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Aims of session

- **To tell you about my research into the experiences of Black women managers in Britain;**
- **To have a conversation with you about the implications of this work for managers in organisations.**



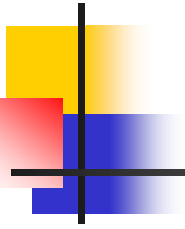
Reflection questions

- *What is this story triggering in me?*
- *As I listen – what's exciting me?*
- *How is this story resonating with my own experience?*
- *What am I curious to know more about?*



Starting Questions

- *Why are the patterns of discrimination being observed in organisations not changing?*
- *Are the experiences of the discriminated groups improving?*
- *Are the strategies being used by us, as change agents, appropriate to the problem?*
- *How do we create social changes in organisations?*



■ *“ The issues that face us are not just how to survive – obviously we are doing that somehow, but how to thrive – thrive with some passion, some compassion, some humour and some style.”*

■ *Maya Angelou in concert*



Re-defined Research question

- What changes would have to take place for Black women to experience themselves as having equality of opportunities?



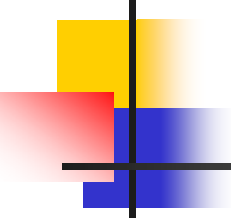
Methodological considerations

- Congruence with research goals/objectives
 - Facilitating liberation in self and others
 - Research as change, as well as for change
 - Attending to the power dynamics in the research process
 - Validating multiple ways of knowing



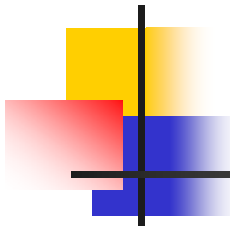
Chosen Methods

- Action Research methods
 - First person inquiry
 - Collaborative inquiry
 - Action inquiry
 - Confirming /disconfirming cycles



About Black women's experiences

- On the margin – tentative, vulnerable, 'outsider'
- Tokens
- Highly visible and yet invisible
- Under scrutiny and treated as suspicious
- Threatened by invisible power



About Black women's experiences

- Made different and treated differently
- Reduced opportunities
- 'Black manager'- a contradiction in terms
- Difficulty in getting the experience of discrimination recognised
- Carrying heavier workloads
- Always in situations of conflict



Our coping strategies

- Proving self
- Cautious, fearful and anxious
- Protective of the self – masking
- Fear of being controlled - so controlling
- Holding back, withholding own experiences and staying silent



Our coping strategies

- Fear of vulnerability, weakness and helplessness
- Fear of being strong and of standing out
- Difficulty in valuing self and paying attention to own needs



What did I learn?

- **Definition of research question is important**
- **Importance of participation for validity in human inquiry**
- **Discrimination is complex and multifarious**
- **Blocks and barriers not easily seen**
- **We are all involved in the perpetuation of discrimination so we must all play a part in the design and creation of a different future**

