

## **THE ANTI-BIAS-APPROACH - A USEFUL CONCEPT TO DEAL WITH INTERSECTIONALITY IN SOCIAL WORK**

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As a social worker it is essential to face the complex network of demarcation lines and power relations in society, not only to understand the situation of our clients but also our own involvement in discriminating structures and marginalisation.

The Anti-Bias-approach is an approach within anti-discriminatory practice in education, which has its roots in the US and in South Africa. It has been brought to Germany and Austria in the 90ies. Firstly developed in the sphere of elementary and primary education, this approach has been adapted for youth work and adult education. However, it is also a very useful concept in social work as a basis for personal reflection but also for organisational development as well – an emerging field of practice of the Anti-Bias-approach in Germany and Austria. Anti-Bias is an experience-orientated training focusing not only on (own) discrimination but also on (own) dominance. The aim is to un-learn oppressive and discriminating forms of communication and interaction as well as to analyze the individual, the social and the structural dimensions of power structures and to develop strategies to tackle discrimination on every level of society.

One special aspect of the Anti-Bias-approach is to focus not only on one aspect of discrimination like sexism or racism but on the complexity of discrimination and privilege based on the theoretical concept of intersectionality. Anti-bias tools help to understand the theoretical framework of intersectionality and to transfer intersectional thinking into the field of practice. The tools and elements developed in the Anti-Bias-Approach can give inspiring ideas to reflect on social work practice.

In my contribution I start with a short introduction of the Anti-Bias approach and the basic assumptions of the concept of intersectionality. Then I want to discuss why the Anti-Bias approach is useful for social work sharing some examples out of my practice out of Anti-Bias-trainings with social work students in Austria and Finland. In the workshop there will be the possibility to try the tool “powerflower” as an instrument of reflection on different social positions of social workers and clients / service users and power relationships in social work practice.