed for a better interaction between the participants as well as a greater involvement of each person. But perhaps the participants were expecting the workshop to just involve « reflecting » on the body and were not necessarily used to non-formal pedagogical tools, notably the games and the exercises involving the use of their bodies,

4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image does the narrator have of the other person?

e.g. positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.

Neutral

5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the other person / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience? (Hypothesis!)

With the analysis of the incident, we were able to uncover some hypotheses concerning the participant in question. It is important to consider all possible reasons for the embarrassment of the participant and not just assume it is tied to her identity as a transgender woman. For example, imitating a gesture, or consciously “doing” something with the body can be embarrassing for many people and has nothing to do with gender and identity. In this particular situation, however, the narrator was able to observe that the participant brought her transgender identity to the forefront in her interactions and exchanges during the workshop. She freely discussed the difficulties she faced as a transgender woman with the other participants.

With this in mind, it becomes clearer how the participant’s transgender identity may have played a role in this situation. The change of gender/sexual identity (from man to woman in this case) implies several deep changes in her way of being, that is to say: the way in which she manages her speech, her movements, her gestures, her mimics, etc. It is thus probable that, even if the new identity corresponds with her deepest identity, she has to get used to behaving like a woman and the transition is not simple.

As the change in identity seemed to be recent, the narrator assumed that the participant was being very careful with the simplest movement that she made because for her, each movement represented her (new) identity in the perception of the others. There was thus no (or hardly any) room for spontaneity in the requested exercise.

We can also assume that the participant’s conception of femininity and more precisely of feminine gestures consisted in thinking that each movement that a woman makes must translate her femininity and that a woman must be careful of her simplest movements, particularly a transgender woman. Transgender women must thus show their femininity more than other women as a way of affirming an identity that certain people will continue to contest (according to remarks she made during the workshop). This hypothesis seems to be confirmed by the tradition and even caricatural vision of the woman’s role in a household (traditional household tasks, etc.) illustrated in her remarks and those of her friend (who was also a transgender woman). Furthermore, this woman may not have expected to participate in physical exercises instead of just a reflection on the body.

6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

Certainly. In a general manner, this incident shows that those working with/on diversity must be prepared to face cultural differences that are not always easy to understand. Regarding gender, this incident allowed the narrator to better understand how gender identity can influence one’s relationship to the body. The analysis of this analysis taught the narrator how to practically address this issue from a professional point of view. She also learned that she must take the difficulties faced by each participant into account and take the time to define the “rules of the game” of any proposed activity as well as the methods and tools that will be used.



CRITICAL INCIDENT: Lesbian Privacy

Name of organisation: LABRISZ Lesbian Association, Raising awareness about homosexuality Country: Hungary						
Date of recording the critical incident: 13 April 2012, Budapest						
Professional domain of the narrator	Gender edu	Health edu	Sexuality edu	Training concerning disability	General intercultural edu	Physical edu / sport
	x		x			
Sensitive zone	What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident? (eg: sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication, gender relations, sexual identity-orientation, power relation, political standpoint)					
Culture of the person experiencing the shock	What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability particular subculture etc)					
	37-year-old, female, lesbian, left-wing researcher, living in a relationship					
Culture of the person “causing” the shock	What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability particular subculture etc)					
	heterosexual teenager girls, students in a grammar school					
Describing the SITUATION						
<i>Please give a short account (10-15 sentences) of a critical incident you experienced. Write from your own point of view. Include where and when the incident took place.</i>						
<p>As part of my fieldwork at schools I was interviewing 3-4 pupils, asking them questions about their sexuality, and they often asked me personal questions, too. In such situations I have to decide how much I want to disclose about myself as a lesbian living in a relationship. In one group, for example, the girls asked me if I had a boyfriend, whether I wanted to have a child and they wanted to know other details about my relationship. As I had told them at the beginning of the interview that they were free to ask me questions, I had to answer. In my response I referred to my partner as if he was a man. I thought if they found out that I was lesbian, it would undermine my research. So I chose to put this consideration higher in my priority list than honesty.</p> <p>When the girls found out that I had a boyfriend but I did not want a child, they were shocked and said that I probably didn’t want a child because my boyfriend did not want one either. This was a “cultural shock” for me to see that teenagers consider relationships as a hierarchy between man and woman and that for them it was just obvious that every woman wanted a child.</p>						
1. Elements of the SITUATION						
<i>What happened? Where did it happen? Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural?)? Try to be as objective as possible.</i>						
This incident and similar ones happened between 2009 and 2011 in secondary schools in Budapest. It was taken place in an empty classroom where during the interview we were in an intimate, secure environment, but in the school building. We were 5 persons: the interviewer and 4 female pupils.						
2. EMOTIONAL REACTION						
<i>How did you feel in this situation?</i>						
I had to make a decision in a very short time as to how much I want to disclose about myself in that						

situation. I was under time pressure. The situation filled me with uncertainties and doubts, just like any other situation where I've got to act quickly.

3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?

honesty, consistency, professional and personal credibility, the risk of losing control over the situation as a researcher, mutuality, the

Objectivity vs honesty vs Activism? Mission of sensitisation?

Researchers are usually expected to not influence / bias the outcomes of their research, unless this bias is built in the research methodology. At the same time as a lesbian left-wing researcher the narrator may have felt the need to make explicit her own position concerning her own sexual preferences, but also concerning her opinion about power dynamics in a heterogeneous couple.

Safety of personal boundaries, the balance between keeping a distance and being open, "professional and personal credibility"?:

Beyond the potential bias of the research outcomes the question of the protection of privacy could also be relevant. Is it part of the job description of a sex educator / intercultural trainer to unveil all aspects of their identity in an effort to promote those identities and contribute to their empowerment? Or should some level of privacy be preserved for the protection of the person of the trainer/researcher?

Neutrality=heteronormativity?

Finally a third level of tension may be between the researchers subjective expectation of a non heteronormative society and her supposition that in order to be neutral she should "blend in" and declare herself as heterosexual, conforming to the (supposed) expectations of a heteronormative society.

4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image do you have of the otherperson?

e.g. positive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.

The incident did not change my perception of the respondents, instead I was happy to be able to create a open climate where they felt free to ask me questions. It meant that they were speaking openly about themselves, too.

5. What could be the norms / values / representations of the otherperson / culture that led to the specific behaviour that caused the shock experience?

(Hypothesis !)

heteronormativity, - we don't know!! The narrator avoided the possible explosion of tensions between heteronormative and multicultural approaches by avoiding the situation and declaring herself heterosexual. The only source of tension that really appeared concerns the expectation of the girls for all women to want to have children and the only acceptable reason for not wanting one being if the male partner does not want one...

crossing the boundaries of one's role, although I encouraged them to do so

All women want children:

The girls in the incident have a very clear interpretation of a situation where a woman in couple does not want a child: it is probably because the male partner does not want one. This logic lies on the assumption

that women genuinely want to have children, i.e. the mother's role is an unavoidable part of women's role.

6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

It helped me reflect on my position as a researcher, and raised the question of to what extent do I need to / should I meet the perception other people have about me in order to achieve my goal (i.e. make a successful interview).

In general professionals involved in action research / training in the domains of interculturality or sexuality would easily face the tension between different values, needs, such as

- a) between the preservation of privacy and the promotion / empowerment of particular identities
- b) between the need of neutrality / objectivity and the need for sensitization and their mission in general
- c) between professional and personal spheres.

There may not be a general recipe, what's more drawing a general recipe may not even be a good idea. In fact punctually, depending on the case some movement between professional / personal spheres can be a resource in the training / research activities. In each case the trainer / researcher has to evaluate the conflicting values, and be prepared for the possible identity conflicts – threats.

CRITICAL INCIDENT: Transgender Authenticity

Country: Hungary							
Date of recording the critical incident: 13 April 2012, Budapest / Ars Erotica Foundation							
Professional domain of the narrator	Gender edu	Health edu	Sexuality edu	Training concerning disability	General intercultural edu	Physical edu / sport	Other
	x				x		
Sensitive zone	What do you think are the “sensitive zones” that are the key issues of this critical incident? (eg: sexuality, gender relations, aging, conceptions of the body, non-verbal communication)						
	gender relations, body image, gender roles						
Culture of the person experiencing the shock	What are the cultural reference frames of the narrator of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability particular subculture etc)						
	40-year-old, educated, middle-class woman, psychologist open to LGBT issues,						
Culture of the person “causing” the shock	What are the cultural reference frames of the interlocutor of the narrator who is at the source of the shock that may have played in the shock experience? (think beyond nationality / religion to also: age, gender, sexual orientation, political standpoint, disability particular subculture etc)						
	Young transgender woman (a man with a female identity)						
Describing the SITUATION							
<i>Please give a short account (10-15 sentences) of a critical incident you experienced. Write from your own point of view. Include where and when the incident took place.</i>							
<p>A lesbian film club plays films about the life of lesbians and the problems they have. Afterwards the films are discussed by the audience with the involvement of subject-matter experts. Last time I was moderator of the discussion as a psychologist. In the audience there was a transgender woman (a man with a female identity) who actively contributed to the discussion. In one of my interactions, when I wanted to pass the floor to her, I said: <i>“Now let’s listen to a man’s opinion.”</i></p>							
1. Elements of the SITUATION							
<i>What happened? Where did it happen? Who were the protagonists? Was there any history between them (personal or cultural)? Try to be as objective as possible.</i>							
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (What happened?) Incident with a transgender man who has a female identity (Who?) The narrator (psychologist but a moderator in a film club) and a transgender woman. (What exactly happened?) The narrator made reference to the protagonist’s original gender, ignoring her self-image. (where) It happened in an open discussion in a film club. 							
2. EMOTIONAL REACTION							
<i>How did you feel in this situation? The narrator is answering.</i>							
I was embarrassed and wanted to correct my mistake so I called her female name.							
3. What norms / values / representations did the incident touch / threaten / question in the narrator?							

Acceptance of diversity, endorsement of claimed identities:

- Trainers working in the multicultural field are expected and expect from themselves the endorsement the identity positions chosen by participants, be that cultural, sexual etc. This is a kind of occupational criteria.

Professionalism:

- As a psychologist intervening after films dealing with sexual orientations the narrator was embarrassed by her own reaction of not attributing the appropriate gender identity to the transgender participant. She may interpret this incident as a lack of professionalism.

Gender is not biological, but social and can be changed:

- Our societies have (to some degree) accepted the idea that people can freely chose their gender identity.
- Nevertheless, research has shown that we categorise the people we meet in a matter of seconds without conscious effort according to three criteria: age, ethnicity and gender. Although gender is cultural, making the difference between man and woman seems to be a very basic categorisation in our social perception. In this incident the basic categorisation according to some primary signs preceded the more elaborated learnt categorisation (whereby gender is not biological but chosen).

4. Based on the analysis of question 3 what image does the narrator have of the otherperson?

e.g. postive, negative, neutral, bizarre etc.

For the narrator the transgender woman was neutral.

5. Whatcouldbe the norms / values / representations of the otherperson / culture thatled to the specificbehaviourthatcaused the shockexperience?

(Hpothesis !)

Identity threat:

For any person being addressed as member of the other gender directly questions and threatens their gender identity. Most transgender women face that threat more often than other people due to some of their primary masculine characteristics (height, voice etc.). Furthermore whenever they are addressed as men they can never exclude the intentional re-categorisation and intentional refusing to accept them as women.

Gender identity is cultural not biological:

For transgender people gender is defined by culture, by subjective identification rather than the primary biological signs. This focus on the cultural aspect of gender is one of the reasons why transgender people do not necessarily opt for the biological transformation via surgery.

Between relativisation and essentialisation of gender:

The transgender position assumes that gender is always cultural. At the same time it also assumes a male/female binomial opposition, which is different from the contemporary tendency of conceiving gender as not just two extremes but a variety of nuances between the two and that each of us makes their own gender mix. Transgender people move from one gender identity to a precise other gender identity, and for the movement to make sense that other gender identity has to be well defined, not relativized. A male to female gender transition cannot take place of the destination position is a relativized feminine-masculine



position, only if it is a somewhat traditional conception of femininity.

6. Does the situation highlight any problem concerning the professional practice, or in general about the respect of cultural differences in intercultural situations?

"I had a cognitive dissonance: my slip of the tongue revealed that unconsciously I had a traditional gender conception."

The narrator's comment points to the fact that up to the present, most people in modern western societies could say the same, having deep down a traditional gender conception. This is reflected by the research on perception, which indicates that we categorise others in terms of gender automatically, without conscious effort and immediately. Whoever slips this categorisation stops the process of automatic perception and we find ourselves wondering: "is this man or a woman?" And though our conscious mind has learnt that gender is indeed cultural and that we would like to have and give the freedom to move between genders it takes time until this acquired freedom is reflected by our automatic perception functions.



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