

Methods of Working with Black and Minority Ethnic Older Women

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Outline of the presentation

1. Researching older black and minority ethnic women: my identity
2. Insider outsidersness and the notion of the
3. Working with black and minority ethnic women: the ethnographic self
4. Developing a culturally sensitive research framework
5. Working with black and minority ethnic women as a vehicle for social and political change.

Researching older black and minority ethnic

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” Ethnicity

Age

” Ethnic and cultural socialisation

” Religion... secular background

Working class background

” Education

” Feminist politics

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A lack of attention to ethnicity in researchõ

- “ Increases the invisibility of those who are already marginalised in society
- “ Reinforces centrality of western medicalised (Euro/American) ideologies and practices
- “ Produces unrepresentative research findings
- “ Political agenda . visibility of all women
- “ Disrupt ethnocentric boundaries of insider/outsider

Insider/outsider as binaries: 3 assumptions

Insider

- “ Shared membership of aspects of socio-cultural group.
- “ Understands meaning of behaviours, values & beliefs.
- “ Socialised into nuances of ethnic/cultural language.

Outsider

- “ Interests and priorities may be dissimilar.
- “ May not fully understand behaviours, values and beliefs. Pre-conceptions about the group.
- “ Not socialised into nuances of ethnic/cultural language.

Problematizing the insider/outsider argument

- “ Creates the argument that researcher and participant should share ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- “ May inadvertently re-create ethnocentric notions of identity. essentialises characteristics of ethnic and cultural identity and may reinforce

Problematizing insider/outsider distinctions: some research participant assumptions about my ethnic background

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Secular – so cannot understand/empathise with religious affiliation

”

Paradoxically this increased trust – perceived to be outside of the ethnic group and social networks

” Participants felt they needed to educate me

Problematizing insider/outsider distinctions: some research participant assumptions about my ethnic background

” Age I was younger so this often meant
participants described their experiences in
more detail -

Othering due to ethnic differences I was

example when talking about protecting skin
from the sun:

Marie and Jane (Afro Caribbean, age 60 +)

Working with black and minority ethnic women: diverse knowledge claims

“ In Western society some knowledge claims are dismissed and others prioritised.

“ This is

Working with black and minority ethnic women: diverse knowledge claims

” The identities, experiences, and knowledge claims of researcher, interpreter, and research participant move within and between cultural

Notion of the third space

Interpretation and the development of

1. Meanings attached to language change across culture, ethnicity, geography, and between languages.

For example

“ English language tends to be more constrained, limited and less expressive than Urdu/Punjabi. This means that the emotional charge and degree of significance attached to particular issues may be underplayed when translated into English.

Interpretation and the development of space

2. The biography of the interpreter and her/his relationship with the

For example

“ Age, religion, status in local community /group may affect what is said, what is left unsaid, what is appropriate.

“ It may not be appropriate for the interpreter to ask particular questions due to age differences, for example.

Working with black and minority ethnic older women: the ethnographic self

” Significance of the body/physical markers of identity

Working with black and minority ethnic older women: the ethnographic self

Range of interaction cues - conversation, gaps, eye contact, facial expressions etc.

” Possibility of misinterpretation e.g. what is polite/impolite/acceptable

” Body language

Working with black and minority ethnic older women: developing a culturally sensitive research framework

- ” There is a need to consider:
 - ” Influences on the direction of the research
 - ” Concepts and theories used

Working with black and minority ethnic older women: developing a culturally sensitive research framework

There is a need to:

- “ Engage reflexively with the competing narratives and knowledge claims of researcher, interpreter and participant throughout the research.
- “ Formulate a political agenda for the research that is able to represent a diversity of perspectives.

Working with black and minority ethnic older women: developing a culturally sensitive research framework

- “ Consider the cumulative impact of life-experiences on ageing
- “ Engage participants as co-researchers

Working with black and minority ethnic women as a vehicle for social and political change

- “ Creation of a cross-cultural political agenda
- “ The subjective knowledge claims of women are central to the development of a united political agenda for feminism
- “ it is clear that these ways of knowing are not exclusive to gender but change across culture, time, space, and language.

Working with black and minority ethnic women as a vehicle for social and political change

Reflexive engagement with ethnic difference is a vehicle for social and political change, as Audre Lorde puts it:

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