Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships

Teaching for social and emotional learning
and respectful relationships

VICTORIA
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Level
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Introduction to the Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationship Resource

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Introduction Overview

The Resilience, rights and respectful relationships (RRRR) teaching and learning resource has been designed to support primary and secondary teachers to provide social and emotional learning and respectful relationships education. The RRRR resource includes teaching and learning materials for Foundation to level 11–12.

At level 8-10, teachers and students transition to the Building Respectful Relationships (BRR) resource which focuses specifically on gendered norms, gender and power, consent, and prevention of gender-based violence. The RRRR resource is structured into 8 key topic areas. Each includes a range of learning activities.

Table 1: Topic areas in the RRRR Resource

Topic 1: Emotional literacy	Students develop the ability to be aware of, understand and use information about the emotional states of themselves and others.
Topic 2: Personal and cultural strengths	Students develop a vocabulary to help them recognise and understand strengths and positive qualities in themselves and others. They identify the values and strengths they have learnt from role models within their families and culture to think about how this guidance helps them to treat others with respect. They consider how to draw on these strengths to engage with the challenges and opportunities that life presents.
Topic 3: Positive coping	Students develop language around coping, critically reflect on their coping strategies and extend their repertoire of positive coping strategies.
Topic 4: Problem-solving	Students learn a range of problem-solving techniques to apply when confronting personal, social and ethical dilemmas. They engage in scenario-based learning tasks to practise their problem-solving skills in relevant situations.
Topic 5: Stress management	Students consider the causes of stress and develop a range of self-regulation and coping strategies they can draw on to manage stressful situations.
Topic 6: Help-seeking	Students develop skills and knowledge for peer support, peer referral and help-seeking.
Topic 7: Gender norms and stereotypes	Students consider the influence of gender norms on attitudes, opportunities and behaviour. They learn about gender equality, inclusion, human rights and the importance of relationships that respect people of all genders.
Topic 8: Positive gender relationships	Students develop an understanding that verbal, physical, emotional, financial and sexual forms of violence are harmful, and that these forms of violence can also be gendered. They learn about safe and unsafe behaviours, consent and their rights to bodily autonomy. They practise strategies they can use to assert their rights to bodily autonomy to be free from coercion or violence. They develop self-care, peer support, peer referral and help-seeking skills that they can use in response to situations involving gender-based violence within family, peer, school, community or online relationships.

Using a research-informed approach to wellbeing education

The RRRR resource uses a research-informed approach to provide age-appropriate learning activities. These activities are designed to support students' social and emotional learning so that they can develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills required for respectful relationships.

The approach is guided by research which shows that a structured curriculum for children and young people which promotes social and emotional skills and positive gender norms leads to improved health-related outcomes and subjective wellbeing. It also reduces antisocial behaviours including gender-based violence.

The wellbeing education research which informs the resource draws from a range of specialist study areas. These include studies in bullying and violence prevention, social and emotional learning, help-seeking, gender education, anti-racism education, human rights education, positive psychology, public health, child abuse prevention and prevention of gender-based violence. Guidance from this body of research is provided throughout the teaching and learning resource. Brief summaries of the evidence base are located at the start of each topic area as well as at the start of each lesson in Topics 7 and 8, where the focus is on gender norms and stereotypes, and prevention of gender-based violence. Some key findings from the research are also included in this introductory section. The resource is also informed by research studies investigating its use in primary and secondary schools. [1-7]

This iteration of the resource was informed by a series of consultations conducted in 2023 with primary and secondary students, teachers, school wellbeing staff, parents and a range of expert stakeholders. Some of these stakeholders included a Koorie working group, the Department of Education's Respectful Relationships and LGBTIQA+ reference groups as well as department advisers with expertise relating to the inclusion of culturally diverse students and students with diverse learning needs.

Advancing learning and wellbeing

The approach in this resource is consistent with the objectives of the Department of Education's research-informed Framework for School Improvement 2.0. This framework places both learning and wellbeing at the centre of school improvement and advocates the use of research to inform practise. The RRRR resource implements the Department of Education's Respectful Relationships initiative, which supports schools to embed a culture of respect and equality across the entire school community. It also supports mental health reform in schools which recognises the important role schools play in supporting and promoting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.

- See the Department of Education's website for more information on the Framework for School Improvement 2.0: https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/fiso/policy
- See the Victorian Government's website for more information on the Respectful Relationships initiative: https://www.vic.gov.au/respectful-relationships

Why provide social and emotional learning?

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the term used to describe research-informed teaching and learning which explicitly promotes mental wellbeing by improving students' social, emotional and positive relationship skills. Studies show that well-devised and well-implemented SEL programs help students to develop the relationship skills needed in everyday life, such as emotional awareness, empathy, perspective taking, self-regulation, cooperation, problem-solving, positive coping, responsible decision-making, peer support and help-seeking. [8] SEL initiatives have been found to be most effective when delivered within a broader wellbeing curriculum that incorporates a range of social, physical and mental health issues, when delivered by the classroom teacher, and when provided with fidelity in schools with a positive relational climate. [9]

Research into the effectiveness of SEL education highlights positive impacts in wellbeing, social and academic outcomes. Students who participate in SEL are more likely to relate in positive and inclusive ways with their classmates who experience emotional and behavioural problems. [10] A strong body of evidence demonstrates that well-designed and well-facilitated SEL leads to improved mental and social health for students, and to improved academic outcomes compared to those in similar schools who are not provided this form of education. [9]

A substantial meta-analysis reviewed the findings from school-based SEL interventions provided for students from kindergarten through to Year 12. It reviewed 424 studies from 53 countries, involving over half a million students. [8] Results showed that in comparison with students in control schools, those who participated in the SEL interventions experienced significantly improved relationship skills, attitudes and social behaviours, as well as associated improvements in school climate and safety, peer relationships and academic attainment.

Similarly a meta-analysis of 82 research trials conducted in a range of national contexts found lasting positive effects when students were followed up between 1 to 3 years post SEL intervention, with benefits including improved social and emotional skills, attitudes and indicators of wellbeing evident regardless of students' race, socio-economic background or school location. [11]

Key Points: Social and emotional learning programs (SEL) teach young people the social, emotional, and relationship skills essential to everyday life. They:

- improve mental health

- are most effective when delivered with fidelity by classroom teachers as part of a whole-school approach

- are related to improved academic outcomes and improved social and mental health

- foster respectful and supportive peer relationships

- reduce rates of bullying and sexual and homophobic harassment.

A review of the content and methods used in SEL education has also found that it contributes to the prevention of youth suicide by reducing some of the key risk factors for suicidality. This review found that the 5 key SEL competencies – identified as self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, social awareness and relationship skills – reduce some of the major known risk factors for youth suicide, as well as feelings of hopelessness and anxiety. These competencies can also assist those who have experienced childhood sexual abuse to seek help and to use protective behaviours. [12]

The evidence suggests that SEL education fosters respectful and supportive peer relationships. It leads to reduced rates of bullying of students with diverse abilities, LGBTIQ+ students and students from marginalised ethnic and migrant backgrounds. It also reduces rates of sexual harassment and homophobic bullying. [7, 9, 13-15]

SEL can help students returning to school following exposure to emergencies, disasters and armed conflict. A review of SEL research trials conducted in these situations found that those receiving substantial SEL education showed improved psychological wellbeing and lower rates of depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder compared to students in control schools. [16]

Figure 1: The high prevalence of mental disorders in young people indicates the importance of providing SEL

- Almost half of females (45.5%) aged 16 to 24 years and a third of males (32.4%) aged 16 to 24 years experienced a mental disorder in the last 12 months.

- 2 in 5 females (40.4%) aged 16 to 24 years experienced an anxiety disorder in the last 12 months.

- 1 in 2 people (50.3%) who described their sexual orientation as gay, lesbian or bisexual, or who used a different term like asexual, pansexual or queer, experienced an anxiety disorder in the last 12 months.

- Females with a mental disorder were more likely to have seen a health professional for their mental health than males (51.1% compared with 36.4%) [19].

What is Respectful Relationships Education?

Respectful relationships education (RRE) describes education which explicitly supports prevention of gender-based violence. Gender-based violence is any form of violence targeting a person based on their gender or gender presentation. It includes any act that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological, financial, cultural or spiritual harm or suffering to someone. Studies show that those who experience any combination of bullying, racism or gender-based violence are more likely to be anxious, depressed, tired or feel worthless and they can find it difficult to participate fully at school. [20-23] Research shows that gender-based violence disproportionately affects women and girls and LGBTIQA+ people.

RRE builds awareness of the ways gender norms can limit people's interests, opportunities and life choices and how they can lead to the endorsement of discrimination and violence. Students develop an awareness of what respectful, equal and nonviolent relationships can look or sound like in different contexts. Students learn the skills people need to relate with others in respectful ways, to assert their rights to be respected and to seek help for themselves or others if subjected to discrimination or interpersonal violence. Effective approaches to prevention of gender-based violence teach the social skills needed for respectful relationships and foster awareness of human rights in relation to gender equality and freedom from discrimination and violence. They include a focus on the ways gender norms can lead to limiting and harmful outcomes, including functioning as drivers of gender-based violence. [24-29]

Figure 2: The prevalence of bullying and gender-based violence indicates need for investment in SEL and RRE

- About 56% of Year 4 students and 43% of Year 8 students were bullied monthly or weekly [30].

- On average, those Year 4 and Year 8 students who were bullied achieved lower scores in Trends in International Maths and Science Studies (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Studies (PIRLS) than children who were not. This indicates that there is a relationship between the average score achieved by children and the frequency of bullying [30].

- 54% of 13- to 18-year-old students reported witnessing verbal harassment of gender and sexuality diverse students at school [31].

- 22% of women and 6.1% of men have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15 [32].

- 11% of women and 3.6% of men experienced sexual abuse before the age of 15 [32].

- 1 in 4 women (23%) and 1 in 14 men (7.3%) have experienced violence by an intimate partner since the age of 15 [32].

What is consent education?

Consent education combines SEL, RRE and sexuality education. For younger children it includes an age-appropriate focus on what it can look or sound like to ask for permission or consent, to refuse permission or consent and to understand that consent can't be obtained by pressuring people to do something they don't want to do. [33] It also includes learning activities that support prevention of child sexual abuse, via teaching about bodily autonomy, body boundaries, the difference between 'safe' and 'unsafe' secrets and the importance of seeking help from trusted adults if their 'early warning signals' are sending a message that they might not be safe. Research shows significant knowledge gains and improved self-protective behaviours occurs when students are taught their rights to be safe from abuse and their right to say no or to tell, even when someone in authority over them abuses them. A review of 24 child sexual abuse prevention programs showed that they increased the knowledge students have about abuse prevention and improved their skills in protective behaviours. [34] This review of studies found no evidence that the programs increased anxiety or fear in students.

For older students, consent education focuses on 'affirmative consent' within relationships. This includes understanding what is meant by affirmative consent, how to have respectful consent conversations and how to resist, report or seek help if experiencing or witnessing coercion or gender-based violence. [33]

Key Points

- Respectful Relationships Education (RRE) explicitly addresses the prevention of gender-based violence.

- Gender-based violence is any form of violence targeting a person because of their gender or gender presentation.

- Consent education includes a focus on what it can look or sound like to ask for, give, refuse or withdraw consent, and on understanding that consent is permission freely given with full knowledge of a situation and without pressure or manipulation.

Why include a focus on gender norms and stereotypes?

The RRRR resource provides an age-appropriate and research-informed approach to teaching about the ways gender norms can lead to harmful or limiting outcomes. It includes activities which focus on understanding every person's rights to respect, to bodily autonomy and to protection from violence within their relationships with peers, families, schools and society. It teaches them about their rights to be free from discrimination and how to seek help if affected by violence at school, home, online or in the community.

This approach is important because international studies have found that the key drivers of gender-based violence at a population level include gender-inequitable social norms and gender-inequitable, violence-endorsing constructions of masculinity. [35] For example, an international study of the cultural roots of gender-based violence in 12 European countries found that violence and discrimination against women was more common in societies where rigid gender roles were the norm, where male honour was protected and where those who challenged traditional gender roles were punished with violence. [36]. Additionally, an Australian study showed that the strongest predictors of attitudes conducive to violence against women held by young people aged 16 to 24 included:

- holding attitudes that endorse gender inequality

- having a low level of understanding of how violence is enacted upon women

- holding prejudicial attitudes towards others on the basis of their disability, ethnicity, Aboriginality or sexual orientation

- endorsing violence as a practise in other aspects of their lives. [37]

Conforming to gender norms can also have implications for a person's health as behaviours considered to be normative or desirable for a particular gender may be associated with negative health outcomes. For example, gendered beliefs related to masculinity may include the denial of vulnerability or weakness and tolerance of displays of aggressive behaviour. [38] These gender norms can lead to higher rates of violence, engagement in risky behaviour and reluctance to seek help in relation to mental health. [39, 40] Gender norms related to femininity and pressures to meet expected beauty standards can lead to augmented rates of body image distress, [41] and internalisation of the expectation that violence against women is excusable in certain circumstances. Morbidity and mortality data which shows different health and illness patterns for men and women illustrates the harmful impacts of

gender norms. [42] Masculinity researchers argue that it is important to normalise positive expressions of masculinity which support young people to challenge micro forms of interpersonal violence, such as name-calling, sexist jokes and homophobic slurs. [43]

Our Watch provides a summary of available evidence about the nature and prevalence of gender-based violence in Australia, along with discussion of effective approaches to prevention. [44] The analysis conducted by Our Watch notes that gendered drivers of violence against women include:

- attitudes condoning violence against women

- men's control of decision-making and limits to independence in public and private life

- rigid gender stereotyping and dominant forms of masculinity

- male peer relations and cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression, dominance and control.

Their framework for action emphasises the importance of a whole-of-society approach to challenging these negative attitudes and associated behaviours, along with efforts to strengthen positive relationships between men and women. [44]

Positive effects of RRE

Studies show that well-designed and well-implemented school-based classroom interventions addressing violence prevention and respectful relationships can produce change in attitudes and behaviours. [45-47] Providing explicit RRE to all students is a key part of a whole-school approach to preventing gender-based violence. [48]

Research suggests the complexity of gender-based violence requires a significant number of sessions to change behaviour and have lasting effects. [49] Research also shows that 'one-off' sessions are both inappropriate and inadequate. While there is no agreed upon minimum exposure, [50] there is consensus that RRE which provides greater intensity and duration has greater potential to produce behavioural change. [48] Further, the research investigating best practise demonstrates the benefits of a sustained approach across multi-session interventions. [46, 47]

Key Points

- The gendered drivers of violence against women include rigid gender stereotyping and dominant forms of masculinity, men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence, male peer relations and cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression dominance and control, and condoning of violence against women

- Conforming to narrow gender norms can lead to negative health outcomes, including those associated with increased risk-taking and use of violence on the part of men and boys, and increased levels of anxiety about body image for girls and young women.

- School-based interventions addressing violence prevention and respectful relationships can produce change in attitudes and behaviours when taught in a sustained way as part of a whole school approach to preventing gender-based violence.

Why commence RRE in primary school?

Research shows that SEL and RRE must commence from an early age, as children are well aware of gender norms and make efforts to fit within gendered expectations by the time they are in kindergarten. [51] As young children learn about gender, they can acquire and exhibit stereotypical, prejudiced and often negative attitudes towards those that they perceive as 'others'. [51-55] For example, they may insist that some games are for boys while others are for girls, thereby actively rejecting peers from certain games. This means that it is important to commence work on building positive gender relationships within these early years. Classroom activities can be used to help children to explore gender identity, challenge stereotypes, learn to value and show respect for diversity and difference and to learn how to apply these attitudes within respectful relationships.

Why provide RRE across the secondary school years?

The prevention of gender-based violence becomes increasingly important as students enter their high school years. Australian studies have found that around a third of young people aged 14 to 18 years who had been in a relationship had experienced some form of intimate partner abuse, with girls almost three times as likely to report sexual victimisation in their relationships as boys. [56]

Other studies have shown that bullying and harassment becomes a more gendered and sexualised practise among adolescents. [13, 14] Bullying can function as a mechanism through which some boys assert their dominance by policing and punishing those who are deemed to be insufficiently masculine, as well engaging in sexual harassment of girls as a way to establish status in the eyes of other boys. [24] Longitudinal research studies have investigated the pathway from bullying in early adolescence (ages 11 to 13) to perpetration of sexual violence in high school (at ages 14 to 18). Studies in the US context have shown that those who engage in homophobic name-calling in early adolescence were more likely to perpetrate sexual violence in their high school years. Boys who bullied others in early middle school (ages 11 to 12) were more likely to engage in homophobic name-calling in late middle school (ages 12 to 13). Further, boys who reported greater bullying perpetration and higher use of homophobic name-calling were 6 times more likely to engage in sexual violence in high school.

Australian research investigating the use of the RRRR teaching and learning resource also found that those bullying others were also more likely to sexually bully others. [7] Further, this study of Year 7 and 9 students showed that students who engaged in these forms of bullying were more likely to befriend others who also did so and that friendship allegiances may play a role in reinforcing or rewarding such attitudes or behaviour. Additionally, this study showed that compared with boys at Year 7, boys at Year 9 were less likely to intervene if other boys in their class sexually harassed girls. They were less inclined to think this behaviour was unacceptable which indicates that there may be increasing normalisation or pressures to engage in gender-based violence as boys age into mid-adolescence.

This research highlights the importance of providing prevention education in primary school and continuing this investment in prevention education as students age through high school. It also highlights the importance of including a focus on the prevention of homophobic name-calling and bullying as part of this approach. [13]

Why use gender-inclusive approaches?

Along with women and girls, people of diverse gender sexuality experience higher rates of gender-based violence. For example, a study showed 54% of 13- to 18-year-old Australians have witnessed students with diverse experiences of gender and sexuality being harassed at school. [31] An inclusive approach to education for the prevention of gender-based violence includes a focus on challenging forms of discrimination and disadvantage based on the binary nature of gender norms, as well as those generated by dominant understandings of masculinity and femininity. [57]

Teaching protective behaviours to support prevention of child abuse

The term 'protective behaviours' refers to behaviours which enable children to recognise and respond to situations where their personal space and sense of safety might be compromised. Programs that increase awareness, knowledge and protective behaviour skills aim to prevent and reduce child abuse and violence by making children feel safer to disclose inappropriate sexual advances. [58]

Research shows that school based abuse prevention programs for early childhood and primary school children are effective in increasing student knowledge and protective behaviours. [58-60] Components of successful programs include teaching children to identify and resist inappropriate touching, reassuring children that it is not their fault if they experience abuse and learning the proper names of genitals. [58] Research highlights that programs are more likely to be successful if they use behavioural skills training such as active rehearsal through role-play followed by shaping and reinforcement, rather than passive learning (e.g. watching the teacher model skills or viewing a film). [58-60] Programs teaching about gender-based violence should include a focus on protective behaviours and provide developmentally-appropriate information and skill-building activities.

The importance of a whole-school approach

Research investigating school-based wellbeing promotion programs highlights the importance of positioning classroom interventions within a whole-school approach when addressing positive student behaviour, [61] SEL, resilience and mental health, [62-65] bullying prevention [66-69] and RRE [7, 29, 70].

A whole-school approach includes a focus on school policies, practises and partnerships with communities and agencies, as well provision of classroom-based curriculum. It is difficult to effect change in student attitudes or behaviour without use of a classroom intervention within a broader school approach [65, 71]. Stronger outcomes are evident when classroom-focused programs are combined with cross-curricular integration, a focus on classroom and school climate and active engagement of parents and carers, service providers and the local community. [72]

Clear messaging which promotes gender equality and identifies the unacceptability of harassment and perpetration of gender-based violence has been found to reduce rates of sexual harassment in schools. [73] Further, students are more likely to report homophobic harassment of peers to their teachers in schools where students have positive relationships with their teachers. [6] Inclusive and supportive teacher–student relationships play a pivotal role in shaping the school environment for gender-diverse students. [31]

Where does the RRRR resource fit within the school curriculum?

The teaching and learning activities provided in the RRRR resource align with the Victorian Curriculum. They address content descriptions and aspects of the achievement standards in both Health and Physical Education and Personal and Social Capability.

Health and Physical Education (HPE) Curriculum integration table

The Victorian HPE curriculum [74]

The Health and Physical Education curriculum will support students to:

- access, evaluate and synthesise information so that they can make informed choices and act to enhance and advocate for their own and others' health, wellbeing, safety, and participation in physical activity across their lifespan
- develop and use physical, social, psychological and cognitive skills and strategies to promote self-identity and wellbeing, and to build and manage respectful relationships
- acquire, apply and evaluate movement skills, concepts and strategies to respond confidently, competently and creatively in various physical activity settings
- engage in and enjoy regular movement-based learning experiences and understand and appreciate their significance to personal, social, cultural, environmental and health practises and outcomes
- engage in and create opportunities for regular physical activity, as individuals and for the communities to which they belong, which can enhance fitness, movement performance and wellbeing
- analyse how varied and changing personal and contextual factors shape both our health and physical activity.

HPE focus areas

Within the HPE curriculum there is a focus on developing the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to promote respectful relationships and safety. These focus areas provide the context for teaching about respectful and safe relationships:

- **Relationships and sexuality (RS)**
  Relationships and sexuality addresses physical, social and emotional changes that occur over time, and the significant role that relationships, identities and sexuality play in these changes. Students learn how to establish and manage respectful relationships, and how to develop positive and respectful practises regarding their reproductive and sexual health. In doing so, students gain an understanding of the contextual factors that influence gender and sexual identities. Students also explore contextual factors that influence relationships and sexuality.
  The focus from Foundation to Level 2 should be on relationships
- **Safety (S)**
  Safety addresses safety issues that students may encounter in their daily lives. Students explore the way contextual factors affect their own safety and that of others. They learn to evaluate their local environments (both physical and social) and develop the understandings and skills needed to navigate these. This includes different settings, including school, home, roads, outdoors, sports clubs, near and in water, parties and online. Students will develop skills in first aid, and in negotiating relationships, personal safety and uncomfortable situations.

HPE strand: Personal, Social and Community Health

The **Personal, Social and Community Health** strand contains the following themes:

- **Identities and change**
  - The development of personal identity, including gender and sexual identity
  - The influence of gender stereotypes on developing respectful relationships
- **Interacting with others**
  - The development of personal and social skills necessary for respectful relationships
  - Exploring emotional responses and how these affect relationships
  - Skills and strategies required to seek, give or deny consent respectfully
- **Contributing to healthy communities**
  - Examining and evaluating health information, services and messaging that influences health and wellbeing decisions and behaviours (including relationships) in the community, and the influence this has on individual attitudes and actions. This includes a focus on physical and social environments and taking action that can help challenge attitudes and behaviours such as homophobia, sexism, prejudice, violence, discrimination and harassment
  - Providing opportunities to practise protective behaviours and help-seeking strategies

Source: Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority 2024 Victorian Curriculum Health and Physical Education accessed from https://f10.vcaa.vic.edu.au/learning-areas/health-and-physical-education/introduction

Personal and Social Capability [75]

The Personal and Social Capability curriculum aims to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills which can enable students to:

- recognise, understand and evaluate the expression of emotions
- demonstrate an awareness of their personal qualities and the factors that contribute to resilience
- develop empathy for others and recognise the importance of supporting diversity for a cohesive community
- consider how relationships are developed and use interpersonal skills to establish and maintain respectful relationships
- work effectively in teams and develop strategies to manage challenging situations constructively.

Source: Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority 2015, Victorian Curriculum: Personal and Social Capability, accessed from http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/personal-and-social-capability/introduction/rationale-and-aims

Effective implementation

The RRRR resource uses a range of collaborative learning strategies which provide opportunities for students to develop social skills. These strategies also engage explicitly with the key content areas of emotional literacy, decision-making, problem-solving, positive self-regard, stress management, positive coping, help-seeking and peer support. The lessons incorporate a range of collaborative learning activities such as paired sharing, small group problem-solving discussions, scenario-based discussions, skills-development exercises, role-plays, storytelling, games, experiential activities and class discussions.

Collaborative learning activities are a key tool for engaging students in critical thinking about the ways certain gender norms and power relations work to legitimise violence and discrimination. [76] The collaborative activities also provide students with an opportunity to develop their social skills. A systematic review of 69 other resources further supported this form of peer-to-peer engagement. [42] It found that attitudes were positively influenced by interventions that used collaborative learning to orchestrate peer-to-peer dialogue, positioned peers as contributors, developed skills for peer relationships, invited positive peer role-modelling and used student voice to inform design and content. Despite these findings, the use of collaborative learning is not the norm in many classrooms, [77] with teachers defaulting to more individualised or teacher-centric forms of instruction, including when providing RRE. [7]

Research investigating the use of the RRRR resource showed that teachers may face a number of challenges affecting their capacity to implement with fidelity, including a combination of emotional, political and pedagogical labour. [1] Emotional labour relates to teacher concerns that learning about gender-based violence may be distressing for students and staff who have experienced gender-based violence or family violence. Political labour is the work needed to manage resistance or backlash by students, parents, carers or community members who are opposed to the use of gender-inclusive approaches or approaches that challenge traditional patriarchal norms. Pedagogical labour is the work associated with facilitating collaborative learning activities, with some teachers citing lack of confidence in managing student behaviour during peer-to-peer tasks.

The research also identified the need for 'structures for care', which are the kinds of structures that supported effective implementation of the RRRR resource. [2] These included providing a designated space in the school timetable, strong leadership support, opportunities to participate in professional learning and to work in school-based teams that provide collegial support and guidance. Teachers also validated the importance of proactive wellbeing and curriculum policy within the education system and their access to the research-informed teaching resources used to guide their approach.

Key Points

- The RRRR resource aligns with the Victorian Curriculum.
- Effecting change in student attitudes or behaviour requires dedicated RRE as part of a whole-school approach.
- A whole-school approach includes a focus on school policies, practises and partnerships with communities and agencies, as well provision of classroom-based curriculum.
- Collaborative learning activities are essential for engaging students in critical thinking and for the development of social skills.

Teacher professional preparedness and support

Teachers who are new to leadership or delivering RRE may benefit from engaging in professional learning and working with colleagues to consider their approach to using the resource. Some schools may elect to use a co-delivery or co-teaching model.

For some teachers, leading activities which include discussions about gender-based violence and discrimination may trigger memories of personal experience. It is advised that teachers consider whether they need wellbeing support before using the resource and whether they would benefit from discussing their needs directly with a trusted senior colleague, counsellor or the principal. Teachers may also find it helpful to work with colleagues to prepare and rehearse delivery of the program, to co-teach with a colleague or to have a colleague lead particular sessions.

There are a range of counselling and help services available for teachers who want to access support in relation to issues associated with mental wellbeing, family violence or experiences of gender-based violence. The following Department of Education resources are available to school staff:

- Family Violence Support resources: https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/family-violence-support/resources
- LGBTIQA+ section of the Inclusive Workplaces policy and guidelines page: https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/inclusive-workplaces/policy-and-guidelines/lgbtiq
- Mental Health and Wellbeing – Employees policy: https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/mental-health-and-wellbeing-employees/policy

All department staff – including school, regional and corporate staff and their immediate family members (aged 18 years and over) – can also access the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). This free, confidential counselling service, provided by mental health professionals, is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The EAP also offers access to specialist counsellors for Aboriginal, LGBTIQA+ and family violence matters.

- To access the EAP, call 1300 361 008 or use the link to the live chat function on the Mental Health and Wellbeing – Employees resources page to make a booking: https://wellbeing.lifeworks.com/au/.

Setting up a safe social space

It is important for teachers to work with students to set up a 'safe social space' for participation and learning. This means establishing a friendly and respectful atmosphere where students and teachers feel safe to share their views without fear of judgement or silencing. It is important to set out the expectations that groups will work together, mix with each other and encourage each other to participate. It is important to make these expectations clear so that everybody is aware of them and then involve students in building class agreements. Some classes will have pre-established ground rules or agreements for a respectful learning environment. However, other groups may be together for the first time. If this is the case, it is important to establish classroom agreements around behaviour because they provide a structure that helps students and staff to feel safe and supported, facilitate classroom management and ensure the class works effectively. Within the resource, there are specific introductory activities provided that suggest approaches to involving students in rule making and setting up a safe learning space.

If a comment is made that leaves other students feeling targeted, angry or offended, it is important that these comments are not ignored. Ignoring sexist or other inappropriate comments can have the effect of communicating implicit teacher approval. Name the inappropriate behaviour and request what is expected in its place, modelling the sort of behaviour that is required. Arrange a follow-up conversation with students who repeatedly engage in this behaviour to support them to develop their interpersonal skills.

Providing a safe social space also involves setting standards about privacy. This includes being clear about what is appropriate to share in the group space and what should be disclosed in a more private setting, such as between a student and a teacher or wellbeing leader (further coaching on this is provided below). The lessons and activities do not require students or staff to disclose their own experiences, which may not be appropriate in the public space of the classroom. Rather it uses the notion of protective distancing, providing generic examples and scenarios as the focus for the learning activities. There may be times when the teacher needs to remind students about privacy, or to use the technique of 'protective interrupting' if they think a student is about to make an inappropriately timed disclosure. The teacher can then follow up with the student to discuss the issue and to arrange for further support if appropriate.

It is recommended that teachers notify the relevant wellbeing staff prior to delivering these lessons, as there may be an increase in help-seeking or peer referral as students engage with the content. The symbol and text below will accompany classes that may prompt help-seeking and require further action from teachers.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance https://www.vic.gov.au/protect and Four Critical Actions https://www.schools. vic.gov.au/report-child-abuse-schools if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused.

Lessons within the resource that address content that relates directly or indirectly to harm or abuse are identified with the icon above.

Teaching sensitive material

Some of the learning activities in this resource deal with sensitive topics like violence, racism, discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse. Some students may have direct experience of these issues. Content advice should be provided to support the wellbeing of those students prior to and within lessons identified by these icons:

Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

Parents and carers should also be informed in advance that students will be exploring sensitive content, and contacted where appropriate if their child has sought wellbeing support.

Teachers should advise students that in an upcoming session they will focus on sensitive content, being specific about what that means. For example, by saying, 'In an upcoming session we will be considering/exploring/discussing bullying or sexual violence.' Remind students about class ground rules or agreements about respectful behaviour.

Let students know that it's okay to feel uncomfortable and that if they think they'll find any of the content distressing, they can read the lesson content in advance, choose not to participate in activities or leave the room as appropriate.

Be proactive about having conversations with students prior to the class and facilitate student choices in an inconspicuous manner. Support students to make choices about their participation during the lesson. Consider using a 'Talk to a teacher' slip for classes with sensitive content, which gives students the opportunity to anticipate their preferences before a class begins. If used, care should be taken to ensure that the slips are protected from misuse, loss and unauthorised disclosure.

Key Points

It's important to:

- Establish classroom agreements that help students and staff feel to safe and respected.

- Notice, name and address sexist or inappropriate behaviour, utilising classroom agreements and school codes of conduct.

- Be clear about what is appropriate to share in a group space and what is better suited to a private setting

- Provide content advice and help-seeking reminders to support the wellbeing of students when engaging with sensitive material prior to and at the beginning of lessons.

Teachers should also be aware of and follow their school's policy on yard duty and the supervision of students. Teachers can access the Department of Education's resource on these policies and review their duty of care obligations when considering alternative participation arrangements for students. See the Department of Education's website for more information on:

- Supervision of Students: https://www2. education.vic.gov.au/pal/supervision-students/policy

- Duty of Care: https://www2.education.vic.gov. au/pal/duty-of-care/policy

Students who exit the classroom must be referred to school wellbeing support. Once the lesson has concluded, follow your school's wellbeing processes to check in with students who have modified their participation to ensure they have access to support if required.

For further information on department polices relating to the care, health, safety and wellbeing of students visit the Department of Education's duty of care resource listed above.

Note that the learning activities which engage with sensitive material do not invite students to share their own stories in front of their peers. Rather, these are structured around scenarios which provide a focus on what affected parties can do to seek help and what concerned others can do to provide peer support or peer referral. Teachers are advised to observe, enquire, support, monitor, follow up and refer if they notice signs that a student may be finding the material distressing or unsettling.

Some teachers may worry that talking about violence could have negative effects for those who have experienced violence. [1] However, teachers can use strategies to make discussions about violence prevention protective and productive. In addition to carefully constructed learning activities and the use of scenarios rather than personal stories, teachers can also shift the focus by using more celebratory or playful learning activities when required. These more playful activities can re-introduce a positive mood and create a sense of inclusion and connectedness to others. These activities are designed to assist students to explore the issues in a blame-free environment. They support students to question harmful attitudes and practises without resorting to blaming or naming and without needing to call on their personal stories. [28] Nonetheless, some of the material in the resource may trigger sad or angry emotions in students or teachers themselves. Some students may react defensively and show discomfort by laughing, joking, accusing or denying the existence or effects of gender-based violence. In this case teachers can use a combination of positive classroom management practises to deal with any potentially unruly or belittling behaviour and provide additional support or referral for those finding the material difficult.

Disclosure of bullying, family violence and sexual abuse can increase during or following provision of SEL and RRE, with some disclosures or help-seeking requests made to educators and other students turning to helplines. [78] Given this likelihood, is important that protocols and pathways for teacher response are clearly established in advance, that wellbeing staff are made aware of the timing of delivery and that students are also provided with information about school supports and trusted external help-sources that they may access by phone or online.

Supporting the Child Safe Standards

Victoria's Child Safe Standards were introduced to further strengthen child safe environments and better protect children from abuse. The Child Safe Standards make sure children and young people in organisations including schools and early childhood settings feel safe and are safe.

The Department of Education's PROTECT guidance helps schools and early childhood services implement the Child Safe Standards. The website includes guidance, policies and templates to support schools to revise their child safety policies and practises to meet the requirements of the Child Safe Standards. For further information on PROTECT guidance visit:

- PROTECT guidance: https://www.vic.gov.au/protect

Delivering the lessons in the RRRR resource sequentially, with fidelity and as part of a whole-school approach to RRE contributes to schools' implementation of the Child Safe Standards. For further information about the Child Safe Standards visit:

- Schools – guidance page: https://www.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards-schools-guidance

Teacher-initiated conversations following possible signs of distress

Research shows that young people can find it difficult to seek help, particularly if experiencing mental health problems or exposure to violence. [79-81] Given this, it is important that staff initiate follow-up conversations with students who are expressing or showing signs of distress.

A follow-up conversation is best conducted in a safe environment, to avoid stigmatising or embarrassing students. In addition, it's important to:

- remain calm during a follow-up conversation

- let the student know you want to check in on how they are

- use active listening skills and open questions to allow the student to tell their story

- listen attentively, without interrupting or making judgement

- thank them for trusting you with their disclosure, reassure them that telling you was the right thing to do and that they will be believed and taken seriously

- validate and believe the student and don't interrogate their experience or behaviour

- remind the student that you need to make sure they are safe and that they receive the help they need. This might involve you talking to others to help get the right people involved to give this help and expertise

- reassure the student that there are things that can be done to help in situations like theirs and that you will arrange to follow up so a plan can be made. Let students know the next set of actions.

Key Points

- It's important to initiate follow-up conversations with students expressing or showing signs of distress.

- The Department of Education's PROTECT guidance includes strategies for managing a disclosure. School staff must follow the Four Critical Actions where there is an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse.

Teachers can respect students' needs for privacy and protection by referring matters to the wellbeing leader or school principal in ways that are discreet. However, teachers may be required to share information with others if they believe a student is at risk of harm. Some disclosures will require a mandatory reporting response. This should be done in a way that ensures protection of the child during and after the notification process. For further guidance on helping students to understand that you may need to seek assistance for them and cannot keep a discussion or disclosure confidential, visit:

- Report child abuse in schools: https://www. schools.vic.gov.au/report-child-abuse-schools#disclosures-from-a-student

The PROTECT guidance includes strategies for managing a disclosure. School staff must follow the Four Critical Actions where there is an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse. These actions outline who an incident, disclosure or suspicion should be reported to. When dealing with an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse, staff should ensure that the principal and school leadership team is made aware of the concern and are involved in providing ongoing appropriate support. For more information about the Four Critical Actions, visit:

- Four Critical Actions: https://www.education. vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/ childprotection/Pages/report.aspx

Dealing with resistance and backlash

Schools may encounter some resistance or backlash in response to teaching about gender equality and gender diversity. The terms 'resistance' and 'backlash' are sometimes used interchangeably to describe a commonly occurring response where members of advantaged groups push back against social justice initiatives which they perceive to threaten their privileged position, beliefs or world view. [82]

Resistance is a response to actual or perceived challenges to existing hierarchies of power. It is a reaction against progressive social change that seeks to prevent further change from happening and reverse those changes already achieved. A typical feature of backlash is the desire by some proponents to return to aspects of an idealised past in which structural inequality was normalised. [82]

Alongside and in response to advances in global and national efforts to address gender equality and prevent gender-based against women, girls and LGBTIQA+ people, there has been ongoing backlash and resistance. Some who oppose this form of education have been influenced by

misinformation and false claims about the aims, methods and content of teaching and learning resources. [83] Consequently, they may hold fears about supposed negative outcomes and fear that this will distract from more 'academic' subjects. Additionally, they may be unaware of the research that shows that education addressing social and emotional learning, human rights, violence prevention, gender equality and inclusion is associated with positive outcomes in students' attitudes and behaviour as well as advances in their academic attainment. Effective communication about the objectives and methods of SEL and RRE may help to allay such concerns. [83]

Australian teachers also observed that some students have adopted standpoints held by prominent social media influencers1 who have actively argued the legitimacy of misogynistic, homophobic, transphobic and racist views. [7] A survey conducted with over 1,300 young men in Australia in late 2022 investigated the influence of one prominent influencer [84] The 1,374 respondents were chiefly students from Years 8 to 10 who participated in a survey following a masculinity workshop conducted by external providers at their school. The researchers found that 92% of respondents were familiar with the influencer's content and 25% of these respondents looked up to him as a role model. Of the other students surveyed, 31% were neutral and 44% disagreed that they look up to him as a role model. Some described him as a confident, hardworking and successful inspiration or noted that they agreed with his opinions such as, 'He tells men that they matter and women are only trying to put you down to be stronger than you.' Those who did not look up to the influencer as a role model tended to describe him using terms like 'arrogant' and 'misogynist'.

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1 At the time this research was undertaken, Andrew Tate was one example of a widely followed social media influencer who combined motivational and lifestyle videos with strongly misogynistic and homophobic views. Source: 84. The Man Cave, Who is Andrew Tate and why do young men relate to him?, in What's really going on with young men? Edition 3. 2023, The Man Cave: Melbourne..

Understanding the ways resistance and backlash can present in schools

Resistance and backlash to gender equality can be expressed in a number of ways, including denial of the problem, disavowal of responsibility, inaction, appeasement, cooption and repression. Resistance may be individual or collective, formal or informal [82, 85, 86]. In schools, these forms of response may be expressed by students, staff, parents and carers or community members.

Resistance and backlash examples

Resistance and backlash in the classroom may sound like:
• **Rejecting** the underpinning human rights principles by refuting notions of gender equality and inclusion, endorsing discrimination and violence or advocating racist, misogynistic, homophobic, transphobic viewpoints.
• **Offending** via use of discriminatory gestures or nicknames, deadnaming, posting offensive images or statements, making sexist/homophobic/transphobic remarks, engaging in forms of sexual harassment.
• **Condoning** forms of discrimination by laughing along when others make sexist/misogynistic/homophobic/transphobic remarks.
• **Excusing** the discriminatory behaviour as natural, harmless, friendly or as a right to free speech, with phrases like, 'they're only joking', 'it's harmless flirting', 'everyone says it', 'they know we don't mean it', 'they do it too', 'they're entitled to their beliefs about women/gay/transgender people' and so on.
• **Denying** that the problem exists by minimising its extent, significance and impact and claiming victimisation is equal for all parties, with phrases like 'we all get along here', 'men are victims too', 'that data is old', 'it's not like that now', 'it doesn't happen around here, so it is not relevant for us' and so on.
• **Reversing** the story by denying privilege and adopting a victim position, claiming reverse discrimination.
• **Blaming** the problem on those who are victimised, with phrases like 'she was asking for it', 'they can't take a joke', 'they deserve it', 'they bring it on themselves' and with the endorsement of date rape myths.
• **Blocking** the learning activities by interrupting, talking over, refusing to participate in activities or with certain students, denigrating the contributions of other students.
• **Undermining** the credibility of the teacher or demeaning their approach, with phrases like 'they can't control the class', or 'she is always blaming the guys' and so on.

Forms of backlash that may be expressed by adults (as parents or carers or in the broader community):

Attacking the morality of RRE on the basis that the approach is supposedly immoral, untruthful or harmful.

Misrepresenting RRE by actively spreading misinformation or disinformation about its objectives or methods.

Proclaiming they have rights to endorse or perpetuate discriminatory treatment.

Accusing the school of harmful treatment, demeaning the moral character of the staff.

Threatening or berating staff, students, other parents and carers, advocacy groups or service providers.

For more detailed discussion on resistance and backlash see:

Flood, M., Dragiewicz, M., & Pease, B. (2021). Resistance and backlash to gender equality. The Australian journal of social issues, 52, 593–408. https://doi.org/10.1002/ajs4.137

Our Watch (2022) Understanding, monitoring and responding to resistance and backlash. Melbourne, Respect Victoria and Our Watch. https://www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au/understanding-backlash-and-resistance

VicHealth 2018, (En)countering resistance: Strategies to respond to resistance to gender equality initiatives, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne. https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/Encountering-Resistance-Gender-Equality.pdf

Responding to student expressions of hate speech

Research shows that there is a close association between witnessing hate speech and using hate speech. A school-based study showed that negative peer modelling is associated with the use of hate speech, with students who are encouraged by peers to participate in such practises being more likely to do so. The study also found that in contrast, students are less likely to use hate speech if their peers or teachers call it out as unacceptable. [87] It is important therefore that educators respond to hate speech by making it clear that this behaviour is unacceptable and that no one should be harassed at school, online or anywhere else.

Key Points

Resistance and backlash to gender equality can be expressed in a number of ways, including victim blaming, denial of the problem, disavowal of responsibility, inaction, excusing or condoning discriminatory behaviour, citing myths as facts, and verbal or physical aggression.

In schools, resistance and backlash may be expressed by students, staff, parents, carers or community members.

Effective communication about the objectives and methods of SEL and RRE, and the research demonstrating its positive impact on student wellbeing and behaviour, may help to support understanding of its positive outcomes for students.

Don't ignore the behaviour, even if the student claims they are only joking or if a member of the target group is not present. Other students may interpret a teacher's choice to ignore this behaviour to mean that the teacher doesn't think it's serious enough to warrant a response, or that staff members will not defend the right all students have to be treated with respect.

Useful steps when teachers respond to behaviours of this nature include:

1. Interrupt the student/s to stop the behaviour.

2. Name the behaviour (for example, 'That is a racist/homophobic/sexist statement').

3. State that it is against the school rules and/or against the law (for example, 'That is against the right to respect rule we have at this school').

4. State that it is a behaviour that has harmful effects (for example, 'That kind of racist/sexist/homophobic talk has harmful effects. It is not to happen again').

5. Identify the follow-up actions (for example, 'I will talk with you further about this after class/You will sit over here, and write an account of what you did, which rule it breaks and what you will do differently next time').

6. Work with students who have experienced hate speech to investigate further and ensure appropriate supports are in place.

Further investigation and comprehensive follow up is required to address continuing, serious, repeated or habitual behaviours.

For advice on use of strategies to support school-wide approaches positive behaviour see the student behaviour resources on the Department of Education's website.

- Student behaviour policy: https:/www2. education.vic.gov.au/pal/behaviour-students/ policy

- Student behaviour guidance: https:/www2. education.vic.gov.au/pal/behaviour-students/ guidance/5-school-wide-positive-behaviour-support-swpbs-framework

See also the Department of Education's guidance on responding to racist bullying, advice for supporting the inclusion of LGBTIQA+ students and the policy informing support for students with disability.

- Racist bullying: https://www.vic.gov.au/racist-bullying

- Support for LGBTIQA+ students: https:/www2. education.vic.gov.au/pal/lgbtiq-student-support/policy

- Support for students with a disability: https:/ www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/students-disability/policy

Parents and carers as partners

Parents and carers are a child's first and most important teachers, particularly in relation to teaching core values and key social and emotional skills. The RRRR resource encourages students to talk with parents, carers, Elders and family members about what they are learning within, with 'talking further' tasks at the end of each topic area to suggest ways that teachers can encourage this communication.

Parents and carers also appreciate knowing about the strategies schools are using to foster respectful relationships and development of the personal and social capabilities. Schools can assist by sharing the learning intentions from the lessons and providing examples of the kinds of activities that students are engaging with. Student contributions to the design and co-delivery of parent workshops and presentations can be used to foster a dynamic exchange. Schools may also find it effective to share information via newsletters, displays and open days.

For further guidance on frameworks and tools to inform effective partnerships between families, school and community refer to:

- Respectful Relationships: A Resource Kit for Victorian Schools: https://fusecontent. education.vic.gov.au/cfee82ef-67f8-488c-a167-52759afda882/respectfulrelationshipsresource akitforvictorianschools.pdf

- Child Safe Standard 4: Families and Communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing: https:// www.health.vic.gov.au/childsafestandards

- Supporting Family-School-Community partnerships for Learning: https://www. education.gov.au/supporting-family-school-community-partnerships-learning

Level 5-6 Resource

Introductory activities

Aims

Activities will assist students to learn simple rules and agreements they need to support a safe and friendly learning environment in their class.

Informed by the evidence base

Building a shared set of expectations and protective routines can contribute to the social wellbeing of the class. Healthy groups develop common understandings about how to work well with each other. Involving students in naming the actions they can take to help create a safe and happy class can help build a shared sense of responsibility for the social wellbeing of the class. A strong sense of connectedness or belonging to school is a protective factor for children and young people.[1, 2] Students also benefit from activities that help them to develop friendships, as forming and maintaining positive relationships with peers can be one of the most challenging aspects of school life.[3]

Learning Intentions

- Students will create or revisit classroom agreements needed to support a safe and friendly learning environment in their class.
- Students will identify shared expectations for effective teamwork during group tasks.

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Coaching point

Developing a safe social space. Introductory activities can be used to build a shared understanding of rules and expectations. Healthy groups develop common understandings about how to work well with each other. Invite students to suggest what will help everyone to feel safe and welcome in the classroom. Co-create class agreements that help to build a sense of respect and responsibility for the social wellbeing of everyone. Your classroom or school may already have rules like this in place as part of their approach to school-wide positive behaviour. Adapt the activity to suit your setting.

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Method

1. Ask students to imagine that there are no rules in the classroom, and everybody can do whatever they want whenever they want. What might happen? Examples of responses include 'People would talk at the same time', 'People could offend, discourage, or hurt each other', or 'People might not get enough work done.'

2. Ask students to identify the agreements that might be needed to make sure that everyone feels safe, respected and included in the classroom and during group tasks.

3. As they make suggestions, ask them to explain how it might work to make the class a friendly and supportive place for everyone.

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Coaching point
Welcoming routines. Simple and joyful welcoming routines can help students to feel connected to the class. Students benefit from feeling that not only their teacher but also their peers are pleased to see them.

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4. Write down students' suggestions. Work to make positive statements about what to do, rather than negative statements about what not to do.

Examples of positive statements	Examples of negative statements
Respect other students.	Do not be mean or violent.
Encourage others to join in.	Do not exclude or distract others.
Take it in turns to be the leader in group tasks.	Don't boss people around.
Take turns to talk in group tasks.	Don't talk over others.
Take it in turns to be the scribe.	Don't be lazy in group work.
Include all members in group tasks.	Don't be choosy about who you work with.
Respect and aim to understand difference of opinion.	Don't put other people down.

5. Guide students to reach a consensus about which agreements should be put in place for their class. For example, they may suggest rules like be friendly, show respect, include others and work hard.

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Coaching point

Supporting participation in group tasks. Some students respond well to having allocated roles during group tasks. One useful model uses the acronym LEARN. If there are only 3 or 4 students in the group, some members can fulfil more than one function.

- **Lead**. This person helps the group to stay on task.

- **Encourage**. This person helps everyone to join in.

- **Amplify**. This person reports back for the group.

- **Record**. This person writes things down for the group.

- **Notice**. This person notices if the group needs help.

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6. **Record the class agreements.** Work with students to create a display which shows the agreements.

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Coaching point

Clear agreements. Keep the final list simple and concise. Having too many rules or agreements can cause confusion. Link these expectations to those created as part of the school's approach to promoting positive behaviour and respectful relations. Display the agreements on the classroom wall, noticeboard or shared digital space. It will be important to reconnect with class agreements prior to delivery of more sensitive topics across the year. For more suggestions about strategies to support students to let you know when they are feeling distressed, see the guidance on content advice provided in the introduction to this resource.

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Emotional literacy

Aims

Activities within this topic area will assist students to:

- explain the influence of emotions on behaviour, learning and relationships
- analyse factors that influence their ability to regulate emotions.

Informed by the evidence base

Research shows that students who participate in rigorously designed and well-taught Social and Emotional Learning programs (SELs) demonstrate improved mental and social health, have improved relationships with peers, are less likely to engage in risky and disruptive behaviour, show improved academic outcomes and have improved capacity for help-seeking. [6, 7, 10, 11] Participation in SELs also reduces rates of sexual harassment and homophobic bullying and lead to reduced rates of bullying among LGBTIQ+ students, students from marginalised ethnic and migrant backgrounds, and students with disability. [12–14] Building a large vocabulary for emotions helps to increase emotional literacy, promote self-awareness and encourage empathy for others.

A meta-analysis of 82 research trials conducted in a range of national contexts found lasting positive effects of social and emotional learning programs when students were followed up between one to 3 years post intervention regardless of students' race, socio-economic background or school location.[11] SELs have also been found to make a significant contribution in students returning to school after exposure to emergencies, disasters or armed conflict. Those receiving a substantial social and emotional learning program showed improved psychological wellbeing and lower rates of depression, anxiety and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) than students in control schools.[15] The collaborative learning activities within these programs help students to build their social skills.[8]

A focus on developing emotional literacy provides an important foundation within social and emotional learning programs. Building a large vocabulary for emotions helps to increase emotional literacy, promote self-awareness and encourage empathy for others. Developing empathy has been found to be an effective tool in reducing bullying.[9] A study conducted with children who had been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder found that the process of matching images of facial expressions showing key emotions to pictures of situations that might elicit such an emotion led to improved understanding of their own and others' emotions, along with improved capacity to match their own emotions to certain situations.[16]

Activity 1: What do emotions look like?

Learning intentions

- Students will demonstrate their understanding of emotions through a focus on the way they are embodied.
- Students will describe ways people may interpret the emotional responses of others through observation of their body language, visual cues or facial expressions.

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Coaching point

Sharing learning intentions. Explicitly sharing the learning intentions will help you and students to intentionally practise these skills during an activity and review the effectiveness of the lesson at its conclusion. This can assist students to understand the purpose behind the learning activities, and how this learning can contribute to their life.

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Equipment

- Room to move
- 'What am I feeling?' cards

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Coaching point

Developing emotional literacy. Students will have different capabilities and competencies in emotional literacy. This is sometimes due to neurodiversity or to variations in vocabulary development, difficulty with empathising or picking up on the bodily cues of others, or expressing emotions if English is an additional language. It is important to point out that not only do people find it hard to think of words for some emotions, but they also find it hard to figure out what others are feeling and may not be able to guess correctly. Reassure students who find it difficult to identify emotions that it's okay to get confused and provide positive feedback on participation. Suggest one strategy might be to ask people how they feel and check your guess with them.

Use teachable moments to make regular use of language for emotions, and to show the ways people can empathise with others (for example, I'm guessing from that frown that you are feeling a bit frustrated', 'That big smile tells me you might be excited about trying this', or 'The sound of that big sigh has me guessing you are really disappointed.') Provide visual cues to help students understand and remember the words for emotions. Display the images for reference, along with the matching word for the emotion. Visual cues can be particularly useful to support the engagement of diverse learners. As part of your use of interactive read-aloud strategies, continue to build emotional literacy when reading class texts or engaging with other visual material by asking students to guess and name emotions that characters might be experiencing. For guidance on using this strategy, refer to the Department of Education **Literacy Teaching Toolkit** https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/discipline/english/literacy/speakinglistening/Pages/examplereadalouds.aspx.

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Method

1. Explain that in this activity students will test their skills in reading body language and in expressing emotions through the body. Ask, 'When I use the word "emotions" what am I talking about?' Collect some examples of emotions from student responses. If students do not have a good grasp of basic 'emotions' vocabulary, it may be a good idea to revisit the Level 3–4 lesson materials in Topic 1: Emotional literacy.

2. Explain that the first activity will be a guessing game where one person acts or shows the body language of a given emotion and their partner guesses what the emotion is. The emotions will be provided on a card or by other mode selected by the teacher, like a whispered instruction.

3. Model an example yourself and ask students, 'What emotion might I be feeling when I look like this?' For example, demonstrate foot tapping, looking at your watch, drumming your fingers or sighing. Students might guess emotions like 'impatient' or 'annoyed'.

4. Place students into pairs or small groups. Give each student a 'What am I feeling?' card, which they must not reveal to their partner or fellow players. Students should take turns to act out the body language described on the card. Their partner tries to guess the emotion that matches the body language described. They should award close guesses, or the use of a synonym.

5. After the game, ask, 'Why it is important to be able to "read" another person's body language and imagine how they might be feeling?' Collect some suggestions. Emphasise the importance of empathy as a key skill for positive relationships. Write the word 'empathy' on the board and build a good understanding of this term.

> **Empathy:** being able to imagine or understand how others might be feeling in response to particular experiences.

6. Ask pairs or small groups to think up some situations where it might be particularly important to be able to notice how others may be feeling. Collect examples as students report back.

7. Point out that reading body language is not like reading a book. Sometimes we get the meaning wrong, just as some of us may have during the game. This is because not everyone shows their feelings in the same way, and not everyone finds it easy to recognise the emotional responses of others. Some differences may be cultural, and some may be individual. Emphasise that this is why we also need to be able to tell people how we feel and ask people how they are feeling. These are 2 important skills for friendship and family relationships.

8. Ask students to discuss in their pairs and then report back, 'What can sometimes make it harder to tell people how we feel? Why do we sometimes try to hide our emotions?'

9. Reiterate that being empathetic, or understanding our own and others' emotions and feelings, is an important life skill. We can develop our skills in recognising and understanding our own and others' emotions, and in communicating about them. These are important skills for life.

Review

Conclude by inviting students to review the learning intentions. Ask some volunteers to reflect on whether this activity helped them learn to 'read' other people's emotions through their facial expressions and other body language. Ask for some examples. Ask students to reflect on why it is important have the skill of being able to read the body language and imagine the emotions of others.

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Coaching point:

Modelling the use of inclusive language. Where gender need not be a main identifier, refer to siblings rather than brothers and sisters, refer to students rather than boys and girls, and avoid positioning gender as a binary by introducing your pronouns and checking which pronouns students use for themselves. A binary is something that consists of 2 things or can refer to one of a pair of things. When talking about genders, binary genders are 'man–woman' and 'boy–girl'. Non-binary people might feel like they have a mix of genders, or like they have no gender at all. 'Non-binary' is an umbrella term for gender identities that sit within, outside of, across or between the spectrum of the 'man–woman' and 'boy–girl' binaries. A non-binary person might identify as gender fluid, trans masculine, trans feminine, or they could be agender (without a feeling of having any gender or having neutral feelings about gender).[17]

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WHAT AM I FEELING?

Types of body language and the emotions that could be related

Body language
- Looking away into space
- Yawning
- Sighing

Possible emotion:
Bored

Body language
- Sitting on edge of seat
- Alert
- Eye contact

Possible emotion:
Interested

Body language
- Looking alert
- Standing up straight
- Hands in pockets with thumbs out
- Direct eye contact

Possible emotion:
Confident

Body language
- Big sigh
- Dropping shoulders
- Smile

Possible emotion:
Relieved

Body language
- Arms crossed
- Drawing back
- Looking sideways
- Touching or rubbing nose

Possible emotion:
Suspicious

Body language
- Holding breath tight
- Clenching lips and hands
- Scrunching eyes
- Scowling

Possible emotion:
Angry

Body language
- Smiling
- Open gestures
- Relaxed body
- Eye contact

Possible emotion:
Pleased

Body language
- Clearing throat
- Biting lip
- Fidgeting
- Wringing hands

Possible emotion:
Nervous

Body language
- Short breaths
- Clenched fist
- Rubbing hand through hair
- Big sigh

Possible emotion:
Frustrated

Body language
- Smiling
- Jumping up and down
- Clapping hands

Possible emotion:
Delighted

Body language
- Clenching fists
- Looking straight ahead
- Drawing a big breath

Possible emotion:
Determined

Body language
- Big gasp of breath
- Jaw drops open
- Hand moves over mouth

Possible emotion:
Horrified

Activity 2: Recognising positive, negative and 'mixed' emotions

Learning intentions

- Students will review a vocabulary that can be used to describe emotions.
- Students will identify events or situations that can lead to particular emotional responses.
- Students will investigate the notion of mixed emotions or emotional complexity.

Equipment

- 'Emotions' list
- 'Emotions' grid
- Pens, pencils, workbooks and paper or digital devices

Method

1. **Introduce the lesson with the following information:**

   In any day we can experience multiple and complex emotions. Emotions are triggered by events or situations and by what we think about what is happening. We may experience strong or mild emotions, and a mix of positive and negative, or comfortable and uncomfortable, emotions. We are going to think and talk about these emotional highs and lows with a focus on understanding ourselves and others better. We are going to use many emotions words, because the more words we have for describing emotions, the better we can communicate our feelings and understand the feelings of others.

   ....

   Coaching point:
   Supporting neurodiverse students to connect emotions to scenarios and to lived experience.
   Questions that support people to connect scenarios to their own experiences can be more meaningful for diverse learners. Research studies with primary school children have shown that neurodiverse students can be supported to recognise emotions through developing a language for emotions and through matching words to visual cues. This can help them to successfully progress to matching emotions to particular situations provided in scenarios, and to be able to identify situations that made them feel particular emotions.[16]

   ....

2. Write the headings 'Positive/comfortable emotions' on one side of the board and 'Negative/uncomfortable emotions' on the other. Ask the class to brainstorm some examples of positive and negative emotions.

3. Connecting back to the body language addressed in the previous learning activity, ask:

   - 'What might positive emotions look like when we see them in others? Sound like? Feel like?' Invite some students to demonstrate or provide visual examples, like photographs, emojis and cartoons.

   - 'What might some negative emotions look like? Sound like? Feel like?' Invite some students to demonstrate or provide visual examples, like photographs, emojis or cartoons.

4. Explain, 'There are times when we can feel mixed emotions, or both positive and negative emotions at the same time. For example, you might be excited about competing in the cross-country finals, but also nervous about whether you will do well.' Invite students to suggest other situations where people may experience mixed emotions.

5. Distribute the 'emotions' list and ask students to circle which they think are 'comfortable' emotions and to put a mark next to those that are 'uncomfortable'. Note that sometimes people may call these 'positive' and 'negative' emotions. Compare lists or compare during class feedback.

6. Share or display the examples of comfortable, mixed, and uncomfortable emotions in the 'Emotions' grid and refer students to the 'Emotions' list.

7. Ask students to work with a partner or trio to provide additional examples of when:

   - someone could experience positive emotions
   - someone could experience negative emotions
   - someone could experience mixed emotions, both positive and negative emotions at once.

8. Ask each group to share one of their examples with the class, and support students to report back by using visual cues like pictures, emojis, role-modelling poses and facial expressions, as this can assist those who are developing their understanding of these words, as well as those who find it hard to interpret visual cues for emotions.

Review

Review the learning intentions by asking students what they have learnt in this activity. Ask if anyone learnt any new 'emotions' words today. Ask for some examples. Ask a volunteer to summarise what is meant by the concept of 'mixed emotions'.

'Emotions' grid

Comfortable Emotions	Mixed Emotions	Uncomfortable Emotions
When in this situation - Succeeding at something after a big effort	**When in this situation -** Moving to a new school	**When in this situation -** Friends leave you out of an activity
You might feel these comfortable emotions - proud, happy, inspired, thrilled	**You might feel these mixed emotions -** nervous, excited, anxious	**You might feel these uncomfortable emotions -** hurt, jealous, ignored

'Emotions' list

hurt	amazed	safe	ignored
loved	hopeful	lonely	uncomfortable
angry	miserable	afraid	inspired
happy	embarrassed	confused	serene
scared	proud	shy	betrayed
excited	tense	strong	disappointed
sad	bored	anxious	determined
surprised	thankful	calm	rejected
jealous	stupid	frustrated	nervous
joyful	thrilled	furious	curious
ashamed	worried	warm	suspicious
unloved	upset	guilty	relieved
distressed	appalled	humiliated	devastated
agitated	excluded	despairing	delighted
comfortable	stunned	interested	enthusiastic
terrified	ecstatic	eager	keen
confounded	cheerful	peaceful	amused
hopeful	satisfied	relaxed	bewildered

Activity 3: Intense emotions

Learning intentions

- Students will describe ways emotions can vary in intensity, from mild to strong.
- Students will identify situations and events (triggers) that can lead to more intense emotions, including in situations where people experience discrimination, exclusion or negative treatment by peers.

Equipment

- Room to move
- 'Emotional Intensity' word list
- Pens, pencils, workbooks and paper or digital devices

Method

Part A: Engaging with language to describe emotional intensity

1. Explain to students that the next activity will focus on understanding intense, stronger, or more deeply felt emotions.

> It is important to have a rich language to help us understand and talk about emotional intensity. Understanding our emotions can help us to cope and to assist others to cope.
>
> Words like 'glad', 'sad' or 'mad' aren't enough to describe how intensely we feel. We may need words like 'thrilled' or 'delighted' to share that we are very happy, or words like 'disappointed' or 'hurt' to describe how sad we feel, or words like 'frustrated' or 'furious' to describe the kind of anger we feel.

2. Explain that in the following game, you will call out a word for an upsetting emotion. Students will form a statue to show that emotion. Then you will 'wind up' the intensity of that emotion, calling out a word for a more intense or stronger form of that emotion. In response, students will need to 'wind up' the intensity of their pose.

3. Demonstrate what you mean, for example, show the difference between 'angry' and 'furious'.

4. Ask students to find a space near their table or elsewhere in the room. Use a circle if space allows. Some students may prefer to work in pairs, facing each other in mirror position, aiming to make matching statues as if seen in a mirror. Use some of the word combinations from the 'emotional intensity' word list below to play the Statues Game.

> **Words for increases in emotional intensity**
>
> - From 'hurt' to 'devastated'
> - From 'shocked' to 'appalled'
> - From 'embarrassed' to 'humiliated'
> - From 'agitated' to 'anxious'
> - From 'excluded' to 'rejected'
> - From 'afraid' to 'terrified'
> - From 'disappointed' to 'despairing'
> - From 'angry' to 'furious'

5. Arrange for half the class to look at the other half while you replay some of the options. Then swap, so the observers can have a turn to be observed. Invite comments from students about what they notice in the shifts of bodily expression.

6. Ask students to work in pairs or small groups. Assign each group one of the emotional intensity examples. Ask them to provide some examples of the types of events that could lead to the different levels of emotional intensity.

....

Coaching point:

People react differently. Point out that people are different. This means that while one person may have a strong reaction to a certain experience, someone else may have a milder reaction. Part of being a supportive friend is learning to notice how other people respond. Sometimes you can tell by watching them and 'reading' their body language. However, sometimes you need to ask people to find out how they feel. Sometimes you need to tell other people how you feel, so they can understand when you are experiencing strong emotions. Sometimes having strong emotions is a sign to us that we need some help, or that we need to talk to someone about a problem we are experiencing.

....

Part B: Considering the impact of exclusion

1. Ask the groups to consider the following scenario. As you read each part, get the groups to agree on which words best describe the emotions that Taj might be experiencing. Encourage students to see that a person can experience more than one emotion at the same time.

2. Tell students, 'When Taj arrives at school in the morning, no one in the class greets or speaks to them.' Pause and ask groups to agree on some 'emotions' words that describe how Taj might feel.

3. Continue, 'No one speaks to Taj for the rest of the day.' Pause again. Ask the groups to reconsider how Taj might feel at the end of the day. Students may choose to keep the some of the original 'emotions' words, or change them.

4. Continue, 'No one speaks to Taj for the rest of the week.' Pause, and allow the groups to decide on their final word – how might Taj feel at this point?

5. Ask each group to share the words they selected for each stage. It is expected that different groups might choose different emotions and intensities. Use this to emphasise that people can have different emotional responses to the same situation.

6. Ask students to discuss why the 'emotions' words they picked may have changed across the 3 stages of the scenario. This is a good opportunity to talk about how emotions can build up or intensify over time.

7. Students will have described Taj as feeling very uncomfortable or feeling negative emotions. Ask them to explain why Taj's experiences would be distressing. Students should be able to identify that Taj has been left out or excluded, and this can be hurtful and prompt feelings of loneliness and rejection.

8. Ask students to think about why this sort of behaviour from others can make us feel distressed. You may also like to talk with students about how classmates could help to prevent or rectify this situation.

....

Coaching point:
Modifying or adding scenarios. When modifying or creating scenarios to align with student needs and context, ensure that the narrative does not inadvertently stigmatise, demonise or pathologise particular groups, or normalise or glamorise harmful behaviour.

Carefully consider the ways you select the 'who', 'where', 'when' and 'what' of the scenario. Consider the implicit messages that may be transmitted via choice of character names or pronouns (the 'who'). Ensure contextual relevance via the 'when' and 'where' of the

scenario. Ensure relevance to the learning intentions in your choice of the 'what', which is typically the predicament, or the challenge or opportunity confronted by the character or characters. Consider the timeliness or suitability of a scenario. (For example, avoid naming a character after a student in the class, or describing a fictional situation that mirrors an actual incident too closely.)

....

Review

Review the learning intentions by asking students what they have learnt in this activity. Ask if anyone learnt any new 'emotions' words. Ask for some examples. Invite volunteers to summarise the concept of 'emotional intensity'.

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Coaching point:
A focus on empathy. This activity helps to build empathy as students consider how others may be affected by negative peer treatment. This activity also advances capabilities to use a rich language to describe and understand more intensely felt emotions.

You may like to connect this lesson with materials or school policies relating to prevention of bullying and remind students of the importance of help-seeking. The lessons in Topic 4: Problem-solving, Topic 6: Help-seeking and Topic 8: Positive gender relations of this resource address in more detail how students can deal with challenging or upsetting situations.

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Activity 4: A roller-coaster of emotions

Learning intention

Students will describe events or experiences that might trigger different levels of emotional intensity across a period of time.

Equipment

- 'Emotional intensity' word list
- Pens, pencils, workbooks and paper or digital devices

Method

1. Refer to the previous activities in this topic by reminding students that we feel comfortable and uncomfortable emotions, which are sometimes called positive and negative emotions. We can also experience mixed emotions, or more than one emotion at the same time. We may feel some emotions more or less intensely.

2. Explain that sometimes we describe these levels of intensity as emotional 'highs' or 'lows'. In any single day someone might experience changing emotions and changing intensity of emotions.

3. As an example use 'A day of ups and downs', provided in the next column. Alternatively, you can create your own example, from a text the class is reading, a picture book or a multimedia text. When engaging with the text, ask students to listen for the way certain events and situations trigger shifts between positive and negative emotions, as well as instances of greater intensity in 'highs' and 'lows'.

A day of ups and downs

The day did not start very well. When I climbed out of bed, I felt something slimy ooze between my toes – a half-chewed biscuit dropped by our baby. Erk!

Things got better in the kitchen. Yummy leftovers for breakfast!

I rushed around to get ready early for school, so I'd have time to play basketball with my friends before the bell. But I had to wait ages until everyone else in the family was ready. Toddler tantrums can really slow things down! I didn't get to school until 3 minutes to 9! People were already on their way into class.

When I got in, I saw that my friend had saved me a seat. Phew!

Then I found out we were working on our assignments, and I had left mine at home. Yikes!

When the recess bell rang, my friend said we should play basketball. As they picked teams I waited and waited. We had odd numbers, and I was the last one chosen.

Looked like this would be a really bad day.

But when I sat down on the bench, my friends from the other class called me over and asked me to join in their downball game. We had the best time.

4. Explain that sometimes with the emotional ups and downs it can feel like we are on a roller-coaster. Present a 'roller-coaster' diagram to show one way to 'map' the high and low points of the day described in the story. Work with the class to find emotions that might have been felt in response to the different events.

5. Refer students to the 'emotional intensity' word list to show how different words can be used to show differing levels of emotional intensity.

6. Explain to students that they are going to create their own story showing a 'roller-coaster' day. The story should contain at least 6 emotions, including some from the 'emotional intensity' word list. There should be at least one 'high', one 'low' and one 'in-between' emotion.

7. Organise for students to work in pairs, choose their topic, and make a list of the highs, lows, and in-betweens that they will put on their roller-coaster. They should then draw their roller-coaster, name the events associated with the various key points, and identify the emotions felt at those points. Some students may wish to use pictures or images to show the different emotions. Once the roller-coaster has been mapped, students could work individually to write up the storyline, or collectively as preferred. Suggest the following topics:

   - A day in the life of a new Prep or Foundation student

   - A day in the life of a new student joining their class

   - The evening experience of the first-time babysitter

   - The sporting match, outing or event that did not go to plan

   - An experience of their own choosing

8. Invite some students to share their work with the class. Discuss the way certain experiences may trigger more intense emotions. Refer students to the concept of 'empathy' and the importance of being able to imagine how others might feel, and how they themselves might react to various experiences.

Review

Review the learning intentions by asking students to reflect on what they have learnt about emotional intensity.

Reflecting on everyday practise

- What patterns did you notice in the emotional expression and regulation of students in your class across the last week?

- How do students' emotional experiences appear to impact on their learning in the classroom?

Optional extension activities for English

- Engage students in mapping the emotional life of one of the key characters in a book they are reading or a film they are studying.

- Ask students to prepare a report on a book they have read that identifies how the author has helped the readers to understand an emotional experience. What techniques did the author use to describe the emotions of the characters?

Talking further

Ask students to create a roller-coaster that reflects their previous day. Encourage them to share their findings with a parent or carer.

'Emotional instensity' list

▶▶ Emotions becoming more intense ▶▶			
Apprehensive	Nervous	Fearful	Terrified
Surprised	Amazed	Astounded	Stunned
Dislike	Horror	Disgust	Loathing
Irritated	Annoyed	Angry	Enraged
Pleased	Happy	Thrilled	Ecstatic
Interested	Keen	Eager	Enthusiastic
Unhappy	Sad	Miserable	Despairing
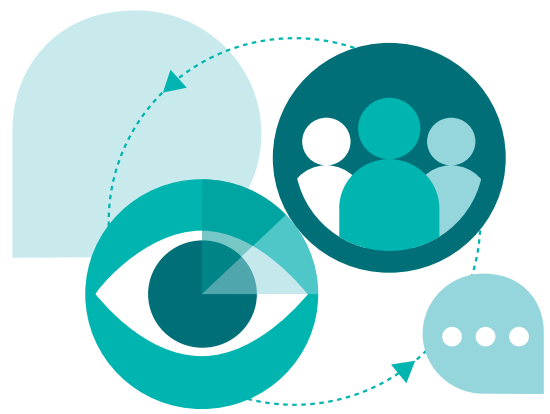
Topic 02 Personal and cultural strengths

Aims

Activities within this topic area will assist students to:

- describe the range and influence of personal and cultural qualities and strengths
- monitor their awareness of the various ways they call on their personal and cultural strengths
- assess the situations where it may be useful to draw on particular strengths to deal with challenging situations.

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this topic contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. See the Introduction page 15 to this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:

Provide content advice prior to an activity

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

Informed by the evidence base

Social and emotional learning programs that use strengths-based approaches work to enhance student wellbeing, positive behaviour and academic achievement.[18–20] Research in the field of positive psychology emphasises the importance of identifying and using individual strengths. Social and emotional learning programs that use strengths-based approaches promote student wellbeing, positive behaviour and academic achievement. [18–20] Research with neurodiverse adults found that the character strengths they most commonly acknowledged and valued in themselves included honesty, appreciation of beauty and excellence, love of learning, fairness and kindness. Those who identified themselves as having the character strengths of gratitude, hope and honesty were more likely to report higher levels of life satisfaction. [21] An intervention using a focus on character strengths with neurodiverse students in the early years of primary school led to improvement in executive functioning and friendship skills.[22] Research in the area of culturally inclusive pedagogy demonstrates the importance of approaches that are informed and enriched by the cultural heritages and strengths of the communities represented in the school.

Children raised within collectivist cultures may have been provided with more opportunities to value interdependence, responsibility and cooperation, while those raised within individualistic cultures may have been encouraged to value personhood, rights, initiative and independence. Teachers should seek ways to recognise and embrace the strengths across both types of traditions.[23]

Strategies to advance cultural inclusion include using examples and case studies that illustrate the richness and contribution of various cultural heritages. This could include celebrating special days and festivals of different religions and cultures that are represented in the school, as well as choosing stories that are set in different lands and cultures.

Activity 1: Respect for rights, culture and heritage

Learning intentions

- Students will learn about ways to understand respect, rights and responsibility by engaging with the work of Aboriginal authors.

- Students will describe ways that non-Aboriginal Australians can walk together to show respect for Aboriginal people and to learn from their perspectives about how to respect people, culture and Country.

- Students will learn about the United Nations *Universal declaration of human rights* and the *United Nations declaration of the rights of Indigenous peoples*.

- Students will share their vision for a just and respectful school where human rights are respected.

Equipment

- *We are Australians* by Duncan Smith OAM and Nicole Godwin, and illustrated by Jandamarra Cadd, or a thematically suitable alternative text created by Aboriginal author(s) and artist(s)

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Coaching point:

Learning from Aboriginal perspectives. Books and resources authored by Aboriginal authors and artists provide opportunities for children to learn from Aboriginal perspectives. Research shows that teachers can be anxious about addressing the 'Learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures' **cross-curriculum priority** https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/overview/cross-curriculum-priorities, and can worry about how to introduce appropriate materials in the classroom. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership discussion paper *Indigenous cultural competency in the Australian teaching workforce* (2020) found that many teachers were anxious about being culturally insensitive as a result of their lack of knowledge. [24] However, there are many resources available for teachers that guide the design of learning informed by Aboriginal perspectives. Stories by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors and artists are among these resources, as are the contributions from Aboriginal academics, researchers, activists and psychologists.

In Victoria, teachers are required to follow protocols when teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. The **Koorie Cross-Curricular Protocols** https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/multicultural/Pages/koorieculture.aspx provide guidelines about how to protect the integrity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural expressions. They enable all Victorian teachers and students to engage respectfully and feel connected to this identity. Further advice is also available from the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI), who have produced the **Protocols for Koorie education in Victorian primary and secondary schools** https://www.vaeai.org.au/wp-content/uploads/delightful-downloads/2020/01/Protocols-for-Koorie-Education-in-Victorian-Primary-and-Secondary-Schools-2019.pdf. This guidance includes an emphasis on the importance of all students learning about the natural sovereignty that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples held across Australia prior to invasion, colonisation and Federation, which they still hold, the major events that have affected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities since colonisation, and the richness of the current living cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

VAEAI provides a range of downloadable **curriculum and education resources, policies, strategies and other publications** https://www.vaeai.org.au/resources/. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies **guide to evaluating and selecting education resources** https://aiatsis.gov.au/education/guide-evaluating-and-selecting-education-resources supports non-Aboriginal educators to make conscious and critical decisions when selecting teaching and learning.

....

Method

1. To model recognition and respect, introduce the the authors and illustrators of the book *We are Australians*. Tell students that this book was written by Aboriginal author Duncan Smith OAM from Wiradjuri Country and co-author Nicole Godwin, and illustrated by Aboriginal artist Jandamarra Cadd, a Yorta Yorta and Dja Dja Wurrung descendent.

2. Explain that the people of the Wiradjuri Country are known as 'people of three rivers', being the Wambool (Macquarie River), Kalari (Lachlan River) and Murrumbidjeri (Murrumbidgee River), which border their lands in central New South Wales.

3. Inform them that Yorta Yorta Country lies on both sides of the Murray River, roughly from Cohuna to Albury–Wodonga. It includes towns in Victoria called Echuca, Shepparton, Benalla, Corowa and Wangaratta. Dja Dja Wurrung Country is in the north-central region of Victoria. It extends from the upper catchments of the Bulutjal Yaluk (Loddon River) and Golipan (Coliban River) to Lalgambook (Mount Franklin) and the towns called Creswick and Daylesford in the south-east, to the Yaluk (Campaspe River) and the towns of Kyneton, Redesdale and Rochester in the east, to Yung Balug Djandak (Boort Lakes) in the north and Lake Buloke, Donald in the north-west, with the Avon Richardson River, Navarre Hill and Mount Avoca marking the south-west boundary.

4. Read *We are Australians* to the class. Invite them to respond using questions like:

   - What messages do you get from looking at the artworks in this book? What do you think the artist might be hoping readers will think about?

   - What do you think the key messages in the written text are?

   - How did the artworks and text work together to reach the reader?

Duncan Smith OAM was born on Wiradjuri Country. He spent his younger years learning his culture and painting with his Elders and members of his family. Elders in Duncan's community took him hunting and gathering, and taught him cultural dances. The people of the Wiradjuri Country are known as 'people of three rivers', being the Wambool (Macquarie River), Kalari (Lachlan River) and Murrumbidjeri (Murrumbidgee River), which border their lands in central New South Wales.

Jandamarra Cadd is an artist who is a Yorta Yorta and Dja Dja Warung descendent. Yorta Yorta Country lies on both sides of the Murray River, roughly from Cohuna to Albury–Wodonga. It includes towns in Victoria called Echuca, Shepparton, Benalla, Corowa and Wangaratta. Dja Dja Wurrung Country is in the north-central region of Victoria and stretches from towns called Creswick and Daylesford in the south-east, to Kyneton, Redesdale and Rochester in the east, Lake Buloke and Donald in the north-west, and Mount Avoca in the south-west.

Nicole Godwin is a multi-award-winning author who shines a light on environmental, animal rights and social justice issues through captivating picture books.

5. To deepen the focus on rights, ask students what they think is meant by the term 'rights' in the line 'As citizens of Australia, we have rights.' Invite them to pair–share to think of some examples of what they believe to be human rights before sharing ideas with the class.

6. Introduce some information about the United Nations *Universal declaration of human rights*.

The United Nations is an organisation that was formed in 1945, after World War II. Its purpose was to help countries cooperate with each other to make the world peaceful and a better place for everyone. Nearly every country in the world is a member.

A short animated video produced by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation provides a brief introduction to the **United Nations and human rights** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SaAmfiJtV4I

One early action of the United Nations was to make something called the *Universal declaration of human right*s in 1948, which describes the human rights that all people should have to live a life of dignity, equality and mutual respect.

In the years after making this declaration, they found the need to make other statements, declarations and conventions, to make it clear that people who were least likely to get their human rights should not be discriminated against. They made the following statements, declarations and conventions:

- that women should have equal rights with men and be free from discrimination (1979)

- that children should have their rights and opinions recognised and get the support they need because they are children (1990)

- that people with disability should have equal rights and the support they need to participate in society (2006)

- that Indigenous people of the world should have their rights protected and be free to practise their culture and own their land (2007). This declaration sets minimum standards for their survival, dignity and wellbeing. It includes the rights to self-determination, participation in decision-making, respect for and protection of culture, and equality and freedom from discrimination
- that LGBTIQA+ people should have equal rights to protection from discrimination and violence (2015).

What are human rights?

According to the United Nations *Universal declaration of human rights*, human rights are the rights of all human beings regardless of their gender, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, ability, age or any other status. They are based on the values of dignity, equality and respect. This means that everyone should be treated fairly, and be free to make important and genuine choices in their lives. These human rights include the right to freedom of opinion and expression, freedom from slavery, torture and discrimination and the right to work and to education. There are many more. In summary, the declaration says that people have the right to:

- safety and protection, including protection from being harmed or exploited by others
- health, including access medical care and safe and healthy food and water
- education, including access to school, mass media and freedom from censorship
- protection from discrimination and access to legal help
- political views, including the right to vote
- be who they are, including freedom of religion and to express their culture and beliefs.

UNICEF India has created a 2-minute animated video that provides an **introduction to child rights** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCYLdtug8sk.

Amnesty International has provided an accessible 3-minute video that **explains human rights** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6e8m8L9BFa4.

7. Introduce the idea of being a 'human rights defender'. A human rights defender is another way of describing a person who is an upstander (someone who stands up for the rights of others). They may do this individually or with others. They may focus on a defending a particular right, or on lots of rights.

8. Invite students to identify some of the actions they have heard people take as human rights defenders. Examples of collective action could include protests, marches and petitions. Smaller group or individual actions could include speaking out against bullying and harassment, and reporting acts of discrimination or violence to teachers or other authorities. Encourage students to also note the actions taken in their school to promote or defend human rights and protect people from discrimination.

9. In this 2-minute video, primary school children from Canada speak about **how they understand human rights, and which rights are most important to them** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1HUL2eeTIEY.

10. To consider the effect of collective actions to 'walk forward together', share some examples of how song, dance and other art forms can be used to encourage people to 'walk together', just like the artwork and text in the book *We are Australians*. The examples below show Australian children and adults including Aboriginal languages as they sing 'I am Australian' together.

Singing with Aboriginal Australians

During isolation, **children from across Australia joined with students at Broome Primary School to sing 'I am Australian'** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JgJ309VIV2U with assistance from the Mabu Yawuru ngan-ga language team and Yawuru Traditional Owners of Broome, who provided the translation and assisted the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) to make the video.

An uplifting version of 'I am Australian' was sung with **lyrics in Pitjantjatjara** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTNgzcUnLas and filmed on Arente Country at Simpsons Gap in central Australia.

The ABC created a collective experience of **people of all ages singing 'I am Australian'** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xh9DusRmM-0 as part of its 90-year celebration.

International inspiration

Masaka Kids Africana is a charity that works with orphans in Uganda. There are more orphans in Uganda than anywhere else in the world — over 2.4 million children — due to the AIDS epidemic, extreme poverty and decades of civil conflict. As well as giving children safe shelter, food, clothing, education and medical care, they use dance and song to build strength and hope for the future.

Travel internationally, and take energy and inspiration from orphans in Uganda as they sing and dance the message **'Never quit.'** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAV-j_XjHWs

Watch as they sing and dance about the importance of friendship in their performance of **'I look to you.'**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRmALdMJxoU

Links to child-friendly versions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

UNICEF has provided a child-friendly version of the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child.

Save the Children has provided a **one-page child-friendly summary** https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/content/dam/gb/reports/humanitarian/uncrc_child-friendly_2022.pdf of the *Convention on the rights of the child*.

The Australian Human Rights Commission has provided a poster of the

12 key children's rights https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/AHRC.2030.The%20Big%20Banter%20A3%20poster%20-%20web%20version.pdf.

11. Provide time for students to make their own response to the book *We are Australians*. They could select a quote from the text, including one from the list below. Encourage them to create or co-create their response using a medium of their choice. Responses could be in the form of presentations, artworks, posters, speeches, letters, dances, songs or multimedia. Encourage students to keep an audience in mind who they would like to encourage or enable to become human rights defenders.

12. Organise a 'festival of sharing', or a way for students to share their works or research with each other and with the wider community.

The following are suggested prompts to guide a response to the book *We are Australians*, co-authored by Duncan Smith OAM and Nicole Godwin, and illustrated by Jandamarra Cadd.

- ***'It is up to us to be part of the present and to act for the future. To know our history. To connect with the people who have lived here for thousands of generations. To acknowledge on whose land we walk.'***
  - *Ten things I/we want governments to do to make the nation a just and fair place.*
  - *How Australians can 'walk together' to make a just future for the nation.*
  - *My/our 'sorry' letter to the Aboriginal peoples of Australia.*
  - *My/our Acknowledgement of Country.*
  - *Some things I/we want all Australians to know about the history of this country.*

The **'Citizens of Australia Timeline'** at the back of the book provides a set of key dates, which can be used as the basis for further research by students as they seek to learn more from history.

- *'As citizens of Australia, we have rights. And we have responsibilities.'*
  - *Letter to everyone – this is what I/we want you to do to respect people's rights.*
  - *What being a human rights defender means to me/us.*
  - *A poster, slogan, song or dance to contribute to a school campaign promoting school values like respect, recognition, rights and responsibilities.*

- *'Our treatment of the land will affect those yet to come.'*
  - *My/our 'sorry' letter and promise to Country, nature or the planet.*
  - *Ten things we can do to look after the environment.*

Review

Revisit the learning intentions. Ask students to describe the activities that have helped them grow their understanding of respect, rights and responsibility, and the ways that Australians can 'walk together' as they respect and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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Coaching point:

Using strengths-based approaches when communicating with parents and carers. It is important to use strengths-based approaches when communicating with parents and carers about issues of concern related to students' participation at school. Aim to make your initial contact one that highlights a positive experience or celebrates the strengths and progress of the child or young person. It can be challenging for parents if they only hear about what is not working, without a broader conversation about the positive aspects of their child's engagement, participation, wellbeing or learning. A focus on the problem, rather than the person, can be particularly challenging for members of marginalised communities, or for those parents or carers whose children don't feel a strong sense of belonging or connection to the school. When working with people from diverse communities, it can be helpful to seek guidance or involvement from cultural leaders, interpreters or other community liaison specialists who are available to provide guidance on communicating with parents and carers, for example, involving a Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO), or using the **Department of Education interpreting and translation services**: https://www2.education. vic.gov.au/pal/interpreting-and-translation-services/policy

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Coaching point:

'Country' is more than 'country'. In Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, the meaning of Country (capitalised) is much more than just the meaning of the English word 'country'.

See this explanation from Professor Michael 'Mick' Dodson AM. He is a Yawuru man, barrister, academic and 2009 Australian of the Year.

When we talk about traditional 'Country'... we mean something beyond the dictionary definition of the word ... We might mean homeland, or tribal or clan area and we might mean more than just a place on the map. For us, Country is a word for all the values, places, resources, stories and cultural obligations associated with that area and its features. It describes the entirety of our ancestral domains. While they may all no longer necessarily be the titleholders to land, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are still connected to the Country of their ancestors and most consider themselves the custodians or caretakers of their land.

Source: https://www.reconciliation.org.au/ reconciliation/acknowledgement-of-country-and-welcome-to-country/

See this explanation from Aunty Laklak Burarrwanga. She is a Datiwuy Elder and a caretaker for the Gumatj clan, and an honorary associate of the Department of Environment and Geography at Macquarie Univers

Country has many layers of meaning. It incorporates people, animals, plants, water and land. But Country is more than just people and things, it is also what connects them to each other and to multiple spiritual and symbolic realms. It relates to laws, custom, movement, song, knowledges, relationships, histories, presents, futures and spirit beings. Country can be talked to, it can be known, it can itself communicate, feel and take action. Country for us is alive with story, law, power and kinship relations that join not only people to each other but link people, ancestors, place, animals, rocks, plants, stories and songs within land and sea. So you see knowledge about Country is important because it's about how and where you fit within the world and how you connect to others and to place.[25]

More information about the importance of Country can be found in **What is Country** https:// www.commonground.org.au/article/what-is-country from Common Ground.

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Extension within the History curriculum

The activities in this lesson may be extended within history lessons as part of the focus on Australia as a nation. In this sub-strand there is a focus on the different experiences and perspectives of Australian democracy and citizenship, including the status and rights of migrants, women, children and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Extension within the English curriculum

Student responses to the text may provide a strong focus for written or speaking and listening projects within English classes. For additional ideas about how to use literature to engage with Aboriginal perspectives, see the Department of Education **English learning sequences** https://learningsequences.educationapps.vic.gov.au/through-whose-eyes-aboriginal-and-european-perspectives-in-literature/.

Extension within the Arts curriculum

Create a performance or artwork that celebrates or communicates Australian citizenship, togetherness, mutual respect, friendship and inclusion.

Engaging in school-wide activities

Active recognition of significant dates in the calendar for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples provides a way for schools to model inclusion, learning, reconciliation and respect. Key dates include:

- 13 February – National Apology Day, the anniversary of the Australian Government's apology for past government policies and practises relating to the Stolen Generations (13 February 2008)

- 26 May – National Sorry Day, commemorating the Stolen Generations

- 27 May to 3 June – National Reconciliation Week. 27 May commemorates the anniversary of the 1967 referendum, when Australians voted to remove clauses from Australia's Constitution that discriminated against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. 3 June commemorates the 1992 Mabo decision when the High Court of Australia recognised native title, which is the recognition that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights over their lands did survive British colonisation

- the first to the second Sunday in July – NAIDOC week, which celebrates the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

- 9 August – International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

- 13 September – the anniversary of the signing of the *United Nations declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples* on Thursday 13 Sept 2007.

The annual VAEAI *Koorie education calendar,* which is available from the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency online **Cultural Hub** https://www.vacca.org/cultural-hub, provides a list of significant dates and links to stories and other educational and cultural resources.

Activity 2: What are personal and cultural strengths?

Learning intention

Students will identify the personal or cultural strengths that people call on to contribute to fair and inclusive treatment of others.

Equipment

- 'Character strengths' list
- Pens, pencils, workbooks and paper or digital devices

Method

1. Explain that in this activity the class will focus on the positive personal qualities we value in ourselves and others.

2. Ask students to draw a rough sketch that shows someone doing something positive for someone else. Once drawn, they should label their sketch.

3. Ask students to share their picture and label with the class. Record the key actions as students present, for example, being responsible, protecting others, helping and looking after the environment.

4. Ask the class to reflect on the examples and ask, 'What qualities does it take for people to perform the actions presented?' You are looking for words like kindness, fairness, courage and caring.

5. Explain that the characters in the pictures have been displaying qualities which we can also call 'personal and cultural strengths'. We can use these strengths to contribute to our world in a positive way or to help us do the right thing. People can use strengths like courage, honesty, fairness or self-control to be respectful of the rights or needs of others, to contribute to their community in a positive way or to do what they think is the right thing.

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Coaching point:

What are personal strengths? Personal or character strengths are different from talents and skills. They are attributes like courage, kindness, humour or persistence, that help you to make the most of your experiences and deal with your challenges. A 'talent' can be described as a natural ability, like being able to sing well. A skill can be described as an expertise or the ability to do something well as a result of learning and practise. Strengths, like talents, can be further developed into skills through learning and practise. Cultural strengths are those we learn from our families and communities. They

are usually handed down across generations. We learn them through seeing how they are used in practise and through guidance from our parents, carers, family members and surrounding community.

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Coaching point:

Unconscious bias. Remain alert to the ways unconscious bias can lead to practises like positioning the dominant group or the stereotype as the norm, thereby signalling that difference from the norm is problematic in some way. Unconscious bias can also lead to victim-blaming in situations of discrimination or violence.

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6. Distribute the 'character strengths' sheet and review it with the class to determine which of the strengths were captured or indicated in the pictures students drew. Check to see if any of the strengths were missed. If so, ask what actions and pictures could be added to represent that strength. Ask some students to add quick sketches to complete the set.

7. Ask, 'Where do we get our ideas about what to value?' Explain that we learn about ways to show strengths from our families, carers, friends, peers and community members. Families pass on cultural strengths to their children that they have learnt as part of being raised in their family or cultural tradition. One way to think about cultural strengths is to think about teachings that are deliberately passed on through customs, traditions, teachings, religions or sayings that are used in a family or community. Sometimes these sayings or teachings are ways of teaching people how to treat others.

8. Provide an example of your own, like the example below:

In my family there was a saying, 'Forgive and forget.' I think this was a way of teaching that it is not good to hold a grudge. There was also a practise that everyone got served an equal share at dinnertime. I think this was a way of teaching fairness. However, I know that in other families, everyone serves themselves from the one plate, and I think this is also a way of teaching fairness, maybe a more effective way, as it relies on everyone noticing if others are getting enough to meet their different needs.

9. Provide time for students to talk in pairs or small groups to identify some practises, sayings, traditions or ways of doing things that they think have been opportunities to learn cultural strengths from their families, carers or communities.

10. Invite students to report back.

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Coaching point:
Creating culturally safe spaces for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Being able to express culture makes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students feel stronger and safer. Providing safe environments for learning has positive, lifelong impacts that cannot be underestimated, and cultural safety is a key dimension of safety for Aboriginal students. Young people who don't feel safe about being themselves and expressing their needs and concerns may be less willing to report abuse.

There are many resources available to support teachers to establish a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. It's recommended that teachers familiarise themselves with the Department of Education's guidance on implementing **Child Safe Standard 1** https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-culturally-safe-environments-guidance Establish a culturally safe environment where the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued, as well as the **Koorie cultural inclusion practise notes** https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/koorie-education/resources. Teachers can establish a safe cultural space with actions like:

- beginning classes by **acknowledging Traditional Owners** https://www.indigenous.gov.au/contact-us/welcome_acknowledgement-country

- supporting Aboriginal students to feel comfortable expressing their culture, including their spiritual and belief systems (being aware that some Aboriginal students may be unsure themselves about what it means to be Aboriginal, especially if they are still learning about their Aboriginal family, culture or Country)

- ensuring Aboriginal support services are available to students

- establishing a relationship with your school's Koorie engagement support officer

addressing any instances of racism within the classroom directly and with appropriate consequences.

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11. Invite some deeper thinking about cultural strengths through questions like the following:

- 'What kinds of strengths do you think people might use to preserve traditional knowledges about how to care for people and for Country?' Possible suggestions include generosity, kindness, courage, wisdom, determination, resourcefulness, commitment and loyalty.

- 'What kinds of strengths do you think might people use to make their society a more equal place for everyone?' Possible suggestions include forgiveness, honesty, courage and generosity.

- 'What kind of strengths do you think might people need to use to look after the environment?' Possible suggestions include generosity, determination, self-control, care for others and wisdom.

- 'What kinds of strengths do you think might people use to take the risk of migrating to another country?' Possible suggestions include courage, creativity, determination, hope and optimism.

Review

Invite students to comment on whether they think the class met the learning intentions of being able to identify some personal or cultural strengths that people call on to contribute to fair and equal treatment of others. Seek some examples or descriptions of what has helped them to become more aware of this. Encourage students to be on the lookout for the strengths displayed by their classmates, family and friends and to compliment them on these strengths.

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Coaching point:
Supporting students to recognise cultural strengths. Some students may find it hard to describe the cultural heritage from which they have benefited. Some have inhabited a dominant culture and do not recognise that they have a culture at all. It can also happen for those who have not yet been provided with sufficient opportunities to share about their family and cultural heritage, for those whose culture and heritage have been portrayed in stereotypical or discriminatory ways within the dominant culture, and for those whose heritage has not been included within the curriculum of the school. This can be experienced as a form of discrimination or exclusion, where to be left out is to be erased, or made invisible, which can signal that a person's existence is not valued. Some further question prompts that might help students to identify cultural or familial strengths include:

- 'What kinds of strengths might people have to call on to survive the effects of invasion, or war?' Possible suggestions include courage, determination, forgiveness, fortitude and resourcefulness

- 'What kinds of strengths might people use to invent new ways to deal with problems like sanitation, food supply and reliable transport?' Possible suggestions include creativity, determination and love of learning.

- 'What kinds of strengths might nations have to draw on to make peace, not war?' Possible suggestions include forgiveness, wisdom, generosity, acceptance of difference and fairness.

'CHARACTER STRENGTHS'*

List

Hope and optimism
Always looks on the bright side of things

Humour
Sees the light side, helps people to laugh

Fairness
Treats people fairly

Determination
Works hard to achieve goals

Honesty
Speaks truthfully

Courage
Does not hide from challenging situations

Loyalty
Stays true through difficult times

Inclusiveness
Treats other people with respect and inclusion, regardless of differences

Trustworthiness
Does what they say they'll do

Compassion
Thinks of how others are feeling

Generosity
Gives their time and possessions freely

Enthusiasm
Has lots of energy and excitement for life

Self-control
Controls desires and sticks to decisions

Creativity
Thinks of many ways to solve challenge

*This is a variation of the 24 character strengths derived from *Character strengths and virtues: a handbook and classification* by Christopher Peterson and Martin E. P. Seligman, Oxford University Press, 2004. This variation has been simplified and does not include all the 24 strengths.

Activity 3: Using our strengths in everyday life

Learning intentions

- Students will identify the kinds of personal or cultural strengths that people may call on to deal with everyday challenges.
- Students will identify ways these strengths might be converted to actions.

Equipment

- 'Character strengths' list from Activity 1
- 'Everyday strengths' scenarios
- Pens, pencils, workbooks and paper or digital devices

Method

1. Select a book or film character, or another person that will be known by all students in the class (possibly one that has been studied in class). Ask students to list the strengths the character or person has shown, linking them to the 'admirable actions' that show the use of these strengths. An example from *Matilda* by Roald Dahl is shown below.

Strengths shown by Matilda in *Matilda* by Roald Dahl	Actions that demonstrate Matilda's strengths
Courage	Matilda stands up to bad treatment of students by Miss Trunchbull.
Loyalty	Matilda sticks by Miss Honey, who is her friend.
Creativity	Matilda thinks of many different ways to address the challenges she and other students face at their school.

2. Explain that in the next small group activity, students will discuss some 'everyday strengths' scenarios and choose the strengths they think would help the character to deal with the challenge they face. They will then aim to explain what those strengths might look like via actions the character could take.

3. Display or distribute the 'everyday strengths' scenarios. Assign different scenarios to different groups to make the report-back richer. Remind students that they can draw on the 'character strengths' list and the work from their previous lesson as they choose strengths to match to the given situation.

4. Arrange for students to work in pairs or small groups and allocate at least 2 scenarios to each pair.

5. Ask students to discuss which strengths they think would best help the character in their scenario as they work at solving their problem. Next, students should choose the actions they think support these strengths to help them to respond to their challenge. They should also prepare to explain why they think these choices would be helpful.

6. Invite each group to report back on one of their scenarios. Ask:

   - 'Which strengths were chosen?'
   - 'Were different strengths selected by different people? What was their rationale?'
   - 'What kinds of actions did you suggest for the character?'

7. Point out to students that the people we admire are influential in our lives. We call them 'role models'. We each have role models in our families and communities. Students will themselves become role models for others. They may already be role models for younger children.

Optional extension activity

Challenge students to keep a 'strengths' journal for a week. Each day they could record a strength they used, when they practised it, whether it helped and in what way. Encourage them to identify the strengths they use regularly, and those they would like to use more often.

Review

Invite students to comment on whether they think the class met the learning intentions. Ask, 'Have you been able to identify some strengths that can be used to deal with everyday challenges? Were you able to choose some actions that could translate those strengths into actions in response to challenges?'

'Everyday strengths' Scenarios

Scenario 1

The homework task is particularly challenging this week.

- Which strengths might students need to use to get the task done?
- These strengths might help them to take actions like …

Scenario 2

Yin won a novel signed by the author in the school writing competition. It's her friend's favourite author, and she knows her friend can't afford to buy the book.

- Which strengths might Yin need to use?
- These strengths might help her to take actions like …

Scenario 3

A student who is new to the school really wants to go on the flying fox and high ropes at camp, but the thought gives them butterflies in their stomach.

- Which strengths might this student need to use to get the task done?
- These strengths might help them to take actions like …

Scenario 4

Abdi notices Bella sitting all alone at lunchtime. Bella seems to get left out a lot just because she uses a wheelchair to get around.

- Which strengths might Abdi need to use to help Bella?
- These strengths might help them to take actions like …

Scenario 5

Carmelina's trans friend Marik is feeling upset because someone has sent a public message to lots of students saying Marik 'likes' someone else in their class.

- Which strengths might Carmelina need to use to help her friend Marik?
- These strengths might help them to take actions like …

Scenario 6

Alinta's younger sibling is playing a really noisy game while she's trying to watch her favourite TV program.

- Which strengths might Alinta need use to deal with this situation?
- These strengths might help her to take actions like …

Scenario 7

Some students in the class have been making racist comments about another class member. Xiang, Raj and Paul can see this is causing a lot of hurt.

- Which strengths could Xiang, Raj and Paul use to deal with this situation?
- These strengths might help them to take actions like …

Scenario 8

Trent is neurodivergent, and sometimes the noise levels in certain activities get to him more than usual, especially when he's not feeling the best. He wants to ask the teacher if he can have some time out for a quiet activity, but he doesn't want to draw attention to himself.

- Which strengths could Trent use to deal with this situation?
- These strengths might help him to take actions like …

Option

Make your own scenario where someone faces a challenge.

- Which strengths might they need to use to deal with this situation?
- These strengths might help them to take actions like …

Activity 4: Respect in action

Learning intentions

- Students will identify actions that people take to demonstrate respect for others.
- Students will identify how particular personal or cultural strengths can contribute towards inclusive and respectful relationships with others.

Equipment

- 'Character strengths' list from Activity 1, cut into separate cards
- Pens, pencils, workbooks and paper or digital devices
- Whiteboard and markers

Method

1. Explain to students that in this lesson they will be exploring how they can use their character strengths to help build a respectful and inclusive environment. Discuss with the class what it might mean to be respectful and inclusive.

2. Ask students to brainstorm with a partner what sorts of actions they might take to be respectful to someone, for example, listening to them, thinking about their point of view, using their name and pronoun correctly, showing consideration for other people's needs and rights, treating others fairly and as equals. Share ideas across the class and make a list on the whiteboard.

3. Repeat the brainstorm, this time getting students to think about the actions they would take to be inclusive, and make a second list on the whiteboard, for example, saying hello, asking someone to join a game, taking turns to speak during group tasks, encouraging others to join in, and engaging in equal ways with others regardless of differences in gender, abilities, culture, ethnicity or religion.

4. Explain that in the next activity students will be assigned a strength and will need to think about how that strength could contribute towards being respectful and inclusive.

5. Randomly assign each pair or small group one of the 'character strengths' cards. Consider using a lucky dip method. Challenge students to come up with ways that using this strength could help someone be respectful and inclusive and provide at least one example. Possible examples include creativity in finding ways to help people with different abilities to join in the same game or courage in speaking up when you see bullying or harassment.

6. Ask students to share ideas with the class.

Optional extension

Once students have identified how a particular strength can be helpful, ask them to create an image, slogan or poster that displays their message.

Display the strengths posters on the class wall as a reference point for future conversations.

Review

Reflect on the learning intentions by asking students if the activity has helped them to identify how a particular character strength can contribute to respectful treatment of others. Seek some examples.

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Coaching point:
Fostering strengths through formative feedback.
Use positive adjectives as you name a specific behaviour that you are acknowledging. This will help students learn to value the qualities you identify and to understand the ways these strengths can be shown in action. This process can enrich the ways you provide positive, formative feedback about students' social capabilities. For example, 'It was kind of you to let others go first', 'It was generous to share out all the pens that way', 'I saw how patient you were waiting with your hand up' or 'I think it might have taken courage for you to have a go at that.'

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Activity 5: Role-playing strengths

Learning intentions

Students will demonstrate what character strengths might look like in action within peer or family relationships.

Equipment

- Room to move
- 'Character strengths' list from Activity 1

Method

1. Explain that the focus on the next activity is to show what various character strengths might look like in action. This is important as it helps us to understand how we might draw on these strengths in our daily lives.

2. Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4 and display the 'character strengths' list. Each member of the group will select a strength from the list. Their job is to create a role-play that shows a situation where each of them gets to use their strength.

3. Provide some situations which students could use as the basis for their demonstration role-play. Provide time for them to organise who each character is, where their scene takes place, what they are discussing and how they will show use of the strengths.

4. Possible scenarios include:

   - friends working out which game to play, in a situation where they prefer different activities (possible strengths may include fairness, inclusivity, generosity and creativity)

   - family members working out how to organise whose job it should be to wash the dishes (possible strengths may include: fairness, determination, loyalty, wisdom).

5. Invite students to share their role-plays with the class.

6. The observers will be asked to spot the strengths highlighted by each character (they might find each character uses more than one strength). After each role-play ask:

   - Which strengths did you see?

   - In which actions and reactions did you spot this strength?

   - How did using that strength make a difference to others and to the person themselves?

Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson

7. Inform students:

   In our next lesson we will focus on the differences between harmful talk and helpful talk and the effects that these different types of talk can have on people's emotional wellbeing. We will learn some techniques that can be used as part of helpful listening if we are assisting someone who has been discriminated against or has been the target of mean or harmful talk. We will also learn some techniques that can help us to make a meaningful apology if we have wronged someone. Remember, you can come and tell me if this worries you, if you or someone else has a problem. You can also tell other teachers, for example wellbeing staff.

8. Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals, for example, ask the students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip, which provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay. Follow up as soon as possible with any students who have indicated a concerned or worried response, demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help.

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Mixing students. Students may not be confident to mix across friendship groups and genders. Mix students into different pairs or groups so that they learn to work well with a range of people and gain confidence in crossing any friendship or gender divides that may be operative in the class. To randomly mix students, you could use one of the following methods:

- **Name lotto.** Cut up a copy of the class roll and mix the names together in a box or hat. Then draw out 4 or 5 names at a time to create random groups.

- **Count off.** Count students off depending on the number in your class so that they end up with groups of 4 or 5 students. For example, with 24 in the class you would count students off from one to 6, then start again. When you finish, ask all those who were 'number one' to form a group and so on.

- **Phone or iPad team sorting apps**. Students can be allocated randomly or sorted selectively ahead of time to support learning.

- **Interactive challenges.** Line up students by height, birth month or in alphabetical order of their first or last names.

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Review

Review the learning intentions by asking students if the role-play activity has helped them to demonstrate different ways a particular character strength can contribute to respectful treatment of others. Seek some examples.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

Activity 6: Talk can harm, talk can heal

Learning intentions

- Students will identify examples of the kind of talk that causes hurt or harm.

- Students will identify examples of the kind of talk that helps when people have experienced discriminatory language.

- Students will develop a sample apology that demonstrates how someone can take responsibility for their hurtful action by naming it, acknowledging its effects, and expressing both remorse and the intention to refrain from repeating the behaviour.

Equipment

- 'Ten actions for helpful listening' template

- 'How to make a genuine apology' script

- Story template: How listening helps (optional)

- Pens, pencils, workbooks and paper or digital devices

- A cheerful game to play or some cheerful or bouncy music

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Coaching point:

Why it is better to intervene than to ignore student bullying and use of hate speech.
Research shows that there is a close association between witnessing hate speech and using hate speech. A school-based study showed that negative peer modelling is associated with the use of hate speech, with students who are encouraged by peers to participate in such practises being more likely to do so. In contrast, students are less likely to use hate speech if their peers or teachers call it out as unacceptable. [26] It is important therefore that educators respond to hate speech by making it clear that this behaviour is unacceptable, and that no one should be harassed at school, online or anywhere else.

A research study found that while most teachers 85% said they intervened when they observed bullying behaviour, only 35% of their primary school students perceived that their teacher intervened. This indicates that observers were not confident that their teacher would take a protective stance against victimisation. Teachers who are more likely to intervene in response to harassment and bullying are those who have high levels of empathy for the victimised parties and higher levels of perceived seriousness about the effect of bullying, along with feeling confident in use of their behaviour management strategies. [27]

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Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Method

1. **Inform students:**

   In this lesson we will focus on the differences between harmful talk and helpful talk and the effects that these different types of talk can have on people's emotional wellbeing. We will learn some techniques that can be used as part of helpful listening if we are assisting someone who has been discriminated against or has been the target of mean or harmful talk. We will also learn some techniques that can help us to make a true and meaningful apology if we have wronged someone. If any part of the lesson makes you feel upset, using your coping strategies may help you to stay calm. You can also speak to me or to another teacher or helper to get some support. If this topic is upsetting for you today, you can do one of our quiet activities or we can arrange another place for you to work. You might want to talk later with someone else here at school or perhaps at home, and that is also okay. Remember to be considerate in the way you discuss situations of this nature and mindful of how your actions may affect other people. We can help each other by working well together.

   ### Part A: What is harmful talk?

2. Ask students to talk with a partner to think of ways to explain what might be meant by the term 'harmful talk'. They may wish to come up with a definition or provide some examples, for example, Harmful talk is when ….

3. Invite students to share their explanations. Work together to co-create a plain language definition. For example, students, might develop a definition like the following:

   Harmful talk is when people put others down or say untrue things about them. It can be about things like their appearance, abilities, skin colour, family, religion, gender, sexuality or actions. This can be done in spoken, written or visual form, and can happen in person or online.

Coaching point:

Understanding harmful treatment of others.
Teachers may find the following definitions helpful to their own understanding of harmful treatment of others.

- **Racism** involves unequal or discriminatory treatment of people based on their belonging to, or the perception that they belong to, a particular ethnic group, nation or race. Racism is based on the assumption that one 'race' is superior to another. Racism can present itself in a variety of ways. Some are more direct and obvious, like harassment, abuse or violence. It also exists in everyday systems and structures that operate in ways that that work unfairly and create unequal outcomes.. This type of racism is called structural or systemic racism.

- **Misogyny** is the dislike of, contempt for, prejudice against or distrust of women.

- **Sexism** is showing prejudice or discrimination based on someone's sex or gender, or representing them in narrow, negative or stereotypical way based on their sex or gender.

- **Homophobia** is fear or intolerance of people who identify as, or are perceived as being, lesbian, gay, bisexual or same-sex attracted. It is usually linked with hostility, verbal and physical abuse or discrimination. Homophobia also includes institutional and cultural bias and structural inequality.

- **Transphobia** is prejudice or discrimination based on a person being, or perceived as being, transgender or gender diverse. Transphobia can be expressed through hostility, verbal and physical bullying or discrimination. Transphobia also includes institutional and cultural bias and structural inequality.

- **Xenophobia** is the dislike of, or prejudice against, people from other countries.

- **Hate speech** is 'discriminatory', biased, bigoted, intolerant, pejorative, prejudiced, contemptuous or demeaning treatment of an individual or group because of their real or perceived identity factors, for example their gender, skin colour, religion, sexuality, ethnicity or nationality. Hate speech may be expressed in multiple ways, including through words, images, posters, memes, symbols, gestures or actions.

- **Misinformation** is false or inaccurate information. If you think of the word mistake, this can help you remember that misinformation is mistaken or false or wrong information.

- **Disinformation** is false information that is deliberately used to mislead or deceive others. The 'd' in deceive and deliberate can help you remember that disinformation is deliberately spread to deceive and manipulate people.

Part B: What are some of the effects of harmful speech?

1. Explain that the class will work together to map some of the effects that harmful speech can have on those who have it directed against them, and for those who witness it.

2. Allocate pairs or small groups to list some of the emotions that those who are harmed might have in response to harmful talk about them. Arrange for other groups or pairs to list some of the emotions that may be triggered in those who witness this kind of behaviour. Students may wish to refer to work in emotions as part of Topic 1, Activities 1–3.

3. Invite students to report back. Encourage them to comment on whether there may be any differences in response when the harmful talk happens online rather than in person, for those who are victimised or for those who witness this form of negative treatment.

4. Point out that sometimes people copy types of harmful talk that they have heard or read online. They may use this kind of talk without really thinking about what they are doing and how hurtful it can be. They might even think this kind of talk is okay because they admire or follow influencers who have modelled this kind of talk or attitude. Invite students to remind each other about the kinds of strategies they can use when they go online to make sure they don't get caught up in negative behaviour or become influenced by negative role models. For example, students may share strategies like the following:

- Think before you post or share, and think before you 'like'.
- Don't say anything online that you wouldn't say in person.
- Don't say anything to someone else that you would not want said to you.
- Check the source of information – is that a fact from a reliable source or is it an opinion?
- Don't do things just to impress others.
- Don't join in just because your friends do.
- Report abuse.
- Don't say anything that might hurt or harm someone.
- Consider if everyone's rights are being respected.
- Be careful about people who are bragging or trying to impress you.

Coaching point:
Supporting students to understand the context and impact of hate speech: Some students may use words that constitute hate speech without fully understanding their meaning, history or context. They may be imitating others who have used this language, without fully understanding the severity of its impact or the unacceptability of all forms of hate speech. It's important that teachers intervene with an educative response when hate speech is used to enable students to understand the meaning and impact of their language and to support those affected by it. Teachers should also consider using restorative approaches when appropriate to enable students to take responsibility for their actions, to understand their impact and to commit to changing their behaviour.

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Part C: Helpful talk and helpful listening

1. Invite the class to develop some suggestions about ways to engage in helpful talk if someone has experienced hurtful treatment by one of their peers or classmates, (for example, If you have been treated badly by someone, it can be helpful when ....)

2. As pairs or groups report back, ask others to suggest some of the personal and cultural strengths that people may need to call on to provide support for a peer who has been subjected to hateful talk. For example, they may choose to name strengths like kindness, compassion, fairness, courage, loyalty or honesty. It may be useful to refer to the list of strengths developed in the 3 preceding activities in Topic 2: Personal and cultural strengths.

3. Introduce the concept of 'helpful listening' by exploring with the class what unhelpful listening might look like or sound like, and then progressing to what helpful listening might look like or sound like. Encourage students to describe helpful and unhelpful actions, rather than attributes or attitudes.

4. Build on students' suggestions with an introduction to the 10 actions for helpful listening. Invite them to note which of the 10 categories of action would be a close fit with their own suggestions and note where additional actions or examples could be added to the list.

Coaching point:
Inviting student feedback to strengthen positive peer norms. When students report back on the positive actions they can take in response to harmful speech, they strengthen positive peer norms that are implicit in disapproval of such actions. Their contributions can also help to normalise the possibility and acceptability of adopting a proactive approach to showing that these actions are not acceptable.

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Ten actions for helpful listening to someone who needs support

Action	Might look or sound like
Show you are friendly towards them.	Smile, say hello, use their name, ask them if they want to sit with you or join in a game.
Ask if it is okay to talk with them.	Is it okay if we talk about what has been happening? Is this an okay time and an okay place?
Ask how they are.	It's okay to talk about it. Friends can help you feel better when you talk about bad times.
Tune in to their body language as well as to their words.	Notice the emotions they may be feeling. Notice if they seem very upset.
Show that you're listening by giving them your full attention.	Looking at the speaker, nodding, asking questions, stopping whatever else you were doing, leaning forward as you listen.
Ask questions to help them explain.	Has this been happening at other times as well?
Tune into their feelings and show you care.	That sounds so hurtful. I am sorry that happened to you.
Don't tell them what to do.	Ask them what might help. What have you tried so far? How did that turn out? Do you want some help to work out what to do?
Let them know if you think it's important to get adult help.	This sounds really bad. It shouldn't be happening to you. I am worried for you. I think it would be good to get some help. Can we work out how to do that?

Part D: Talk that heals

5. Ask students to comment on whether they think it is more or less likely that people will join in harmful talk or fail to help when the talk happens online as opposed to an in-person interaction.

6. Acknowledge that most of us will find that there are times when we need to apologise to someone, because we've treated them badly or did something that hurt another person. A genuine apology can help to heal things. It won't always heal a hurt, but it can help towards making things better in the future than they have been in the past. A genuine apology can also help the person who did the wrong thing take responsibility for their actions and for the effects they had on another person. It can also help them remember to treat people with respect in the future.

7. Introduce the suggested ingredients for 'How to make a genuine apology' below. Invite students to suggest why each step might be important for both the person who did the wrong thing, and for the person they wronged. For example, it's important to say what the wrong thing was, because that's part of taking responsibility for the fact that it was wrong and serious, and not just a joke.

8. Arrange for students to work in pairs or in small groups to write an apology letter or statement where a fictional character apologises for the way they wronged another. They should also recommend 3 to 5 strengths that a person can call on to help them make this apology an authentic, responsible and sincere apology. They may wish to refer to earlier work in Topic 1, Activities 1–3, to assist them to choose words for the various emotions, and the 3 previous activities within Topic 2: Personal and cultural strengths, as they identify words to represent the recommended strengths to call upon.

9. Invite some groups to present their statements to the class, along with their nominated strengths.

10. Review the suggested strengths to reflect on those that people may most need to call on if they are to take responsibility for a wrongdoing.

How to make a genuine apology

- Describe what you did that was wrong, for example, I said mean and racist things about you.

- Acknowledge that it was the wrong thing to do, and don't make any excuses, for example, That was a hurtful thing to do.

- Describe the effect that you think your

action may have had on the other people, for example, I think it must have really hurt your feelings and made you feel like you were not safe at school.

- Say you are sorry for doing the wrong thing, and for causing the hurt or harm, for example, 'I am sorry I did this to you, and I am sorry I hurt you.'

- Say what you intend to do in the future, for example, From now on, I will treat you with respect and I won't call you names or be mean to you or about you.

- Accept whatever reaction the other person has. They may or may not be ready to forgive and they may still feel distressed about what happened.

11. Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals, for example, ask students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip, which provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay. Follow up as soon as possible with any students who have indicated a concerned or worried response, demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help, connecting students to the appropriate wellbeing.

12. If needed, provide a fun, energising activity following the review section of the lesson to lift the mood after this potentially sensitive content.

Review

When reviewing the learning intentions, invite students to describe what they did to show that they could identify some of the effects of harmful talk, and some of the ways peers can become helpful listeners when talking with those who have been treated badly by others. Invite them to describe what they have learnt about the features of a genuine apology and to reflect on why making an apology is an important thing to do if you have wronged someone.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

The ingredients for a genuine apology

- Describe what you did that was wrong, for example, 'I said mean and racist things about you.'

- Acknowledge that it was the wrong thing to do, and don't make any excuses, for example, 'That was a hurtful thing to do.'

- Describe the effect that you think your action may have had on the other people, for example, 'I think it must have really hurt your feelings and made you feel like you were not safe at school.'

- Say you are sorry for doing the wrong thing, and for causing the hurt or harm, for example, 'I am sorry I did this to you, and I am sorry I hurt you.'

- Say what you intend to do in the future, for example, 'From now on, I will treat you with respect and I won't call you names or be mean to you or about you.'

- Accept whatever reaction the other person has. They may or may not be ready to forgive and they may still feel distressed about what happened.

STORY TEMPLATE:

How listening helps

Page 1

Introduce the 2 main characters by name. These characters should both be animals.

Page 2

Explain that Character A had experienced harmful talk, for example, about their appearance, abilities, family or their religion.

Page 3

Show the emotions that Character A experienced following the mean treatment.

Page 4

Show how character B asks if they want to talk about it.

Page 5

Show how Character B listens in a helpful way by paying attention and noticing or using body language.

Page 6

Show how this helps – Character B asks questions to help Character A to explain what happened.

Page 7

Show what Character B does to tune into their feelings and show they care.

Page 8

Show how Character B asks Character A what might help.

Page 9

Show how they work together to come up with some different options about what to do.

Page 10

Show which action they decide to take.

Page 11

Show how this action helps to make a good outcome.

Page 12

Sum up with a key message about how to help a friend by listening to them.

Reflecting on everyday practise

- How might I increase my use of strengths-based language when providing formative feedback to students?

- How do I foster an environment where students are encouraged to recognise their own and their peers' strengths and contributions?

Optional extension activity for English

Ask students to work individually, in pairs or small groups, to create a book or a book proposal for younger children aged 5 and 6 that helps them to learn how to use helpful listening techniques. Students should use animals as the characters, which fits with the convention of books for younger children, particularly when the story contains sensitive or difficult experiences for one or more of the characters. Provide the story template as an option that can be used to assist them to structure their narrative.

Invite students to share their book proposals or to share their stories and encourage use of appreciative listening as a means of providing feedback. Explain that as part of appreciative listening, students will comment on one of the strengths they see in the story. Possible examples include, 'I liked the way your drawing helped the reader to see that the listener was paying attention, and that the other character was really troubled', 'I liked the way your helping character showed that they understood by naming all those emotions', and 'I liked the way you chose the situation to be the kind of mean talk that you sometimes hear little kids use.'

Consider a method to share the stories with a wider audience, like arranging a story sharing session with a Foundation or Year One class, or arranging for stories to be 'published' for use in the library.

Talking further

- Encourage students to take the strengths list home and invite family members to identify some strengths they see in each other.

- Encourage students to ask key adults in their lives about how they have used their strengths to help them deal with challenging situations.

Positive coping

Aims

Activities within this topic area will assist students to:

- identify a range of coping strategies to help them deal with intense emotions
- identify the influence of self-talk on their actions and emotions.

Informed by the evidence base

Informed by the evidence base: As they grow and develop, all children will encounter challenging or stressful situations.[28] Individuals deal with the demands on them by drawing on a range of coping strategies. Some strategies are more productive than others.[29] Helping students to extend their portfolio of positive coping skills will enable them to cope more successfully with future changes and challenges. Resilience research shows that the use of positive self-talk is associated with greater persistence in the face of challenge, whereas negative self-talk is associated with higher levels of distress, depression and anxiety.[30] Research studies have demonstrated that those who use positive self-talk about how they will approach and manage challenge are more likely to succeed. Negative self-talk includes over personalising adversity, excessive self-blame, and exaggerating the likely duration and impact of adversity or failure. It includes focusing on what is wrong and ignoring what is right. Positive self-talk includes more realistic appraisal of capacity, circumstances and effort. It includes acknowledging and being grateful for the positives, recognising personal strengths and positive intentions, and realistic attribution of responsibility. Positive self-talk can be learnt or strengthened through practice.[31, 32]

Activity 1: Introducing the concept of self-talk

Learning intentions

- Students will investigate the concepts of positive and negative self-talk.

- Students will develop a positive self-talk vocabulary.

Equipment

- 'Positive self-talk statements' list

- 'Self-talk' scenarios

- Pens, pencils, workbook and paper or digital devices

Method

1. Remind the class that in previous lessons they have looked at how intense emotions can be felt in their bodies, and how we can experience ups and downs, and more intense emotions. They have looked at how character strengths can help them deal with the challenges in their lives. Now they are going to look at how their minds can play a part in either creating or deepening upset or in helping them to manage their emotions.

2. Write the term 'self-talk' on the board. Ask students to guess what they think this term means.

3. Explain that 'Self-talk' refers to the conversations that people have with themselves in their heads. When they were little, they probably did quite a bit of thinking out aloud or talking aloud to themselves. As they have gotten older, this 'talk' is mostly done inside the head, rather than out loud. It is part of people's thinking.

4. Explain that sometimes our level of emotion is produced by our 'self-talk' or the things we say to ourselves about what an experience means. Explain to students:

   When I miss a catch, I might tell myself, 'Nice try – and better luck next time' or I might tell myself, 'You are so clumsy, you are letting the team down.' In the second version, I am going to feel a lot more upset. In the first version, I acknowledged my effort, and I did not make missing a catch mean that I should give up, but rather that I should keep trying.

   I might get a low result on a test, and tell myself, 'That's disappointing, but I am going to learn from this and work at doing better next time' or I could tell myself, 'I am no good at this, I might as well give up.' The second one is much more negative and is going to lead to

me feeling more upset. The first one will help me stick at it.

This talk we do in our head is called our 'self-talk' and it makes a big difference to how we cope with the challenges that come our way. You can hear from the examples that we can have positive or negative self-talk. Our self-talk can help or hinder the way we deal with situations. If we exaggerate the negative side of things, it can make it hard to keep going when things go wrong. Being optimistic and using realistic, honest and helpful self-talk is more positive. It can help us get through challenging times, keep learning and maintain our determination and effort.

5. Explain that students will work in small groups to check their ability to demonstrate the difference between positive and negative self-talk for characters in a particular scenario. Display a copy of the 'positive self-talk statements' list for students to refer to if they need some examples of an approach they could suggest as they respond to the scenarios.

6. Provide a worked example of what they will do. An example is below:

Self-talk scenario

You have to attend orientation at your new school where you don't know anyone.

Negative self-talk might sound like, 'I'm too shy to cope', 'No one will like me', 'I won't fit in' and 'People won't want me as a friend.'

Positive self-talk might sound like, 'It might be lonely at first, but I will eventually get to know people and settle in. I have made new friends before, so I should be able to do it again. Other people will also be feeling shy so maybe I can help them by saying hello and starting to talk to them.'

7. Assign students to groups and allocate a couple of scenarios to each group. Ask them to script some possible negative and positive self-talk for the character in their scenario.

8. Arrange for groups to report back. Invite deeper thinking about self-talk using questions like the following:

   - What kinds of messages did you notice the negative self-talk was sending?

Negative self-talk tends to include exaggerations about how severe or how long a bad situation will last. It tends to place total blame on the individual and not allow for the influence of other circumstances. It tends to tell people they are no good, and not account for any of their strengths. It tends to assume that things will go from bad to worse.

- What kinds of things did the positive self-talk argue?

- How can we make the positive self-talk more convincing than the negative? Hints – make it specific and practical, challenge exaggerations made by the negative side, offer more realistic explanations, and draw on evidence from prior experience.

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Coaching point: Engaging in positive self-talk. Most people find it easy to engage in negative self-talk; however, it can be harder to identify types of positive self-talk. Students may benefit from some examples.

'Positive self-talk statements' list

- Acknowledge effort over success – 'Even if I don't get the best mark, at least I know I tried hard.'

- Be realistic about how long the challenge will last – 'Even if it is scary to talk in front of the school, it won't last that long, and I can keep control of my nerves.'

- Be practical about what you can do to cope – 'I am going to stay calm and focused and give this my best effort.'

- Encourage yourself – 'I can stick at this.'

- Remind yourself you have managed similar challenges before – 'I have stuck at things before, so I am not going to give up this time.'

- Don't make one failure mean failure forever – 'Even though I missed a shot, that does not mean I am never going to succeed at scoring a goal.'

- Be hopeful about future opportunities – 'The team will be disappointed, but there's another game next week.'

- Challenge mean talk – 'It hurts when people say mean things, but that meanness is more about them than me, and I don't have to believe what they say.'

- Value yourself – 'I am who I am. It doesn't make sense to compare myself to others. People should accept me for who I am.'

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Review

Invite students to comment on what they think has helped the class address the learning intentions. Ask volunteers to summarise the concepts of positive and negative self-talk. Ask students to reflect on how this activity might help them to practise their skills in positive self-talk. Ask students where this skill might be useful to apply in the future.

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Coaching point:
Different stressors, different strategies. Remind students that different people can find different things stressful. What worries one person might be fun for another. Some students find too much noise and movement to be stressful, while others may not. Some people find it distressing when changes happen, and other people like change. Also, people can have different preferences in relation to the coping strategies that work best for them. It is useful to ask people what they find helpful when they feel stressed.

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'Self-talk' scenarios

Scenario 1

You hurt your ankle playing sport, and now you won't be able to take part in the end of year performance.

Scenario 2

Your friend from another class says they'll join you at lunchbreak, but they don't arrive, and you see them playing with another group.

Scenario 3

You've trained for 4 weeks for cross-country, really hoping to win. You come 11th.

Scenario 4

You hear your best friend being invited to a birthday party by a classmate, but you don't get invited.

Scenario 5

You are about to sit a test for your new secondary school, and you aren't sure you can do as well as your older sibling.

Scenario 6

Your parent or carer seems to give a lot more attention to your younger sibling than to you.

Scenario 7

You're not allowed to go out with your friends because you didn't finish your chores.

Scenario 8

You fall over your feet in front of everyone at a school assembly.

Scenario 9

You find it hard to keep up with others in class during certain activities as you take longer to learn some things.

Scenario 10

You have very different interests and hobbies from others in the class.

Scenario 11

Your body doesn't look the way you wish it did.

Scenario 12

You don't get selected for the top team.

Activity 2: Strengthening skills in positive self-talk

Learning intentions

Students will practise using positive self-talk.

Equipment

- Room to move
- 'Self-talk' scenarios from previous lesson
- 'Positive self-talk statements' list from the previous lesson
- Pens, pencils, workbook and paper or digital devices

Method

1. Explain that students will be asked to work in small teams to create a short role-play where they will act out what someone's self-talk might sound like. This will help to develop skills of positive self-talk. The aim is to present a self-talk dialogue that demonstrates how the positive can out-argue the negative self-talk.

2. Arrange for students to work in trios. One person is the body of the character and the other 2 take the roles of negative self-talk and positive self-talk that happen inside this character's mind. Options include putting 2 players in role as the positive self-talk.

3. Students should choose one of the scenarios used in the previous lesson. Students representing positive and negative self-talk aim to have an argument about what has happened in the scenario and what it means. The person doing the negative self-talk will highlight and try to provide convincing evidence for all the negative ways of viewing the situation. The person doing the positive self-talk will emphasise all the positive ways of viewing the situation or countering arguments made by the negative side. The person in the role as the 'body' of this brain will give feedback about which messages are getting through, and also provide tips about how to strengthen the positive side. Encourage students to refer to the 'positive self-talk statements' list from the previous lesson for ideas about how to construct realistic, honest, and useful positive self-talk.

4. Invite groups to prepare, and then recruit some volunteers to share their role-play with the class. The role-play could be time limited to 1 minute.

5. As volunteer players present their role-play, invite observers to keep track of the positive self-talk and be prepared to add any coaching afterwards about what might help to strengthen the positive side.

6. Where useful, arrange a replay to enable the positive side to take on some of this coaching and show what it might sound like in action.

7. To sum up, point out that we all have emotional reactions to situations that we find stressful or challenging. However, our self-talk can influence how we feel, and what we end up doing. If we listen only to our negative self-talk, we may increase our distress or feelings of weakness or worthlessness. The best way to deal with negative self-talk is to argue back with positive self-talk. This is a skill we can get better at with practise. Therefore, it is important for us to notice our own negative self-talk and be able to use positive self-talk to argue back. Strengthening our positive self-talk is like putting a coach inside our own heads that encourages us and gives positive and practical advice.

Review

Ask students to reflect on how this activity has helped them increase their skills in using positive self-talk.

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Coaching point:

Growth mindset. The concepts covered in this lesson are also relevant to Carol Dweck's ideas about growth mindset, which looks at how students' self-talk around their experiences can impact on how they learn, and how they deal with success and challenge. If developing growth mindset is a focus for learning in your school, you may wish to discuss how self-talk can model both a fixed or growth mindset.[33] Aim to model the use of positive self-talk when you set challenges for the class. Ask students to share their thinking from time to time when they encounter a challenge.

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Activity 3: Personal coping strategies

Learning intentions

- Students will describe the difference between productive and unproductive coping strategies.
- Students will identify a range of productive coping strategies they can use in their everyday lives.

Equipment

- Pens, pencils, workbook and paper or digital devices
- 'Key coping styles and strategies' chart

Method

1. Explain that we all have many different coping strategies to help us deal with the stress and challenges in our lives. A coping strategy is something we use to help us feel better, or to keep going when things get tough. Give a few examples of your own preferred coping strategies, like talking with a friend, going for a walk or listening to music.

2. Ask students to provide some examples of coping strategies and write them on the board.

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Coaching point:
Positive peer modelling. It is important to collect examples of positive self-talk scripts from the class, as students learn via positive peer modelling which helps to normalise conversations about stress and coping.

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3. Once you have a collection, introduce the notion that coping strategies can be grouped into different types or categories. Provide the following 5 categories, giving an example for each category and asking students to add others.

Key coping styles and strategies chart

- **Energetic activity** includes things like exercise, sport, dance and active play, which can help lift your mood.
- **Self-calming** activity includes things that calm you down, like drawing, meditation, praying, being in a quiet space, listening to soothing music, taking a shower and snuggling in bed.

- **Social activity** includes things to connect you with others, like talking things over, help-seeking or playing with others.
- **Shifting attention** includes things that take your mind to a different place, like reading, watching TV, playing games or doing a favourite hobby.
- **Getting organised** includes activities that help you better prepare for what needs to be done, like making lists, tidying up, making a plan or organising an activity.

4. Explain that generally these are positive or productive strategies to use, as long as none of them are used excessively, and as long as we match the coping strategies to the situation, we are in. For example, taking a shower to calm down might be good, but taking 10 showers a day would not be an effective way to cope. Playing basketball to lift your mood would be good, but playing basketball would not work as the only strategy for getting your assignment finished on time. So, in general, we aim to have a wide range of positive coping strategies, and use them in combinations to match the challenges we are experiencing.

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Coaching point:
Unproductive coping. You may also wish to discuss unproductive or harmful coping strategies. These include things like taking anger or stress out on others, using violence or aggression, using alcohol or other drugs, sulking, excessive self-blaming or excessive blaming of others. We aim to reduce or cut these out of our profile as these types of strategies tend to make things worse, rather than better, either for ourselves or for others.

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5. Set students the task of drawing up a 'positive coping' portfolio for themselves. Their portfolio should include at least one strategy from each of the 5 categories on the chart **energetic, self-calming, social, shift attention, get organised**. Challenge them to list at least 20 coping strategies. Display a copy of the 'key coping styles and strategies' chart to help them with this.

Coaching point:

Checking in on group work skills. It can be useful to assist students to become more mindful of what it takes to work effectively together on group tasks. One method includes use of reflective analysis. If necessary, to assist with this, stop students early in the task and ask them if they think they have set up a way that helps everyone contribute fairly. Do they need to assign group roles, for example, scribe and leader? Should they take turns to suggest ideas so everyone gets a voice?

Pause groups later in the task to ask them if their group is now working more effectively as a team. Are the strategies chosen during the earlier pause working? Should people switch roles, or make changes to the way the group works?

Pause at the end of the task and ask groups to self-assess how they worked as a team. Ask group members to think of one thing they did well, and one thing they could do better in the future.

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6. Explain to the class that the next activity provides opportunity to share and compare. Arrange for students to work in pairs or trios, to present their coping portfolio. After sharing, they should then identify one strategy that they have in common with their partner(s), and one that is different, and be prepared to report back.

7. After giving students time to share with their partners, bring students into a circle so that each person can provide some input on a strategy that they share and another that is different.

8. Point out that we all need to have some coping strategies that we can use at school, as well as strategies that we use at home and in the community.

9. Invite students to identify some strategies that can be used at school. Record this list.

Optional extension activity

Arrange for the class to collaborate to build a visual display of the coping strategies that can be used at school. This display can be used as a point of reminder during conversations about self-regulating and managing stress levels at school.

Review

Finish the activity by asking students to comment on whether they think the class met the learning intentions. Ask students to summarise what is meant by positive coping strategies and negative coping strategies.

Reflecting on everyday practise

- How does the language I use in my interaction with students model positive self-talk?

- What coping strategies am I promoting in my classroom when there are events like camps, tests or challenging learning that students may find stressful?

Optional extension activity for English

Provide students with time to write a short story with 2 different endings. In one version of the story, a character responds to a challenge by using unproductive coping strategies, which make things worse for them. In the second version of the story the character responds to the same challenge with productive coping strategies, which assist them to address the challenge more effectively. Their coping strategies can include use of self-talk.

Talking further

- Encourage students to take the 'positive self-talk' sheet or 'coping strategies' list home to discuss with their family members.

- Students can talk with family members about the self-talk or coping strategies they find helpful.
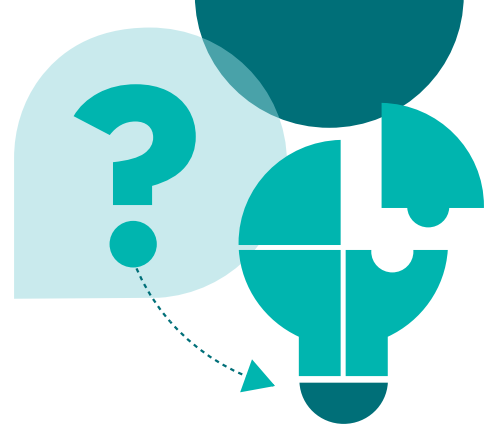
Topic 04 Problem Solving

Aims

Activities within this topic area will assist students to:

- devise strategies and plans to assist in completing challenging tasks, making decisions or resolving problems
- identify factors that influence decision-making
- identify causes and effects of conflict and practise different strategies to resolve problems.

Informed by the evidence base

It is important to help students learn a range of problem-solving skills through applied learning tasks to help them cope with future challenges. Problem-solving is identified by the World Health Organization as a key skill for health.[34] To be able to solve problems, students need to be able to think critically and evaluate the consequences of various actions.[6] Use of problem-solving tools to explore possible responses to challenges provides opportunity for students to develop critical-thinking skills, whilst also learning with and from a range of other student within small task groups. For example, use of scenarios or narratives has been shown to be an effective basis for discussion between autistic and non-autistic pairs, generating increased connectedness and understanding of each other.[35]

Activity 1: We have a problem, how can we deal with it?

Learning intentions

- Students will identify the problem in a scenario.
- Students will brainstorm possible options that may provide a solution to an interpersonal problem.

Equipment

- 'Problem-solving' scenarios
- Pens, pencils, workbooks and paper or digital devices

Method

1. Explain that the focus of the next activity will be to try out some useful thinking strategies to use when dealing with problems or making difficult choices.

2. Ask students to turn to the person near them and describe to them how they would define a personal problem. Ask for volunteers to share their definitions. Create a working definition and write it on the board.

3. Now ask them to define the word 'option'. Ask for volunteers to share their definitions and create a working definition to write on the board.

4. Explain that in life we can be faced with a range of problems, many minor and some on a larger scale. Sometimes we must make difficult decisions or make hard choices. Being able to work through problems is an important skill for life. Helping others think through their options when they face a problem is also an important skill in friendship. It is often useful to be able to help people think things through for themselves rather than to just tell them what to do.
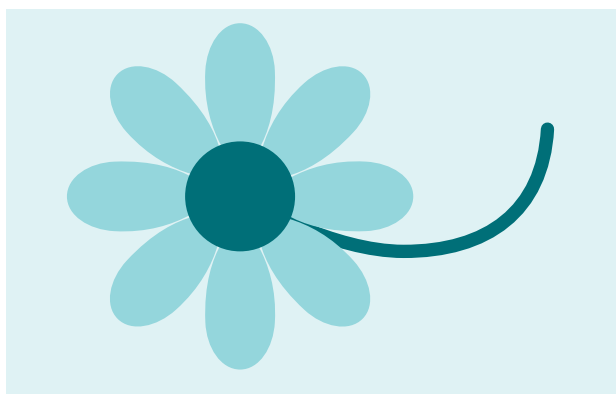
- Draw the image of a daisy flower on the board. Explain that this image can be used as a model to help us map out our options before we make a decision about the best thing to do. Lead students through a modelled example, using the scenario below or another of your choice, working with the class to map it onto the daisy problem-solving model.

> **Problem**: You have a friend over to your house after school and they want to play outside but you want to play inside on the computer. Neither of you will back down, and you end up having an argument.

5. Explain, 'First, we name the problem and write the name on the stem. Next, we brainstorm some options for actions that might help the 2 friends who have the problem, writing a different option for each petal.' Add additional layers of petals if needed. Invite students to explore what each option might entail in terms of what it would take to do the actions needed, and what the outcomes might be.

6. After all options have been explored, ask each student to choose for themselves the one they think would be the most productive. When using this model, the preferred option, once chosen, can be repeated in the centre of the flower.

7. Invite volunteers to discuss their choice. Note that often people will have different preferences regarding the options on offer. When using this model, each person would put their preferred option in the centre of the daisy to show that this is their choice.

8. Assign students into mixed groups. Invite each group to choose a scenario, and complete the brainstorm of options, using the daisy model. They may differ regarding which option they would choose to place in the centre to mark their choice. Encourage them to learn about and seek to understand the difference preferences people may have as to a preferred option.

9. Invite groups to report back to the class and explain their thinking and recommendations.

....

Supporting student's contributions. Use active listening skills to paraphrase what you have heard a student contribute to a discussion or activity. Active listening involves paraphrasing (rather than assessing the merits of the contribution). It is a useful way to check for meaning, to add clarity or to introduce or reinforce key terms. Invite the student who has made a contribution or their classmates to build on the ideas. Redirect, deflect and/or use additional questions to steer the conversation, elicit ideas and advance engagement with the learning intentions.

....

10. Invite other students to comment on the choice:

- In what ways might this choice help the person deal with the problem?

- What do you see as some of the benefits of this option?

- How can using a thinking model like this be helpful when faced with a difficult choice?

Review

Review the learning intentions by asking students to reflect on what they have learnt in this activity. Ask: 'Has the activity helped you learn some thinking strategies to use when dealing with problems or making difficult choices? How has using the daisy model helped you to do this?'

....

Coaching point:
Bystander or upstander? Introduce students to the notion that a bystander is someone who observes something. A bystander can be affected by violence directed towards others, as it may also cause them to feel distressed or anxious that they too might receive this treatment. A bystander may, however, decide to become an upstander. An upstander is someone who takes positive action to assist people who are excluded, hurt or victimised. As students respond to scenarios, they have the opportunity to consider the possible options that could be taken during or after the event as part of being a helpful upstander. They are also invited to consider how particular options might affect their own safety as well as that of others. Acknowledge that 'upstanding' can take courage. Knowing what to do is one thing but actually carrying out the planned action is the real challenge.

Problem-solving scenarios

Scenario 1

Waru has been invited to birthday parties by 2 different people and both parties are on at the same time on the same day.

Scenario 2

Sunny has a big project due tomorrow and they forgot to bring it home to finish.

Scenario 3

Yoshi and Phoenix have been waiting after school for 20 minutes and their grandparent still hasn't come to pick them up. Their grandparent has never been late before.

Scenario 4

A group of friends have started playing basketball at lunchtime. Flynn often walks off or gets upset when things don't go his way as he finds the game challenging. Some of his friends don't want to let him join in anymore, and only play with skilled people, but others think this would be mean. How can Flynn's friends help him to enjoy being part of a team?

Scenario 5

Jo really likes their prep buddy and plays with them a lot. But the prep buddy keeps following Jo around during lunchtimes. This gets challenging, as it often means Jo doesn't get to join in properly with others from their own class.

Scenario 6

Design your own sceneario

Who are the characters? Where are they? What is happening to create a problem?

Activity 2: Exploring what works

Learning Intentions

- Students will role-play the selected option in a problem situation.

- Students will reflect on the challenges of carrying out choices in social situations.

- Students will evaluate an action.

- Students will modify an action based on advice about its possible effects on others.

Equipment

- Room to move

- 'Problem-solving scenarios' handout from Activity 1

- Pens, pencils, workbooks and paper or digital devices

Method

1. Explain that, having identified some options for problem-solving in Activity 1, students are now going to try out what 2 different options might look like in action. This is one way to further consider what it might take to carry out the advice they have previously decided upon. This is important, as it can be harder to follow good advice than it is to come up with it. Role-play is one way to try out some options, and to examine how the different strategies might come across to the people affected.

2. Ask students to work with their group to develop 2 role-plays around a scenario used in the previous activity. If there has been some time passed since engaging with these scenarios, arrange to revisit and refresh memories. Remind students they also had the option to devise their own scenarios and could take up this option again. The scenarios should show how they could translate the 2 different options into action. They should make both scenarios as realistic as possible to make it easier to compare them later, and to test what it might be like to carry out these options in real life.

3. After they have rehearsed, ask groups to present their scenarios to the class.

4. Invite other students to comment on the different options shown in the scenarios.

   - To what extent did each of the approaches help the person deal with the problem?

   - What were the effects of these approaches on each of the people involved?

   - Which do you think would be more effective to deal with the situation?

5. Give students a chance to write a piece of advice to any of the characters in the scenes presented, based on their thinking about what might be an effective way to address the problem.

Review

Revisit the learning intentions by asking students to reflect on what they have learnt from the role-play activity.

....

Coaching point:

Setting up role-plays. It can be useful to provide a planning structure when asking students to prepare a role-play. The 4 W's is a helpful structure. The 4 W's stand for 'who, where, when and what'.

- Who: Decide who each character is, and who will play that character.

- Where: Decide where the scene is set.

- When: Decide when the scene happens.

- What: Decide what the main focus of the scene will be, and what the first line will be.

....

Activity 3: Problem-solving panel

Learning intentions

- Students will describe commonly occurring problem situations.
- Students will develop advice for how to deal with these situations.

Equipment

- Room to move
- Slips of scrap paper to make 'role' cards
- Pens, pencils, workbooks and paper or digital devices

Method

1. Explain that this activity will require students to identify some common problems that young people around their age encounter, and to practise some creative thinking approaches to addressing these problems. They will then practise their critical-thinking skills by working out what different types of advice might be given from different perspectives or from different people. It is helpful to look at a problem from many angles before deciding how to act.

Part A: Coming up with a set of problems

2. Ask students to write a 'Dear Wise One' letter explaining that historically, people wrote anonymous letters to magazines, seeking advice for personal problems. The letter should be short, describe the problem, and be totally anonymous so that no one, including the author or the parties in the situation, is identified. People have also traditionally used helpful members of their family or community when they need advice, or turned to their elders to learn about how to manage complex situations that affect not only themselves, but also other people in their life.

3. Provide an example of a letter someone might write. Displaying your example will give students a model they can use to write their own letters.

Example

Dear Wise One, I am always shy when I meet new people. I am not sure how to get started when I'm talking to people I don't know. Please can you give me some advice?

4. Allow time for students to write a letter which outlines a problem that could affect people in their peer community. Reinforce that they should not name anyone. Emphasise the importance of students choosing a realistic and relatively everyday sort of problem. Potentially students may do this part of the activity in pairs or small groups to encourage interaction and peer support.

5. Collect the letters and check content to ensure suitability for further use with the advice panel.

Part B: The advice panel

1. Explain that an advice panel will be set up by allocating students to groups. Each group will be allocated a role, and they will help to prepare a volunteer from their group to act out this role on the panel. The panel comprises the following roles:

   - The doctor focuses on how to keep you safe and healthy.
   - The grandparent focuses on how to ensure your good future and happiness.
   - The coach focuses on how to encourage you to get the best performance and play well as a team member.
   - The psychologist focuses on how to help you understand your feelings and those of others.
   - The environmentalist focuses on how to help you understand the effect of your choices on the environment, including the social, natural and built environments.
   - The banker focuses on how to help you understand the financial costs of your choice or the resources or materials you would need.

2. Explain to students that they will send one representative from their group to the panel at a time. However, they should be prepared to 'sub on' or role-swap and take that representative's place as the panel deals with its various requests for advice. The group's challenge will be to provide advice from the perspective of their assigned role. This may not be the same as their own personal advice.

3. Allocate the roles to the groups and arrange groups to have a quick meeting and brainstorm the sorts of things that their representative might have to say. They should also choose their first representative.

4. While groups are preparing, read the submissions, and select a letter that is suit able for discussion. Read the selected letter to the class. Allow some time for the groups help their player to think of a response to this situation.

5. Invite panel members forward. They should wear their role card and take their seats across the front of the room.

6. Re-read the scenario. Interview the panel members in turn to seek their advice. Encourage the class to applaud each panel member's contribution. When all have contributed, ask the audience if they want to make further suggestions or critique the advice given by the panel members. Finish by acknowledging that while some of the responses may have been humorous or unrealistic, nonetheless, there may be some useful insights that could be applied in a real situation. Invite observers to note what some of these were, and supplement with some of your own observations.

7. Invite the new panel members up or get group members to swap and repeat with an exploration of a second problem.

Review

After the activity is complete, ask students what they learnt from that exercise. Ask:

- 'Could any of this advice be useful in real life?'
- 'Could any of this advice be harmful in real life?'
- 'Is there any advice they did not think of which could be useful?'

....

Coaching point:
Help-seeking reminder. Remind students that if they have a real problem that they would like to discuss, they can come and see you out of class to talk more privately. Alternatively, they can send you a note to let you know they would like a time to talk. Be aware of the possibility of a student disclosure of harm or abuse.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

The Four Critical Actions outline who an incident, disclosure or suspicion should be reported to. Staff should ensure that the principal and school leadership team are made aware of the concern and are involved in providing ongoing appropriate support.

....

Coaching point:
Help-seeking. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from religious or cultural backgrounds, and LGBTIQA+ students may be less likely to seek help if they anticipate that the help services will not understand their cultural needs, belief systems or identities.

....

Reflecting on everyday practise

- How can you support collaborative problem-solving within your classroom?
- What approaches do you use to invite students to engage in critical thinking?

Optional extension activity for English

- Write a short story about a character who encounters a problem, thinks through a range of strategies, chooses an option and learns something from their choice.
- Apply the daisy problem-solving model to analyse the problem encountered by a character in a text. Where did they face a moment of choice? What were some of the options they could have considered? What choice did the character make at that moment? Where might a different choice have led to a different outcome or ending to the story?

Talking further

- Encourage students to share the daisy problem-solving model with their parents or carers, and to work with them to complete a daisy based on a home-related problem.
- Prepare some worked daisy problem-solving models for a wall display for others in the school to read.

Stress management

Aims

Activities within this topic area will assist students to identify some causes of stress and strategies that can be used to reduce stress.

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this topic contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. See the Introduction oage 15 to this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:

Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

Informed by the evidence base

Stress is a normal part of life, especially as children get older. Children who cope better with life's stressors develop good mental health and wellbeing.[29] However, students need assistance to recognise their personal signs and symptoms of stress. They also need practise in how to develop suitable strategies for dealing with stress. These learning opportunities will better prepare students to cope effectively with challenges in the future.

A study with children from years 3 and 4 investigated the stressors they experienced at school, along with the strategies they used to cope. It found that children faced a ranges of stressors including interpersonal conflict arising from unfair play, anxiety about asking for help from peers or teachers, and worry about 'bad grades' or performance challenges related to schoolwork and expectations.[36]

Mission Australia's 2022 annual Youth Survey found that almost 3 in 10 young people aged 15 to 19 years (29%) reported high psychological distress, 16% reported their overall mental health and wellbeing as poor, and almost a quarter reported feeling lonely most of the time.[37] Almost half of females and gender-diverse young people reported feeling extremely or very concerned about body image females (47%), males (15%), gender diverse (49%). Many young people reported feeling extremely or very concerned about mental health females (53%), males (25%), gender diverse (72%), and about school or study problems females (47%), males (23%), gender diverse (46%). Close to 2 in 5 (38%) young people who expressed strong climate concerns reported they were also experiencing high psychological distress, and one in 5 (23%) of these young people had a negative outlook about their future.[37]

Students report finding it hard to generate coping strategies, indicating the importance of an applied focus on developing coping strategies suitable for a range of contexts. A review of mindfulness interventions used with children and young people found that 'body-centered meditations' and 'mindful observations' guided by explicit instructions led to improved socio-emotional outcomes. [38]

Activity 1: Stressors

Learning intentions

- Students will demonstrate their understanding Students will identify the various contexts and situations in people's lives that can cause stress.

- Students will recognise that stress is often felt when we feel challenged, frustrated or inadequate.

Equipment

- Pens, pencils, workbooks and paper or digital devices

Method

1. Explain that the focus of this activity will be on understanding the sorts of things that make people feel stressed, and the ways different places or contexts provide different kinds of stressors.

2. Ask students to brainstorm and then write a definition of the word 'stress'. Collect and discuss their definitions. Share the definition below.

Stress is what a person feels when they are worried or feeling uncomfortable about something challenging in their environment. Stress can be positive. People can be excited and engaged by challenging situations. But we often use the word stress to refer to the negative feelings we have about challenges we experience. Stress can be a response to one single challenging experience, or it can be the buildup over time of lots of smaller or long-lasting challenges.

3. Divide students into groups of 4 or 5 students, and allocate each group with a location from the list below:

   - in the classroom
   - in the schoolyard
   - at home
   - in the community
   - at the shops

4. Ask the groups to brainstorm the types of situations that could happen in that location to make a person feel stressed. You may like to discuss one example for each group as a class to get the groups started, for example:

   - In class – a student may be stressed about answering a question when they are not feeling confident about their response.

   - At home – students may be stressed about a family member who is not well.

   - In the community – it may be stressful to walk home by yourself.

5. Once students have had time to make a list, ask for a volunteer representing each location to share 5 items from their brainstorm. Write the stressors on the board. Ask students to choose one of the locations and stressors from any of the lists and write a paragraph that shows how a fictional character experienced that stressful event. Ask students to write in the first person to make the writing powerful. The following example uses a street as the location and a large dog as the stressor:

I feel terrified every time I have to walk past our neighbour's house. Their huge dog always rushes to the gate, barking ferociously and baring huge, scary teeth. It jumps up again and again. I can always hear its sharp claws scrabble against the gate. One day I'm sure it will leap the fence and attack me! My legs go to jelly and my stomach churns every time, so I always cross the street to keep as far away from it as possible.

6. Invite some volunteers to read their stress stories to the class. Before the readings, ask students to practise 'reading with feeling' to dramatise reading to the class.

7. Ask students to comment on what they have noticed about stress from listening to this exercise. If the class is finding it difficult to articulate their observations, you may like to ask:

- 'Did any of the stories or stressors listed by other students surprise you, or were they familiar?'

- 'Was there anything that several stories shared?'

- 'Do you think the stories represented experiences that would commonly cause stress to a student of your age? Or are there other things that are more stressful?'

8. To lift the mood after this exercise, play a game like the one suggested in Activity 2, or any classroom game that is a favourite of your class. Use this game to talk about how we can use play, exercise or social activity to lift our mood when we feel stressed. Emphasise to students that in future lessons for this topic, they will be learning about ways to help deal with stressors like the ones described in this lesson.

....

Coaching point:

Advancing empathy. This activity helps to build empathy as students describe how others may be affected. Listening to the reporting back of the causal situations provides a form of peer-supported learning as students hear their peers recognise what might be an upsetting experience. The activity also builds a richer language through which to describe and understand more intensely felt emotions.

....

Coaching point:

Encourage students to identify when they need to use self-calming or self-cheering coping strategies. Teach students signals they can use to let you know when they need to use one of their self-calming or self-cheering coping strategies. Positively reinforce their capacity to identify when they need to deliberately self-regulate. Work with students to establish routines or strategies that are suitable for use in the classroom. Students may find it helpful to use a fidget toy, work for a while in a 'quiet corner', get a drink of water, wear headphones for a short time, or engage with a short mindfulness activity like colouring. Work with colleagues and families to understand the needs and self-regulation strategies of neurodiverse students, and trauma-affected students.

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Activity 2: Lifting the mood

Learning intentions

Students will use inclusive and collaborative play to lift the mood and build a sense of social support.

....

Coaching point

Games are beneficial. When effectively and purposefully facilitated, collaborative games can help students to mix and to strengthen social connectedness, which is a protective factor for mental wellbeing. Structured play can assist those who are anxious in social situations to participate with their peers. Games can also be used to advance social and emotional skills.[39] Following participation in a game, ask students to identify the skills they used which can also be used in other life situations. Encourage them to find key 'messages' in the games about how to conduct respectful relationships. Games can also be helpful to lift the mood after engaging with sensitive material, to engage or re-energise the class, and to bring a spirit of fun and joy into the class.

Equipment

- Room to move
- Chairs arranged in a circle

Method

1. Explain that the class will sample using a collaborative game for the purposes of mood lifting and social support. Play the Anyone Who Game (described below) or choose a game from the Games Collection at the end of this resource.

2. To play the Anyone Who Game, seat students on chairs arranged in a circle. Remove any spare chairs.

3. The teacher stands in the centre of the circle. They do not have a chair. The teacher calls out, 'Anyone who....' and adds a category, for example, 'Anyone who likes ice cream'. When they call out the category, the players in that category must move to a different chair. At this time the teacher will also rush to a chair. The person left without a chair will make the next call in the game.

4. The next person will then make a new call. For example, they might say, 'Anyone who came here on a bicycle'. All those who came on a bicycle must swap to new seats.

5. Play a few rounds of the game. By this time the class will be sitting in a mixed

arrangement and some differences and similarities will have been noted. For the last round, challenge students to find categories that are as inclusive as possible, to maximise movement between chairs. Remind them to do this safely.

6. Ask students how games like this one help to build social connections and lift the mood of the class.

Review

Conclude the activity by asking students to summarise some key messages from the game. For example, students may note that there are many differences between people in the group. Diversity is a strength, and different people bring different ideas and strengths. People can prefer different ways to cope with stress, and what one person finds stressful another might enjoy.

Activity 3: A guided relaxation

Learning intentions

- Students will identify situations where people may need to use self-calming strategies.

- Students will practise some self-calming strategies and discuss the effects these strategies have on their mood.

Equipment

- Calming music (optional)

Method

1. Explain that the next activity will provide a chance to practise a relaxation technique:

   When we experience intense emotions, these feelings are 'embodied'. That means they are felt in our bodies, not just in our minds. Our responses to intense or long-lasting negative emotions might include difficulty sleeping, crying, rapid heartbeat, sweating, nausea, trembling, headaches, difficulty speaking, lump in the throat, difficulty concentrating, having nightmares, being short-tempered or tantrums. To manage these reactions, we often need a way to physically calm ourselves. A guided relaxation is one way to do this.

2. Ask students to find a space in the room, sit comfortably and close their eyes. Put on meditative music and read the 'Pegasus adventure' provided below, choose an alternative script of your own or use one provided by a mindfulness resource. Ask students to be aware of their breathing and how their body feels during the activity.

3. When finished, ask:

   - 'What happened to your breathing?'

   - 'How did your body feel?'

   - 'What things were going through your mind?'

Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson

4. Inform students:

   'Our next topic will be about help-seeking. The first lesson will look at some scenarios that include more serious personal and family problems. This is so we can develop our thinking about when and how to seek help if we or people close to us are experiencing problems.'

   Remind students that if this worries them, they can speak to you or to their helpers to get some support.

5. Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals, for example, ask students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip, which provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay. Follow up as soon as possible with any students who have indicated a concerned or worried response, demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help.

Review

Review the learning intentions by asking students to consider the following:

- 'How did you feel after the relaxation exercise compared to before the exercise?'

- 'Is this something we should do more often at school?'

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

The Pegasus adventure

I am going to take you through one strategy that can help with relaxing and with managing stress.

Lie on your back or remain seated, and put your head down on the desk.

Close your eyes. Allow your body to relax and be quiet. Tell your legs to be floppy, your arms and hands to be loose, your head to just be heavy on the floor or desk. For the next couple of minutes, just a little time, ask your body to be still and your ears to listen. Well done!

You are going to take a journey. A magical Pegasus flying horse has been sent just to you. It floats down and lands quietly at your feet. Feel the gentle breeze from its flapping wings on your face. It indicates for you to climb aboard the golden, jewel-encrusted chariot harnessed to its back. You step up.

Cushions of every colour greet you. Lie back among the soft, feathery cushions. They feel so soft, it is as if you have fallen onto a cloud. Allow yourself to sink down low into their warm embrace.

The Pegasus begins to flap its powerful wings. It rises gradually into the air. You feel safe. You are feeling very calm and relaxed.

As you travel higher into the air, you look down to see a glistening ocean beneath you. The Pegasus floats down, taking you close to the water. There are dolphins playing, diving gracefully over the waves. Their bodies glisten in the sunshine. The Pegasus has taken you close enough to feel the salty water gently spray your face.

Again, Pegasus rises higher and higher into the bright blue sky. As you rise, the air becomes warmer. The Pegasus turns and, in the distance, you see a vast expanse of land. Flying over the forest, you see trees swaying from side to side. In the shade of the trees, you can see animals grazing. You lie back and close your eyes.

Now the Pegasus is slowing, descending. You know this journey is almost over. Take a deep breath and thank your body and mind for travelling along on this Pegasus ride. You land gently. Allow your attention to come back to where you are in this room. Wiggle your toes and fingers. Your body feels awake. You can open your eyes when you are ready.

Reflecting on everyday practise

- How do you manage stressful situations in the classroom?
- What signals from students tell you that they are stressed?
- What strategies do you use to reduce stress levels in your classroom?

Optional extension activity for English

Students can write their own 'Pegasus adventure', a script designed to support a guided relaxation. They might design one for a young child, a parent or peers. Students can develop their own 'stressful day' story, highlighting the experiences that the central character found challenging, and featuring more or less successful ways of sorting out how to address the challenge.

Talking further

- Encourage students to talk with parents or carers about what they like to do to relax when they feel stressed.
- Work with students to write an item for your school newsletter to encourage families to think about relaxation and calming activities. You might suggest that they make a family list of 10 favourite ways to calm down or relax, or try some relaxation exercises at home.

Topic 06 Help-seeking

Aims

Activities within this topic area will assist students to:

- identify situations where they should seek help in working through problems
- identify a list of trusted people to seek out when needing help
- normalise and destigmatise help-seeking behaviour
- contribute to groups and teams.

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this topic contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. See the Introduction page 15 to this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:

Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

Informed by the evidence base

Encouraging and fostering help-seeking behaviours is one way to improve mental health and wellbeing.[40] Australian data shows that many young people find life to be stressful and challenging. The young people most likely to be facing psychological distress are those who identify as female or non-binary, young people with disability and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander young people.[41]

Research demonstrates that help-seeking attitudes are influenced by gender norms, with males less likely to indicate that they would seek help than females. [41] Further, those from marginalised communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders,[42] religious or cultural minorities,[43] and those who identify as LGBTIQ+ [44] may also be less likely to seek help, particularly if they anticipate that the help services will not understand their cultural needs, belief systems or identities. It is important to normalise help-seeking and build the skills and knowledge that young people need to seek support when needed.

Research demonstrates that it can be the people who most need help who are least likely to feel that they can enter a help-seeking pathway.[45] If they do seek help, they may be more likely to turn to peers, rather than to formal sources like doctors, wellbeing leaders or psychologists. It is important to build skills for peer support and peer referral, as well as to normalise help-seeking as a legitimate action.

Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson

Advise students that in the following lessons they will focus on help-seeking. This means discussing scenarios where peers are concerned about what is happening to a friend or classmate. The scenarios include situations where someone is feeling distressed, like when they have problems at home, with friends or with school. They will focus on how to help others and how to seek help. They will also learn about the different kinds of help available in the school and beyond. Remind students that it will be important to make sure the class is a friendly and supportive place while they work on this topic. Revisit the class agreements about respectful behaviour. See guidance in the learning activities provided in the Introductory activities section of the resource on page 22.

Remind students that this may be a time to draw on their positive coping strategies as addressed in Topic 3: Positive coping and Topic 5: Stress management, and that help-seeking is also an important mechanism for coping, peer support and peer referral.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

Sample script for content advice advice for Topic 6

Across the next few lessons we will talk about ways to seek help or to help others. We will talk about situations where people are distressed because they have been left out or hurt by others, or worried about something that has gone wrong. We will learn about this because we want to make sure we know how to help our friends or to ask for help if this sort of thing happens.

Sometimes, when we hear a story about someone being unsafe or hurt, it might make us feel a bit wobbly inside. Before we start each lesson, I will let you know if there will be scenarios about children who have been hurt, left out or called mean names. If you find that the lessons make you feel upset or wobbly, your coping strategies may help you to stay calm. You can also speak to me, another teacher or a helper to get support. If this topic is upsetting for you today, you can do one of our quiet activities or we can arrange another place for you to work. You might want to talk later with someone else here at school or perhaps at home, and that is also okay.

Activity 1: I wonder if I need help with this?

Learning intentions

- Students will identify types of problems that they can solve independently.

- Students will identify how they may benefit from seeking help from peers for particular types of problems.

- Students will identify how they may benefit from seeking help from adults or services for particular types of problems.

Equipment

'Do I need help with this?' scenario cards

'Help-seeking options' labels

Pens, pencils, workbooks and paper or digital devices

A cheerful game to play or some cheerful or bouncy music for dancing

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Coaching point:

Knowing when to seek help. Remind students that problems can affect people in different ways. There will be times when one person may want to seek help, while another may feel okay going it alone or with support from a friend. When it is a question of safety or an ongoing distressing problem, then this may be the time for a person to seek help, even if they find it challenging to ask for help. This may take courage.

It is important to support young people's resilience by recognising and celebrating their ability to solve many of their problems independently. Equally, it is essential to empower them to know when it is smart to seek help. They can come to recognise these times and to normalise the practise of help-seeking through talking, planning and practising. When students have a plan that they have discussed and practised, they are far more likely to seek help when needed.

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Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Method

1. Inform students:

   In this activity the class will focus on help-seeking. We will look at some scenarios that include more serious personal and family problems. This is so we can develop our

thinking about when and how to seek help if we or people close to us are experiencing problems. If any part of the lesson makes you feel upset, or worries you a lot, using your coping strategies may help you to stay calm. You can also speak to me or to another teacher or helper get some support. If this topic is upsetting for you today, you can do one of our quiet activities or we can arrange another place for you to work. You might want to talk later with someone else here at school or perhaps at home, and that is also okay. Remember to be considerate in the way you discuss situations of this nature and mindful of how your actions may affect other people. We can help each other by working well together.

2. Explain to students:

   As we have seen in our activities on problem-solving, there are lots of ways to solve problems and many can be solved independently. However, there are times when some problems are just too big to handle alone. There can also be times when lots of smaller problems happen at the same time and mount up to make us feel overwhelmed. It is helpful to be able to think about how you are feeling and what the problem is when trying to decide if you need to get some help.

3. Ask students to work with a partner to build a list of some small problems that they can manage themselves and some larger problems that they think are too hard to handle alone. Record these on the board in a 'small problems' and 'large problems' section. Note that some small problems can turn into big problems if they happen frequently or happen in combination with a lot of other small problems or lead to lasting feelings of distress or experiences of unfairness.

4. Ask, 'What feelings could tell us that a problem is a large one?' Examples of responses include fear, feeling sick in the stomach, headaches, being grumpy, having trouble sleeping and not wanting to do something like come to school. Ask students to identify the feelings that go with some of the items in the 'large problems' section.

5. Explain that in the next task they will look at some problems and make decisions. Ask, 'Which are the types you could imagine you would sort out on your own, which would you want friends to help with, and which would you need to refer to adults for help?' Explain that there will also be a 'not sure' category for those in the 'too hard' basket.

Help-seeking options

- Handle on your own
- Handle with help from a friend
- Get help from an adult
- Not sure

6. Divide students into groups of 4 and provide each group with a set of 'Do I need help?' scenario cards and a set of 'help-seeking options' labels – 'Handle on your own', 'Handle with help from a friend', 'Not sure' and 'Get help from an adult'.

7. Ask students to discuss the scenarios and group them under the different headings. Invite a student from each group to report on one of the scenarios. Rotate until all the scenarios are accounted for. Ask if there have been any differences of opinion between or within groups. Highlight these scenarios for further discussion. What were the different views and concerns here?

8. Discuss those scenarios where students had different responses. Ask:

- 'Were there any scenarios where you think it's important that the person seeks help and if so, why?'
- 'How could listening to their own or someone else's feelings help someone decide when to seek adult help?'
- 'How could listening to negative self-talk stop us from asking for the help that we or others need?'
- 'What feelings might those with large or long-lasting problems be experiencing?'
- 'What are some of the worries or barriers that can make it harder for people to ask for help?'

9. Re-examine the scenarios that were referred for adult help. Ask if there is any difference between asking for adult help on physical safety like the asthma attack, practical problems like the stolen phone, relationship issues like parents splitting up, issues like the cyber-bullying situation, financial issues or the classmate who always asks for some of your lunch.

10. Remind students that different people will feel differently about problems, so there will be times when one person may want to seek help, while another may feel okay going it alone or seeking support from a friend. When it is a question of safety or an ongoing distressing problem or situation of injustice, then this may be the time to override your friend's opinion and listen to your own sense of what is right. This may take courage.

11. While it is important to support people's resilience by recognising and celebrating their ability to solve many of their problems independently, it is also essential to empower them to know when it is smart to seek help.

12. Identify that sometimes we fear being judged or blamed for having relationship or money problems in a way that we don't with other health emergencies. This is called stigma. It is important to make sure that this fear of stigma does not prevent us for asking for help for ourselves or our friends. No one should have to carry significant distress on their own.

13. Ask students what they should do if they find they have promised to keep a secret, but then discover that the situation is really distressing, and they feel the secret should be disclosed.

14. Point out that in this situation they can tell their friend that the secret is not a good one to keep and offer to go with them to get the right adult involved. This is not the same as spreading the story everywhere. It can still be kept private, even though it is not kept secret from the right adults. If the friend refuses, the next step is to go to a trusted adult, explain the situation and ask for help. Tell your friend you have done this because you are worried, you care about them, and you do not want them to suffer without help. You might also tell your friend the problem is also distressing for you.

15. Remind students:

   As people grow up, they naturally expect to do more and more for themselves, and they don't need to ask other people for help all the time. We call this being 'independent' and we take a lot of pride in it. However, we also need to be able to work out when it is better and safer to ask for help, either from our friends or from appropriate adults. We need to develop skills to work out how and when to ask for help, and when it would be dangerous or silly to try to handle something on our own.

16. Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals, for example, ask students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip, which provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay. Follow up as soon as possible with any students who have indicated a concerned or worried response, demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help.

17. Provide a fun, energising activity following the review section of the lesson to lift the mood after this potentially sensitive content.

Review

Review the learning intentions by asking students to reflect on what they have learnt in this activity about the different levels of help that we might need to draw on in different situations.

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Coaching point:

Help-seeking. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from religious or cultural backgrounds and LGBTIQA+ students may be less likely to seek help if they anticipate that help services will not understand their cultural needs, belief systems or identities.

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You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

DO I NEED HELP WITH THIS?

Scenario cards

Your pen ran out when you were rushing to finish a test.

You have a cold. Your nose keeps running and you don't have a tissue.

A friend sends you a video that shows something that you think isn't respectful of someone else's privacy and would seriously embarrass them.

When you line up at recess, one person always pushes you around.

You discover that your Year 10 babysitter used your phone to send inappropriate photos to another person that you don't know.

There are 2 types of cereal for breakfast. You can't choose which one to have.

The person sitting in the desk behind you keeps tapping your chair with their foot, and they won't stop when you ask them to.

You are walking home from school when a friend starts having an asthma attack.

You are at a friend's house, and they show you how to watch videos you think should just be for adults only. The next day you receive an email inviting you to watch the videos for free.

You get separated from your family when you're in the city, and you don't carry a phone.

A classmate always teases someone else about the kind of food they bring for lunch.

One of your classmates has started really showing off about hanging out with older kids from high school. These kids are always at the skate park until dark. Your friend is a good skater, but you think they might be under a bad influence because the older kids smoke and sometimes you see them drinking too.

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Do I need help with this? Scenario cards

DO I NEED HELP WITH THIS?
Scenario cards

You see a friend take something from someone else's bag and put it in their own bag. They don't realise that you saw this happen.

The assignment task is really hard to understand. You were away sick when the explanation was given.

Two good friends keep fighting and then making up, and you keep getting caught in the middle.

You are worried about the effect of some really mean body-shaming talk that is going on in the schoolyard. The teacher doesn't know it is going on, because people only do it when there are no teachers around.

A classmate is always asking for some of your lunch. You think maybe their family is having money problems, but so far you haven't been sure if you should ask or tell someone about this. You tried to ask your friend about this, but they just changed the subject.

One of your friends is planning to take friends to the movies as their special birthday celebration, but you know this won't be a good choice for another friend who has a visual impairment, and you don't want them to be left out.

You were using your parent's laptop and dropped it, causing a crack in the screen.

You forget to return the sport equipment you borrowed at lunchtime.

Your friend has started going to the sickbay a lot with headaches. They told you in secret that they're feeling very upset because their parents are fighting and might split up. This has been stopping your friend from sleeping properly at night. They asked you to promise not to tell anyone.

Do I need help with this? Scenario cards

Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships **Level 5-6**   83

Activity 2: Thinking about trust and courage

Learning intention

Students will explore and apply the notions of trust and courage in relation to help-seeking.

Equipment

- Room to move
- About 10 blindfolds, or strips of cloth or scarves to use as blindfolds – students could also close their eyes instead of wearing a blindfold

Method

1. Explain to students:

   In the previous activity we thought about when to ask for help. This activity focuses on what it takes to ask for help. It also reminds us that many people contribute to our lives on a daily basis, so we already receive a lot of support and help. We also have a lot of people that we give help to, and we probably know that this is something that makes us feel good about ourselves. Despite this, we can be reluctant to ask for help when we need it. We will use a game to help us explore why. In a later activity we will also be learning about where we can go for help if we think our peers are not the best or only people to check in with. For example, we could talk with a family member, teacher or other member of school staff, or use a helpline.

2. Organise students to work in pairs. Give each pair a strip of material to use as a blindfold. Alternatively, students could close their eyes instead of wearing a blindfold. One person takes the blindfolded partner for a walk, leading them by the elbow. Remind students to take things slowly and safely and to focus on the goal of navigating without any incidents. Those who opt not to play can assume the role of 'safety officers' or 'reporters'. The safety officers watch out that incidents do not occur. The reporters comment on what they observe in the game.

3. After the game, ask students:

- 'What did you feel when you were the person who was being led?'

- 'What did it take to allow yourself to be led blindfolded?'

- 'What actions or communications on the part of the leader were helpful?'

- 'What messages do you see in this game that are relevant to the challenge of help-seeking or to the challenge of providing peer support?'

Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson

4. Inform students:

   'In our next lesson, we will focus on who to ask for help, who already provides help and support, and how you contribute to helping others.' Remind students that if this worries them, they can speak to you or to their helpers to get some support.

5. Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals, for example, ask students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip, which provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay. Follow up as soon as possible with any students who have indicated a concerned or worried response, demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help.

Review

Review the learning intentions by asking students how this activity helped them think about how both trust and courage are important when it comes to seeking help. Point out that when we seek help with larger problems we need to have:

- trust in those we choose to go to for help

- trust that we ourselves have the courage to ask

- trust that we have the courage to cope and try again if no effective help is given when we first ask.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

Coaching point:

Comfort with games involving bodily contact. Provide a range of participation options in games involving bodily contact. This will enable those who do not feel comfortable playing to choose an alternative way to participate, and to contribute to the meanings made from the game. Alternative participation options can include adopting the roles of 'sports commentator', 'reporter', 'occupational health and safety officer', 'umpire', 'coach' or 'cheer squad'. Ask students in these roles to support fair, safe and skilful play or to comment on ways that the operations of the game can provide insights into the key questions asked.

Activity 3: Help-seeking, who to turn to and who to thank

Learning intentions

- Students will identify people and services they can turn to when they need help.

- Students will identify people who already contributing to supporting or helping them.

- Students will identify ways they provide help to others.

Equipment

- 'Helping hands' and 'support stars' templates

- 'Help-sources' information tool

- Pens, pencils, workbook and paper or digital devices

- A cheerful game to play or some cheerful or bouncy music for dancing

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Method

1. Inform students:

   In this activity the class will focus on the issue of help-seeking. We won't look at troubling scenarios today, like in a previous lesson when we focused on when to ask for help. Rather, this activity focuses on who to ask for help; who already provides help and support; and how you also contribute to helping others. If any part of the lesson makes you feel upset, using your coping strategies may help you to stay calm. You can also speak to me or to another teacher or helper get some support. If this topic is upsetting for you today, you can do one of our quiet activities or we can arrange another place for you to work. You might want to talk later with someone else here at school or perhaps at home, and that is also okay. Remember to be considerate in the way you discuss situations of this nature and mindful of how your actions may affect other people. We can help each other by working well together.

2. It is important to be aware of the different help sources that may be available in times of need. Invite students to identify key help sources in their school or community.

3. Display the 'help-sources' information tool. You may wish to add more detail about school and community help sources or help-seeking pathways. Use the tool to talk about the practicalities, benefits and limitations of the various help sources.

4. Point out that each of us will have times when we need help. We will encounter situations where we provide help to others or help them get the support or information they need. We have all been helped many times by others in our lives. Some of us may also have sought information or advice from trusted help services available by phone or online.

5. Introduce the 'helping hands' and 'support stars' images as ways to record information about who students could turn to for help and who already provides them with support. Point out that those 'stars' who achieve great things, like sporting and performance stars, are people who draw a lot from the help of others, for example family, coaches and teammates. Ask students to select or draw one of the images, and identify 5 people from who they received some form of contribution or help in the last fortnight. Example responses could include 'Parents and carers feed you', 'Friends play with you', 'Siblings help you with homework', 'Police protect you' and 'Crossing supervisors help you cross the road'.

6. Complete one of your own 'helping hands' on the board. Share this as a form of modelling that even adults appreciate help. Ask some volunteers to share their answers.

7. As the second step, ask students to think of 5 people they could approach for help if faced with one of the serious issues that were identified in the earlier activity as requiring adult assistance. Encourage students to include at least one person from the school setting and one from their family or community. As a final step, they should make a 'hand' or 'star' to show 5 people they have contributed to helping or supporting during the week.

8. If they have completed the 'helping hand' image as part of an activity for earlier years, discuss how the list of 5 might change as they get older. Will it be different? If so, why and in what ways? Discuss how the number of people they support or help will also increase as they get older.

9. Explain to students that people who feel appreciative or grateful for the things that others do for them, and for the positive things that happen in their lives, tend to be happier and to cope better with stress and challenge. So practising being grateful is an important life skill. Being appreciative of others and saying thank you are important relationship skills. Invite students to make a thank-you note for someone whose contribution they appreciate. They may like to deliver or send the note, or deliver their thanks verbally to this person.

Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson

10. Inform students:

    'In our next lesson, we will rehearse help-seeking strategies. We will be looking at scenarios that show things like people bullying, being racist or being mean on social media. We will also develop some role-plays to show how people could ask for help in these sorts of situations.' Remind students that if this worries them, they can speak to you or to their helpers to get some support.

11. Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals, for example, ask students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip, which provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay. Follow up as soon as possible with any students who have indicated a concerned or worried response, demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help.

12. Provide a fun, energising activity following the review section of the lesson to lift the mood after this potentially sensitive content.

Review

Review the learning intentions by asking students to reflect on what they have learnt in this activity in relation to people they can reach out to as a source of help, and people that they can contribute to or help. Ask students to give some examples of people or services they can turn to if they need help. Invite students to give some examples of ways they provide help to others.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

Coaching point:

Using Kids Helpline resources. Primary schools in Australia can book free, early intervention and prevention sessions with Kids Helpline. Facilitated by a qualified Kids Helpline counsellor via a video link, the evidence-informed lessons are educational and interactive. You can also liaise with a Kids Helpline counsellor to tailor sessions to the needs of your school or class.

Parents and carers

Trusted parents, carers and other adults aim to look after you, care for you and support you. They may also be able to help you get extra support if you need it. Often this makes them the best people to go to for help.

Friends and siblings

You might have a friend or sibling who is easy to approach. Friends and siblings can offer support like letting you know they care, doing things you enjoy together or sharing their own worries with you. However, if it is a serious or long-lasting problem, you might need an adult to help

Teachers

A teacher you trust can play an important part in guiding you to get the help you need. They might ask you some questions to better understand what you might need help with. They can provide some help directly, like encouraging you and helping you stay connected to learning and to school. Where possible, teachers will respect your privacy, however, they may be required to share information with others if they believe a student is at risk of harm.

School counsellor, mental health practitioner or wellbeing officer

Your school may have a mental health practitioner, counsellor, chaplain or wellbeing staff member available for you to speak to. You can ask a teacher to refer you to them. A parent, carer or friend may also assist you to start this form of help-seeking. School counsellors will listen to what's going on, make sure you're safe, and help you to make a plan to feel better and take some first steps. They can help you find a more useful way of thinking about or approaching a problem.

Doctor, including your general practitioner

You can talk to a doctor if you have a worry about your mental health and wellbeing. Doctors are trained to treat or refer anyone with physical or mental health concerns and can send you to a mental health practitioner like a psychologist if you need it. Doctors will know about the services in your area that are best for you.

Psychologist

Psychologists are mental health experts who can help people with their mental health and wellbeing. Psychologists talk to you about the issues you have and give you tools to help manage them. A local doctor can help you understand how to connect with a psychologist

Kids Helpline

The Kids Helpline operates 24/7. You can call anytime, for any reason, and speak to a qualified counsellor. The call is free, even from a mobile.

Call 1800 55 1800

Email counsellor@kidshelpline.com.au

Visit https://kidshelpline.com.au

Webchat counselling: https://kidshelpline.com.au/get-help/webchat-counselling?gad_source=1&gclid=EAIaIQobChMI6L3Imq-2hAMVIahmAh0i9goPEAAYASACEgJDRfD_BwE

Some of the main reasons children call Kids Helpline include family problems, bullying, relationship and dating problems, mental health, stress and anxiety.

HELPING HANDS

I could ask these people to help me:

I can help these people:

I have been helped by these people:

Help services I could contact:

SUPPORT STARS

Stars don't go it alone!
They seek help,
Appreciate help,
and give help.

Activity 4: Rehearsing help-seeking conversations

Learning intentions

- Students will identify sources of help in the school, home and community.
- Students will rehearse help-seeking conversations.

Equipment

- Room to move
- Pens, pencils, workbooks and paper or digital devices
- 'Help-seeking conversations' scenarios
- A cheerful game to play or some cheerful or bouncy music for dancing

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Method

1. Inform students:

   In this activity students will rehearse help-seeking strategies. This is because, like any other skill, help-seeking is something we can get better at with practise. We will be looking at scenarios like people bullying, being racist and being mean on social media. We will also develop some role-plays to show how people could ask for help in these sorts of situations. If any part of the lesson makes you feel upset, using your coping strategies may help you to stay calm. You can also speak to me, another teacher or helper to get support. If this topic is upsetting for you today, you can do one of our quiet activities or we can arrange another place for you to work. You might want to talk later with someone else here at school or perhaps at home, and that is also okay. Remember to be considerate in the way you discuss situations of this nature and mindful of how your actions may affect other people. We can help each other by working well together.

2. Select one of the 'help-seeking conversations' scenarios to use as a working example. Model the way students will work out who the characters in their role-play will be, and then brainstorm some ideas together about what the help-seeker could say when they ask for help.

3. Arrange for students to work in pairs or trios. Provide opportunity for them to choose a scenario to work on. First, they will need to work out who the 2 characters will be, then

they will brainstorm some ideas together about what the help-seeker could say when they ask for help. They will prepare some suggestions and then report back to the class.

4. Collect some of these ideas from the class. Add some if needed, for example, 'Could you help me to [X]?', 'I feel [X] ', 'Can you please [X]?', 'Could I talk to you about a problem?', or 'I'm really worried and I need some help.'

5. Then ask the pairs or small groups use these ideas and rehearse a short role-play where the person asks for help. Set the help-seeker the aim of being as clear and specific as possible in making their request for help.

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Coaching point:

Building confidence to show role-plays. If students don't feel confident to present their role-plays, work up to it by arranging for half the class to perform their scene at once, while the others observe multiple scenarios. Then swap, so the other half has a turn. Repeat with 2 or 3 scenarios, then eventually work up to short observations of individual scenes. Observing multiple scenarios at once can also be helpful when time is short, and all students want a chance to show their scene before the lesson ends.

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6. Invite some volunteers to show their scenes or do a quick ''screen surf' around the room, 'switching on' each set of players for a short time, or switching on 2 or more 'screens' at once.

7. Invite some players to repeat their scenes, so the observers can identify what the help-seeker did to 'get the job done' – that is, to actually ask for the help they needed. Ask observers to make suggestions about what else the help-seeker could do or say. Invite students who make the suggestions to step into the scene to demonstrate them if they feel comfortable to do this or seek volunteers who would like to do this. Invite observers to also note any of the positive or helpful responses given by the character who was approached for help.

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8. If students are really struggling to ask for help, select one of the following strategies to assist them.

    - Invite them to make a 'worst-fears' scene first, where they dramatise their worst fears about what might happen if they seek help. Follow this with a positive scene that shows how a caring person might react. Relate the 'worst fears' to the activity they have done on negative self-talk in Topic 3, Activity 1.

    - Invite them to show an example of ineffective help-seeking in the first version of their scene and then replay a better way to do it. This mode can help to break the ice with some humour.

    - Ask students to swap roles so they both get a turn in the help-seeker role.

    - Ask students to try a different help-seeking scenario, to see if one kind of help is easier to ask for than another. Discuss why this might be so.

9. To deepen reflection on the exercise, ask students:

    - What it was like to be in the help-seeker role?

    - What did it take to ask for help? Which strengths were needed? Examples of responses could include , courage, honesty and determination.

    - What were the fears and concerns of the help-seeker?

    - Is there anything that could help to make things easier for the help-seeker?

    - What was it like to be in the helper role?

    - What was positive and what was challenging about being in the helper role?

    - What fears and concerns might the helper have?

10. Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals, for example, ask students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip, which provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay. Follow up as soon as possible with any students who have indicated a concerned or worried response, demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help.

11. Provide a fun, energising activity following the review section of the lesson to lift the mood after this potentially sensitive content.

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Review

Revise the learning intentions by asking students to reflect on what they have learnt in this activity. Ask students to reflect on why it is useful to normalise the skills of help-seeking.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

Help-seeking conversations

You see a friend take something from someone else's bag and put it in their own bag. They don't realise that you saw this happen.

What's the problem? Who could you ask for help? What could you say? And then?

You get separated from your family when visiting the city at night, and you do not carry a phone.

What's the problem? Who could you ask for help? What could you say? And then?

You notice on social media that someone in your class was attacked by other people, with mean comments being made over weeks. The person who has been targeted by these mean posts is a classmate and has been looking sad at school lately.

What's the problem? Who could you ask for help? What could you say? And then?

The assignment task is hard to understand. You were away sick when the explanation was given.

What's the problem? Who could you ask for help? What could you say? And then?

Two friends keep fighting and then making up and you keep getting caught in the middle.

What's the problem? Who could you ask for help? What could you say? And then?

You were using your parent's laptop and dropped it, causing a crack in the screen.

What's the problem? Who could you ask for help? What could you say? And then?

One of your friends often asks to share some of your lunch. You think their family may have money problems, but so far you have not been sure if you should ask or tell someone about this.

What's the problem? Who could you ask for help? What could you say? And then?

You are worried about the effect of some really mean body-shaming talk that is going on in the schoolyard. The teacher doesn't know it is going on, because people only do it when there are no teachers around.

What's the problem? Who could you ask for help? What could you say? And then?

One of your friends is planning to take friends to the movies as their special birthday celebration, but you know this won't be a good choice for another friend who has a visual impairment, and you don't want them to be left out.

What's the problem? Who could you ask for help? What could you say? And then?

Activity 5: Communicating clearly

Learning intentions

- Students will identify and demonstrate the need for clear communication when help-seeking.

Equipment

- Pens, pencils, workbooks and paper or digital devices

Method

1. Explain that you will play a game to help focus on the challenge of communicating clearly. This is because communicating clearly is a really important skill when help-seeking.

2. Divide the group into pairs. Explain how to play the back-to-back drawing game.

   - Each pair sits back-to-back on the floor.

   - Give one person in each pair a pencil and a piece of paper and the other a shape.

   - Explain that the player holding the shape will give verbal instructions to their partner on how to draw the shape – without actually telling the partner what the shape is!

   - The instructor must give step-by-step directions: For example, if describing the square, start by saying, 'Draw a line horizontally across the page.'

3. After time is up, they should compare the attempted copy with the original. Give them a chance to swap roles and play again.

4. Discuss what helped and hindered the completion of this task. Ask students what key messages they can see in this game that are relevant to the topic of help-seeking.

Review

Review the learning intention by asking students to identify why clear communication is vital for help-seeking. Highlight that clear communication is very important in letting people know about our problems and needs. It's not enough to hint and hope. Reinforce that to ask for help clearly, you need to be able to recognise and name the problem and make the request for help.

Coaching point:

What is ableism? Students with disability can be subjected to bullying or exclusion by peers, and may also not feel respected and included by adults. This is a form of ableism, which has no place in schools. Ableism is when people discriminate or unfairly treat those who have disability or fail to cater for their needs. It can come from a lack of understanding of what people with disability may need and want, making assumptions about people and not allowing them voice and choice regarding decisions about their lives. It can include being mean or leaving people out on purpose. It can also include things like not providing wheelchair access, or learning support, or quiet spaces, or sign language, or not asking people what they need, or not treating people with full respect.

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Activity 6: Revisiting key learnings via 'The roller-coaster day' storyboard

Learning intentions

- Students will demonstrate their knowledge of emotions, strengths, coping and help-seeking strategies and sources of support.

Equipment

- Paper and writing or drawing equipment or digital devices
- 'Roller-coaster day' storyboard template

Method

1. Explain that students will create a 10-page storyboard to instruct a filmmaker making a film about a child who had a challenging day, with a series of ups and downs. The film is to be realistic rather than fantasy in genre.

2. Give students the storyboard template to outline their storyline. Draw the template on the board. Explain the template by providing an example.

3. Ask students to choose a person who will be the central character and to give this person a name. They will then develop their storyboard following the guidelines provided.

4. Arrange for students to share their storyboards with each other. This can be done in pairs or in groups of 4.

5. Suggest that students take their storyboard home to show their parents, carers or siblings.

Review

Review the learning intention by asking students to reflect on how effectively they were able to use the story template to demonstrate their knowledge of emotions, strengths, coping, help-seeking strategies and sources of support.

Roller-coaster day

Write and illustrate a ten-page storyboard using the template on the following page.

Reflecting on everyday practise

- How do you encourage students to seek your assistance and each other's assistance in the classroom?
- How can you develop a sense of trust and empathy between students in your classroom?

Optional extension activities for English

- Ask students to invent some sayings or pointers to guide peers about when to handle something on their own and when to ask for help., for example, if it involves more than one person; or if it lasts longer than a fortnight; or if it won't go away no matter what you try; or if it causes pain or suffering; or if it is a lasting breach of someone's rights – you should ask for help!
- Students could write a story for younger children which models how a character might go about help-seeking. This character should persist in their help-seeking until they find the right kind of help.

Talking further

- Encourage students to share their helping hand or star with those they included as part of their 5 trusted people.
- Students could ask their family members who they talk to when they want help for different things.
- Encourage students to ask parents or carers to tell them about a time that someone in their life provided help for them, or a time when they helped someone else.

ROLLER-COASTER DAY
Template

Page 1

Introduce your character. Give the character two different strengths.

Examples

Kind, a leader, brave, funny, forgiving, fair, honest and generous

Page 2

The day starts badly for this character because they must face something they really don't want to do. What is the experience that they wish was not about to happen?

What emotions is your character feeling?

Examples

Hurt, surprised, sad, angry, scared and disappointed

Page 3

How are your character's emotions felt or seen in their body?

Examples

Shaky, fast heartbeat, sore tummy, shivers, sweaty, hot face, crying and headache

Page 4

What self-talk is happening inside the character's head as they think about the unpleasant experience?

Page 5

Things look up! The day turns out better than expected. Describe some positive action that contributed to your character feeling better.

Which emotions does your character feel now?

Page 6

Things get worse again. Your character has to work out the right thing to do. It is not going to be easy.

Page 7

Your character uses some of their coping strategies. What do they do to make themselves calm down or cheer up?

Page 8

Your character asks for help. Who do they ask and how does it go?

Page 9

Show how your character chooses to respond to some helpful advice.

Page 10

Conclude with something that your character learnt from this experience

Gender norms and stereotypes

Aims

Activities within this topic area will assist students to:

- analyse the impact of peer and adult actions in maintaining or changing contemporary gender norms

- develop an awareness of the impact of gender norms on the attitudes and behaviours of those entering adolescence

- identify the standards and associated actions that underpin respectful gender relations.

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this topic contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. See the Introduction page 15 to this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:

Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

🔍 Informed by the evidence base

Studies show that school-based social and emotional learning, violence prevention and respectful relationships initiatives can make a real difference, producing lasting change in attitudes and behaviours in students. [46–48] Providing explicit classroom programs to all students is a key part of a whole-of-school approach to preventing gender-based violence and promoting positive relationships.[49] Research shows that children become aware of gender at an early age, are well aware of gender norms, and are making efforts to fit within gendered expectations by the time they are in kindergarten.[50] As young children learn about gender, they may also begin to enact sexist values or stereotypical beliefs and attitudes.[50–54] They may, for example, insist that some games are for boys and others for girls, and actively reject peers of a different gender from certain games. This means that it is important to begin building positive gender relationships within these early years. Classroom activities can be used to help students to challenge stereotypes, to value and show respect for diversity and difference, and to learn how to apply respectful and inclusive attitudes within positive gender relationships.

An inclusive or 'gender-complex' approach can be used to challenge the oppression and disadvantage that arise from negative gender norms and in response to the gender binary.[55]

In the past, it was common for educators to employ 'gender stereotypical' approaches that replicated the gender binary and associated expectations by assigning different roles and opportunities to boys and girls. As gender equality movements drew attention to the importance of equal opportunities for boys and girls, it was not uncommon for teachers to seek a 'gender-free' or 'gender-blind' approach, whereby the teacher sought to be fair by ignoring gender.

However, with this approach, dominant patterns tended to persist because steps were not taken to recognise and address inequality or positions of relative privilege or disadvantage. Subsequently, 'gender-sensitive' approaches evolved. Within a gender-sensitive approach, teachers devise differential strategies to counteract inequity. However, this approach tends to operate within a gender binary and may fail to normalise a diversity of gender and sexuality. This can lead to continuation of experiences of exclusion, devaluing or discrimination towards those who do not fit within the dominant binary identities or gender-conforming norms. Within a 'gender-complex' approach, a teacher employs strategies from a gender-sensitive approach but becomes additionally alert to the ways that heteronormative and binary 'boy/girl' or 'man/woman' classifications can work to exclude or stigmatise those who do not fit neatly within these membership categories. To interrupt this trend, they intentionally use inclusive approaches that offer recognition and normalisation of, and respect for, all genders including non-binary gender identities and those who do not identify with the gender assigned them at birth.[55]

Activity 1: Talking about gender – from inclusive language to inclusive actions

Informed by the evidence base

Many people are aware of both their gender identity and their sexuality from an early age. Research conducted in Australia found that half of young people who are sexually attracted to people of the same sex or gender will know before 12 years of age.[56] A national study of Australian students in Years 10 to 12 found that around 20 per cent of respondents have had some experience of same-sex attraction or being attracted to both sexes.[57, 58, ABS, 59] Gender-diverse young people are also likely to know from a young age that their gender is different from what has been presumed for them, even though they may not communicate this to others until late adolescence or adulthood. [60] A national study conducted into the wellbeing of trans young people in Australia found that more than half of trans young people were 13 or younger when their parents realised that they were trans, or when the young person came out to their parents.[60]

Learning intentions

- Students will understand how to use the terms 'sex' and 'gender'.

- Students will understand how to use the terms 'gender', 'cisgender', 'trans', 'gender diverse' and 'non-binary'.

- Students will identify strategies that children and adults can use to create a friendly and inclusive school.

Equipment

- A3 paper and pens for brainstorm task

- Example of the 'fish' diagram

- Pens, pencils, workbooks and paper or digital devices

Coaching point:
Contemporary language and colloquial terms.
Some of the language and concepts in this activity may be new to students if they have not already received the sexuality education components of the curriculum. Additionally, many students will also have heard this language used without necessarily understanding the terms and may adopt use of informal or colloquial terms to refer to those of diverse abilities, faiths, cultures, sexuality or gender. Sometimes students may use these terms without fully understanding their meaning. In some instances, colloquial terms also carry pejorative associations or have evolved from slurs or other forms of discriminatory talk. Consult students about the terms they use and consider incorporating contemporary language into scenarios where respectful and appropriate. Make sure you and students understand the meanings of substituted words. Ensure that students also learn how to use the more formal language, which is an important part of knowledge acquisition. Learning the appropriate language to use can empower students and enable respectful forms of communication.

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Method

Part A: Learning language for respectful talk about gender and diversity

1. Explain to students:

   Today we will be revising or learning some language that helps us to understand and describe how people experience gender. When babies are born, we often describe them as male or female, based only on what their bodies look like. This physical appearance, however, doesn't describe everything about the people those babies will grow into, or about the ways the society they grow up within will also shape who they become.

2. Lead students through the key terms and definitions in the box below. Use the teaching of language as an opportunity to help students understand the distinctions made via the key terms of 'sex' and 'gender'.

Diversity

We use this word to help us recognise and value the ways people are different. People have differences in their beliefs, religion, skin colour, family, gender, ethnicity and cultural traditions. They also have differences in body

types, abilities, health, personalities, interests, where they live, family or home situations, and their access to money and resources.

Inclusion

We use this word to help us talk about the importance of valuing, including and respecting everyone, regardless of difference.

Sex

We use the word 'sex' for a person's biological sex characteristics. This includes their sex chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs. Most people are assigned a sex at birth, like male or female, which is based on a person's sex characteristics and reproductive organs observed at or soon after birth.

Intersex

We use the word 'intersex' to describe natural variations to physical or biological sex characteristics, for example, variations in chromosomes, hormones or anatomy. Intersex traits are a natural part of human bodily diversity. Not all intersex people use the term intersex. Being intersex can occur in different ways for different people, as they may have different variations. As a person grows up, they may identify as intersex, or being of the male or female sex, and they will express the gender that feels right for them.

Gender

Gender is a part of a person's personal and social identity. It's part of how you understand who you are and how you interact with other people. Many people understand their gender as being a girl, woman, boy or man. Some people understand their gender as a combination of these, or none of them. Gender can be expressed in different ways, for example, through behaviour and physical appearance.

We also use the word 'gender' to describe the expectations that people learn from their society, depending on what sex they were born or assigned at birth. These expectations and pressures about what a society expects girls, boys, men and women to be like are shaped by culture, traditions and history. This includes things like expectations about the way people dress and behave, and what kinds of roles they should have at home and work.

These gender roles and expectations are learnt. They can change over time, vary from culture to culture, and play out differently at different stages in a person's life. Gender norms around masculinities – what males are pressured to be like – and femininities – what females are pressured to be like – can affect people of any gender, including non-

binary or transgender people.

Gender identity

Gender identity is the gender that a person knows themselves to be. It might be a clear match with their biological sex as assigned at birth – we call this being 'cisgender'. It might be different – this is called 'transgender', 'trans', 'gender diverse' or 'non-binary'.

Transgender

We use the word 'transgender' (or 'trans' for short) to refer to people whose sense of personal identity or gender does not exclusively align with the sex they were assigned at birth. For example, someone who was assigned as male at birth may realise as they grow up that they are really a girl or woman. Many transgender people identify as a man or a woman; however, some people are gender diverse. This means they may be non-binary or gender fluid, or they may use other terms to describe their gender. It is important to be aware that these are umbrella terms. These identities can have different meanings for trans and gender-diverse people.

Gender binary

A binary is something that consists of 2 things, or it can refer to one of a pair of things. When talking about gender, binary genders are 'man–woman' or 'boy–girl'. Non-binary people might feel like they have a mix of genders, or like they have no gender at all.

Sexuality

Sexuality refers to a person's intimate, romantic or sexual attractions to others. These attractions may be towards someone of the same gender, another gender, all genders, no gender or a combination. Some people describe their identity as heterosexual or straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual (attracted to more than one sex or gender), queer, pansexual (attracted regardless of gender) or asexual (does not experience sexual attraction). Sexuality can change over time.

3. Point out that we need all these words to help us understand and respect diversity. If we don't have words for differences, we may not be able to value and respect difference, or even understand that difference exists.

4. However, it's important to remember that we do not use words as labels to sum up everything about a person. People are always more than any one feature. We do not use words as put-downs. We use language to share meaning, and it's important to do this in a respectful way.

5. Explain that pronouns like 'he' and 'she' have a built-in gender binary, whereas the pronoun 'they' does not. The words 'he' and 'she' are a binary, because we use these words to describe one or other of a set of 2, or as opposites that belong in a pair. There are only 2 options. We don't use words for colour this way. We don't assume 'blue' and 'red' are opposites or that they are the only 2 colours. We don't imagine colours as being a binary or only being part of 2. But this is how the pronouns 'he' and 'she' are used in the English language. So, just like there are more than 2 colours, there are more than 2 genders. Additional pronouns have evolved to better reflect people's gender identity and provide inclusive and respectful ways to refer to people who are gender diverse, including the word 'they'. For example, instead of saying, 'She drove the truck to the depot', you would say, 'They drove the truck to the depot.' Instead of saying, 'He likes chocolate ice-cream', you would say, 'They like chocolate ice-cream.'

6. One way everyone can show a respectful, gender-inclusive approach when meeting people is to introduce themselves using their own pronouns. This opens the way for others to share their pronouns if they choose to. Avoid saying 'preferred' pronouns as the term 'preferred' implies someone's gender is just a preference, when it is an important part of their identity. If you accidentally misgender someone you can apologise, just as you would if you got someone's name wrong. Misgendering on purpose can be hurtful. Purposely using a name that is no longer used by that person – referred to as 'deadnaming' – is also hurtful.

7. Some common pronouns are 'she/her', 'he/him' and 'they/them.' Other pronouns may be used over time as language evolves to best reflect people's gender. Remain aware of the importance of learning which pronouns people use as being right for them to demonstrate support and respect. Language evolves over time to meet the needs of populations. Additional terms may become available. Remain aware of the importance of learning which pronouns people identify as being right for them.

8. Point out that gender is one form of diversity, but that human populations are diverse in many ways. Invite students to name some of the other forms of diversity or difference that can be found in the human population. They may suggest differences like race or ethnicity, abilities, body types, religion, culture, age, wealth, neurodiversity, health, family structures or family history.

Part B: Contributing to a friendly and inclusive school environment

1. Refresh students' understanding of the term 'inclusion'. What does it mean if a school, workplace or community states that they have an 'inclusive' approach?

2. Point out that we can hear the word 'include' inside the word 'inclusive'. This reminds us that an inclusive approach means that every person is included, recognised, valued and respected, regardless of difference. Their diversity is valued. An inclusive approach also means that people will take extra steps to include and respect those who might not otherwise feel welcome or get an equal chance to participate. For example, an Acknowledgement of Country is used to show respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Other ways to be inclusive include acknowledging special days that are celebrated in different cultures and religions, and providing audio guides for people who are blind or have low vision, and ramps for those who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices.

3. Explain that the class will work together to map out what individual students and their school community could do to contribute to a fully inclusive approach, so all students feel that they are valued, proud of who they and their family are, and can truly participate.

4. Introduce the 'fish' diagram by drawing it on the whiteboard or displaying it on a pre-prepared poster. Explain how it works as a tool to plan for change:

   • The bubble the fish is swimming towards is its goal – suggest a goal of being an inclusive, friendly and safe school.

   • On the backbone of the fish, students should write all the strengths they have that will help to move towards the goal. They should brainstorm some of the strengths they see in their class, referring to Topic 2: Personal and cultural strengths.

   • On the ribs, they should write the strategies, which are things they can do that will help them steer towards the goal. Some will be things students themselves can do. Other things will be actions the school can take.

   • On the waves, students should note where there may be some barriers that slow them down as they work towards their goal, like the fish having to swim against a tide.

   • On the tail, they should put the key actions or strategies they think will be most helpful to invest extra energy in. These are the strategies they think will give us the greatest power in moving forward. They can be new ideas, or they can be existing strategies that they particularly want to support.

5. Assign students to groups. Each group will draw their fish swimming towards a bubble with the

goal written into it. On each of the bones of their fish they should write different actions that will help to move the school towards its goal. Examples of school actions are teaching students about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, celebrating the different cultures and religions of people in the school, making welcome signs in different languages and teaching about gender inclusion. Examples of student actions are encouraging shy people to join in, sharing spaces and equipment in the playground, welcoming and respecting trans students and never using put-downs. Challenge groups to aim for at least 8 actions with at least half of the strategies being those that can be taken by students.

6. When students have identified their strategies, invite them to share their ideas with the class. Once students have shared their work, encourage them to add some of the ideas shared by others to their fish.

7. Then challenge students to think about what might be added to the wavy lines, which represent the tide the fish may be swimming against. Are there any barriers in the school that might be slowing the fish down as it swims towards its goal? For example, an example of a barrier might be people reacting to mean talk with laughter as if it's funny, rather than mean.

8. Invite students to return to their groups to identify possible barriers that could be at work in a school, slowing down progress towards the goal of a friendly and inclusive environment. Students may also want to name additional strategies or barriers that may be affecting younger students in their school.

9. Arrange for groups to report back on the barriers they have identified. As they review the collective input, invite students to nominate the student strategies that they think will be most helpful to overcome these barriers. Duplicate or add these strategies to the tail of the fish.

10. Record a selection of the strongest nominations. Invite each student to put their name against the student strategy that they will aim to focus on across the next week. Find a time to review their progress after the week has passed.

11. Display the school of fish as a visual reminder for the class. You may find it useful as a point of reference when you see students model use of proactive strategies. Catching and naming these strategies in action is a helpful way to provide positive reinforcement. You may also want to prompt the class to look at the strategies before commencing a challenging collaborative task, so they can reminder themselves about the strategies for inclusion they will need to bring to the task. This can help to foster a sense of the responsibility they have for co-creating a friendly class.

Review

Review the learning intentions, asking students if they found the 'fish' activity useful in helping them to understand the actions they can take to make school a friendly and inclusive place. Ask students to identify if they are clear about the meanings of key words that are needed when they talk about gender diversity and inclusion. Ask them to give some examples of words they now feel confident to use, like gender, trans or gender diverse.

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Coaching point:

Diversity of beliefs. Some students may share due to their religious, cultural or family beliefs it is difficult for them to know how to support peers who have diverse gender identities and sexuality. This can feel like a challenging situation to address. One approach that may help is to reassure students that people do not have to share the religious beliefs or cultural backgrounds of others to show respect. Respect is about the way we treat people. School and classroom expectations of behaviours and values promote kindness, respect and good treatment for all students, parents, carers and staff.

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Fish Diagram
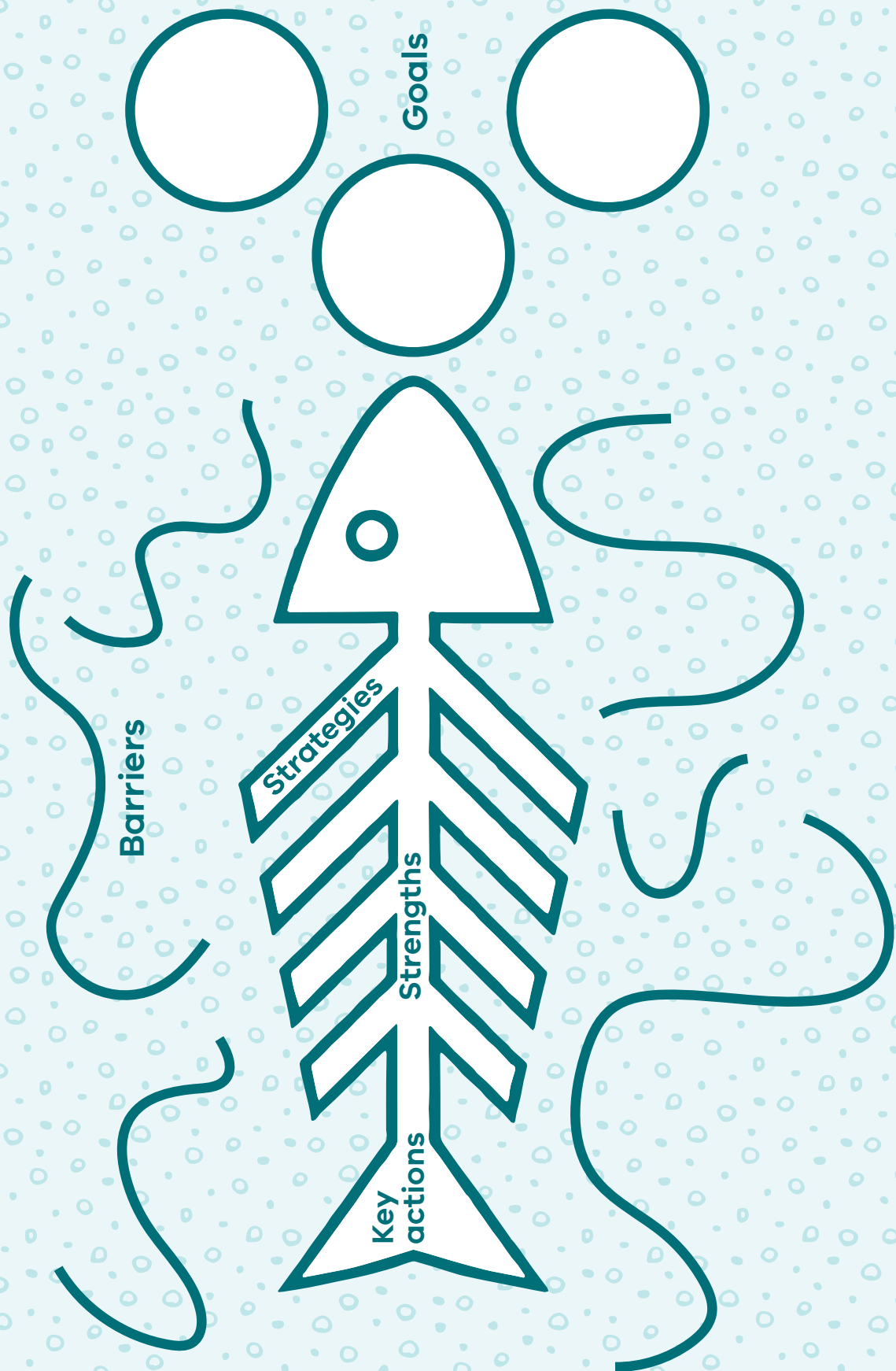
Goals

Barriers

Strategies

Strengths

Key actions

Activity 2: Born or made? The intergenerational gender machine

Beliefs about gender norms and roles are socially constructed. That is, the types of behaviours considered acceptable, appropriate or desirable for a person based on their gender are created by societies.[61] Gender norms include attitudes about what it means to act, speak, dress and express oneself as a member of a gender category as well as attitudes about how to treat others. Children learn these norms and expectations from an early age and this influences the roles, attitudes and behaviours they adopt. [50–54] Dominant norms around masculinity can lead to normalisation of some forms of violence.[62]

People absorb gender expectations from many sources, including parents, friends, teachers, institutions and the media. [63] . For example, gender beliefs related to masculinity may include the denial of vulnerability or weakness, high expectations in relation to emotional suppression and physical dominance, a belief in the acceptability of violence and presumptions about sexual entitlement. These gender norms can lead to higher rates of risky behaviour involving alcohol use or unsafe driving, as well as higher rates of violence towards women. [64] Gender norms related to femininity and pressures to meet expected beauty standards can lead to augmented rates of body image distress and to higher rates of mental health problems. The impact of gender norms is illustrated in morbidity and mortality data which shows different health and illness patterns for men and women. Children benefit from critical-thinking exercises designed to assist them to detect and challenge common gender stereotypes, and to note the limiting nature of many traditional gender norms.

Learning intentions

- Students will describe ways that gender norms are passed on through social and cultural practises like clothing, hobbies and sport.
- Students will identify ways gender norms are transmitted through intergenerational cultural practises like the traditions and rituals associated with weddings or celebrations.
- Students will identify gender norms that can have limiting or harmful effects.

Equipment

- 'Cogs in the gender machine' handouts
- Slips of paper or sticky notes
- Pens, pencils, workbooks and paper or digital devices

Coaching point:

Critical thinking. The mapping exercise in the 'gender machine' helps students to gain an awareness of the way that many influences interact in the production of gender norms. Use of visual mapping exercises can help students to comprehend the complexity of these interactions and to think critically about them. Even though individuals can and do challenge, resist and interrupt gender norms, they live in a world that is constantly generating gendered images and practises, which in turn influence expectations and behaviour. Becoming critically aware of gender pressures and stereotypes can help students become more open-minded in the way they see what is possible for themselves and others. This in turn might open the possibilities people can imagine for themselves, both now and in the future.

Method

1. Explain that you are going to investigate how ideas about gender are created and re-created and passed on from one generation to another. Ask students to imagine there is a machine with cogs. Cogs turn and make a machine operate (demonstrate this by using the visual representation handout included in this activity or use another visual aid like an animation).

2. Imagine that society operates like a giant gender 'machine' that produces the ideas that we have about how people should behave or

express themselves, based on their gender. How does this 'gender machine' do its work? What might be some of the ideas that different parts of the machine are producing? How do the cogs in this machine work to produce and reproduce gender stereotypes?

3. Allocate each group one of the 'cogs of the wheel' cards. These include:

   - traditions and clothing
   - media and advertising
   - sport and leisure activities
   - work and business
   - homes and families
   - children's games, toys and stories.

   Explain to students that their cog does the kind of work that fits with the title on their card. Seek and offer a few examples to ensure that students understand the task. For example, someone might suggest that the 'traditions and clothing' cog creates expectations that women wear high heels while men wear flat shoes, that the 'sport and recreation' cog generates the idea that women should wear sport uniforms that are designed to emphasise their physical appearance over practicality or the idea that boys are better at sport than girls; or that the 'children's games' cog creates the idea that toys marketed for girls and boys should be coloured differently, with boys given blue and girls given pink or purple.

4. Explain that each group is going to generate material to show how their cog of the machine works to produce gender norms. They will name or find visual evidence of the kinds of practises, sayings or actions that happen in their assigned domain that produce ideas about gender. This may include thinking about those things that happened in their parents' and grandparents' times. Ask students to write key words or phrases on slips of paper, or alternatively to find images to help tell the story of what happens in their cog of the machine, for example, in various forms of media and advertising.

5. Create a space onto which each group can map their answers and assemble the cogs of the 'machine'. Aim to create a mapping space that demonstrates the interrelated nature of the gender machine. You could create this on the whiteboard or on the floor (an example model for the mapping exercise is provided). Aim to build a visual picture of the ways that various domains connect with, and influence others, just like the cogs in a machine. (For example, television, advertising, and social media might create or reinforce the expectation that women are valued for their appearance and should wear make-up, meaning that more women feel pressure to spend money and time on make-up and clothes. As groups report back, encourage them to give examples).

6. As they provide feedback, invite the class to think about how actions within each domain influence and inform other domains. How might what happens at school or work connect with what happens in homes? How might what happens in the media affect what might happen in relation to children's toys? How might what the media portrays affect decisions about buying toys for children?

7. As they review the machine they have generated, invite your class to think about what has changed over time, and about how one generation affects the next. Explain that ideas generated over time and passed down from grandparents to parents, as well as through institutions, governments and businesses create 'intergenerational' norms and pressures. Ask:

   - What do you think was different in relation to gender expectations when your grandparents were young?
   - What differences might have been experienced due to the various countries that people lived in, and whether they lived in cities or in rural areas?
   - For example, in Scotland men and boys may choose to wear kilts, which are a form of skirt, which is considered 'feminine' clothing in some places. In rural areas women may undertake heavy, physical work that may not be as common for women in city areas.

8. Discuss:

   - What kinds of components would you want to design into a new generation 'gender machine' to produce a gender-fair, gender-safe and gender-inclusive world?
   - What kinds of people would you want it to produce?

   Conclude the activity by noting that the 'machine' continues to generate gender norms. These norms can affect everyone, regardless of their gender identity. Some of these norms can limit people's choices, affect their rights, affect their health, affect their choices and interests, and result in discrimination or inequality.

   This in turn may lead to gender-based violence. However, we can see that things within each of the cogs are constantly changing.

   - By upholding respect for rights, and working for a fair, inclusive and friendly school, we are modifying the machine and working to produce the conditions that allow all people to live in a gender-fair, gender-safe and gender-inclusive world.

Review

Review the learning intentions, asking students if the learning activities helped the class to see the complexity of the ways gender norms are passed on from one generation to the other, while also changing across time.

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Coaching point:

Awareness and action – inviting student voice. The mapping exercise in the 'gender' machine helps students to gain an awareness of the way many influences interact in the production of gender norms. Becoming critically aware of gender pressures and stereotypes can lead to students becoming more aware of inequitable patterns in their class or school. To enable students to contribute anonymously, consider providing an 'inputs' box for students to post their questions or comments, anonymously if preferred. Encourage them to use this box to either feed forward ask a question or make a suggestion which will help them, or the class, move forward in relation to gender equality or inclusion, or to feedback, in order to comment on how things are working. Provide yourself with time to review the inputs after class and use following sessions to respond to the inputs as appropriate.

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Gender Machine

Adults produced here

Homes & families

Work & business

Media & advertising

Children's games, toys & stories

Sport & recreational activities

Traditions & clothing

Enter babies here
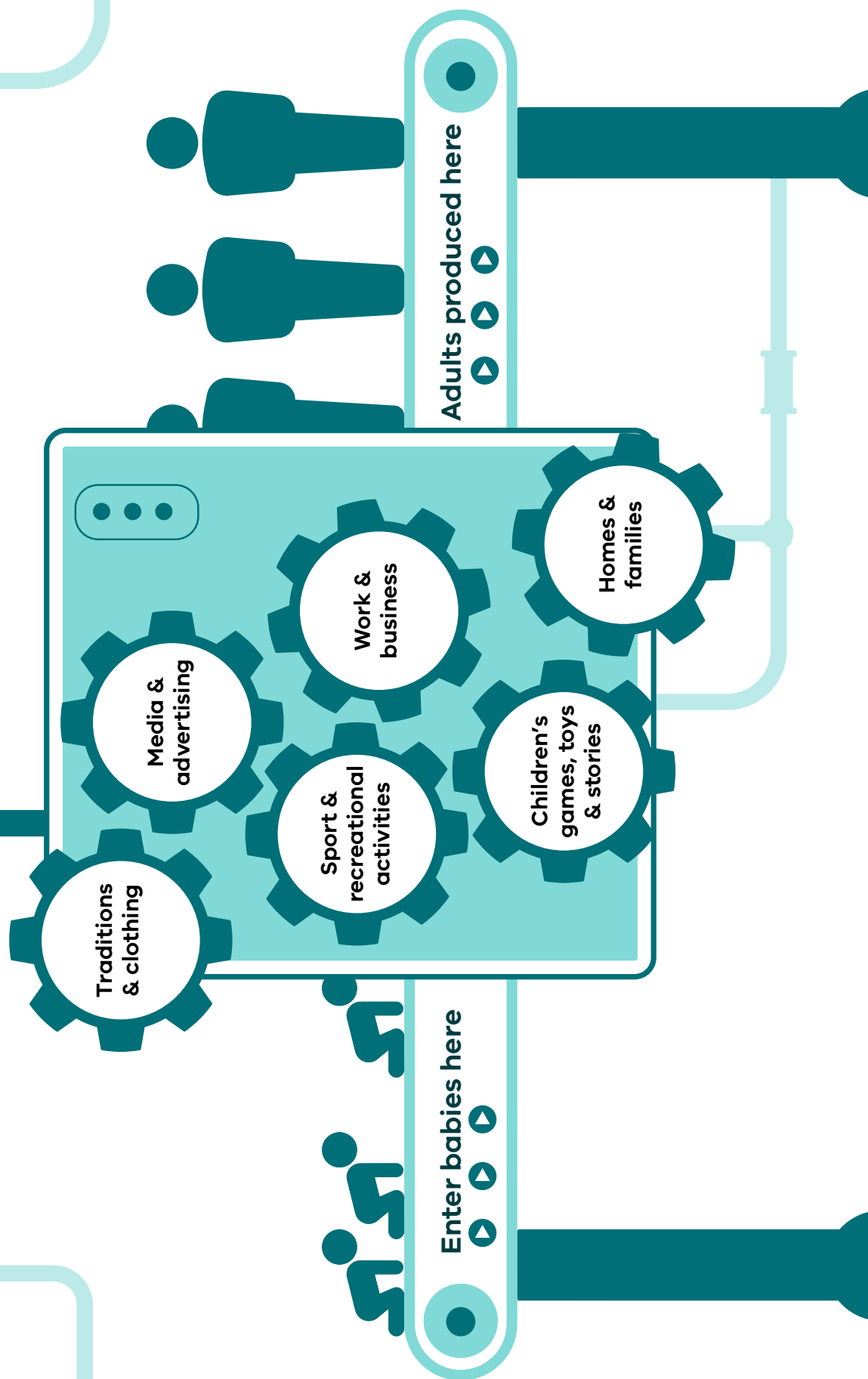
≡ COGS IN THE ≡
GENDER MACHINE
Task cards

Traditions and clothing

What differences based on gender might be seen in what people usually wear, for example, to parties or special events like weddings? What are some of the current ways fashion suggests how people should dress because of their gender? Consider also what happens for different age groups.

Work and business

What are some of the images you see of people at work? Are there gender differences? What were the sorts of roles people played at work when your parents, carers or grandparents were younger? What has been changing?

Media and advertising

What are some of the differences in gender roles you see shown in advertisements? In popular TV shows? On social media? What differences do you see in what is being 'sold' to people because of their gender? How are people of different genders used as characters in advertisements?

Homes and families

What sorts of different roles can be given or expected in homes, based on a person's gender? What were the traditional gendered approaches to housework, care and home duties when your parents, carers or grandparents were younger? To what extent do you think things have been changing over time?

Sport and recreational activities

What do you see in the sport section of television news, and other sport programs? Are there gender differences in relation to which sport or players get most of the attention? Are any recreational or fun activities usually assumed to be more appropriate for one particular gender than another?

Children's games, toys and stories

What sorts of gender differences do you see in the ways toys, games, TV shows and stories are marketed to children? What effects do you think this might have?

Activity 3: Facts about gender and equality of opportunity

Informed by the evidence base

Researchers who work in the area of gender and identity point to the way certain discriminatory practises can become invisible, or just taken for granted as a 'natural' way for things to be. For change to happen, people must first be aware of inequity, agree that it is neither 'natural' nor acceptable, and begin to imagine what a fairer world would look like.[68, 69] When students learn about human rights, they are better placed to defend their rights and those of others in situations where these rights may be threatened, withheld or taken away.[70, 71] Students who do not conform to gender norms tend to be disproportionately affected by bullying and violence in school settings.[12–14, 72] We can use data to challenge students to think more critically about the extent to which gender equality has been attained in their world, and about how negative gender norms and practises can continue to lead to unequal outcomes. Examination of gender equality data can help to demonstrate that gender equity is about more than freedom from harassment. It is also about everyone having the opportunity and encouragement to participate fully and safely in life regardless of their gender.

Learning intentions

Students will use data to provide examples of the ways gender norms can lead to limiting or harmful outcomes.

Equipment

- 'Gender fact' cards
- Pens, pencils, workbooks and paper or digital devices

Method

1. Raise the question: How 'gender-fair' is our country? To what extent do you think our country has achieved a situation where people of different genders are treated equally? What score would you give out of 10, if 10 was a perfect score for equality and fairness, and one out of 10 was a terrible score?

2. As students respond, invite them to give some examples to explain why they chose a particular score.

3. Once students have shared their ideas, introduce the notion of using carefully collected data to give us information about the extent to which the nation has achieved gender equality. Provide an example by introducing the following fact.

Fact 1

Did you know that in 2022 only 39 per cent of Australian Parliamentarians were female?[37] That means there were around 61 males for every 39 women. In most countries in the world, males make up the majority of national parliaments.[38]

Ask, 'What message do you think this sends to young people about leadership as they grow up in our country?'

Source: Safe and Equal 2022. Fast Facts on Family & Gender-Based Violence, https://safeandequal.org.au/resources/fast-facts-2022/

Fact 2

Did you know that Australia's international ranking for gender equality went down from being 15th in the world in 2016 to 43rd in the world in 2022? In 2022 our neighbouring country, New Zealand, was number 4 in the world.

The Global Gender Gap Index benchmarks gender parity across 4 key dimensions: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival and Political Empowerment. The world's top 7 countries, in order, for gender parity were: Iceland, Finland, Norway, New Zealand, Sweden, Rwanda, Nicaragua and Namibia

Ask, 'What message do you think this sends to us about whether we need to do better about gender equality in our country?'

Source: World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report 2022. https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2022

4. Point out that these facts may lead some of us to lower the score we gave our country as being a gender-fair place. However, there is a lot more data to look at to help build a richer picture.

5. Explain that students will now work in groups. Each group will get a different' gender fact' card. Once in their group, they will review their data, make sure they understand it, and discuss the questions on the card. They will then prepare a clear explanation of what they have learnt to 'teach' the class about what their data is telling them. As they make sense of the data on their card, ask them to consider the following:

    • What is the data is saying about what happens in this country?

    • Does something that is like this pattern show up in school life?

    Gender fact cards

    Fact card 1: Gender pay gap

    Fact card 2: Women in business leadership

    Fact card 3: Cultural diversity of political leaders

    Fact card 4: National awards

    Fact card 5: Sport

    Fact card 6: Home duties

    Fact card 7: Road traffic accidents

    Fact card 8: Worry about school or study

    Fact card 9: Mental health of young people

    Fact card 10: Body image distress

    Fact card 10: Personal concerns about discrimination

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6. Arrange for the groups to present back to their peers about their data. Encourage some broader discussion about how these patterns might be affected by gender norms.

7. Invite students to review the 'gender-fair' score that they chose for the nation and consider if they want to change it, following the presentation of the data by different groups. Ask for some volunteers to share their 'before' and 'after' score, and to explain any choices they made to change their score.

8. Encourage a positive focus by asking students what sorts of changes they hope to see by the time they are adults.

    • ''In looking across what all the data indicates, what changes do you hope to see by the time you enter the adult world that will ensure opportunities for people of all genders to participate fully and equally in life?'

    • 'What can you do now, in this part of your life, to help to make these changes come true?'

    • 'What do you think others could or should be doing?'

9. Work with the students to display key data in the room, along with their own statements about the changes they want to see in the world.

📑 **Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson**

10. Inform students:

    In the next lesson, we will consider some of the health and wellbeing problems that can arise because of gender norms – that is, because of the different expectations of and treatment of people that relate to gender. Remember, you can come and tell me if this worries you, if you or someone else has a problem. Or you can also tell other teachers, for example wellbeing staff.

11. Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals, for example, ask the students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip, which provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay.

    Follow up as soon as possible with any students who have indicated a concerned or worried response, demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help., connecting students to the appropriate wellbeing support.

Review

Review the learning intentions, asking if students found working with the data useful in helping them to identify the ways that negative attitudes about gender roles and gender identity can have hurtful and harmful effects. Invite some students to summarise what some of these effects are.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

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Coaching point:

Gender fair, gender aware. Some students may have very strong views about what is appropriate for boys and girls to do. A 'gender-fair' or rights-based approach is useful. Encourage students to challenge the limiting nature of gender labels by focusing on the positives: identifying what boys and girls and gender-diverse students can do, rather than what they can't. Provide books that include characters that interrupt gender stereotypes and which provide positive role models for students of all genders. Be alert that researchers have found that most central characters in children's fiction have been boys, and that often both boys and girls are portrayed in stereotypical ways. Gender-nonconforming characters have typically been absent. This means that attention is needed when selecting texts to correct this imbalance.

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Gender fact cards

Fact card 1: Gender pay gap

In Australia, there is a pay gap between men and women. On average, women's full-time wages are lower than men's in every industry and occupation in Australia.

On average, women earn 14 per cent less than men for doing the same job.

This means that for a woman to earn the same amount as a man, she would need to work 59 extra days in the year.

Think: Why do you think this is so? What effect might this have?

Source: Safe and Equal 2022. Fast Facts on Family & Gender-Based Violence, https://safeandequal.org.au/resources/fast-facts-2022/

Fact card 2: Women in business leadership

In Australia, women are less likely than men to be represented in key company leadership roles.

Many big businesses and organisations are led by a chief executive officer (CEO). In 2019–20, only 18 per cent of Australian CEOs were women. This means that less than 1 in 5 CEOs were women.

Only one per cent of these CEOs identified as culturally diverse women. This is the same as one in every 100 people.

Think: Why do you think this is so? What effect might this have?

Source: Safe and Equal 2022. Fast Facts on Family & Gender-Based Violence, https://safeandequal.org.au/resources/fast-facts-2022/

Fact card 3: Cultural diversity of business leaders

Australia is a very multicultural country. This means that in addition to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other people born in Australia, we have many people who come from different parts of the world. Over 21 per cent of Australians come from a non-European background, for example, they come from Asia, Africa or the Middle East. However, less than 10 per cent of Australia's members of Parliament have a non-European or Aboriginal background.

Think: Why do you think this is so? What effect might this have?

As of 30 June 2021, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represented 3.2 per cent of the total Australian population.

Source: ABS. June 2021, Preliminary 2021 Census-based estimated resident population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians

In May 2023, those who identified as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander represented 3.1 per cent of all Commonwealth, state and territory members of parliament.

Source: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parliamentarians in Australia: a quick guide, https://www.aph.gov.au/

Gender fact cards

Fact card 4: National awards

In Australia, the majority of people who were awarded the Order of Australia OAM have been males. This award is given for outstanding achievement and service to the country. But this pattern has been changing. For example, in 2020 only 30 per cent of Order of Australia awards were to women. That is less than one-third. In 2023 this had risen to 48 per cent of awards.

Think: Why do you think this is so? What effect might this have?

In 2022, Georgie Stone was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) alongside her mother Rebekah Robertson, for their work promoting the rights of transgender young people. Georgie was one of the first transgender women to receive an OAM.

Think: Why do you think this award was not given to a young transgender person until 2022?

Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2015 4125.0 – Gender Indicators, Australia, Aug 2015, Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics

National Australia Day Council 2022 Australian of the Year Awards – Recipients, https://www.australianoftheyear.org.au/recipients/, Accessed 21 July 2022

Fact card 5: Sport

A study of participation rates in Victorian sport showed that young people aged 10 to 14 were the most involved in sport. However, there were big gender differences, with nearly three-quarters of boys playing sport (74.0 per cent) but just over half of girls playing sport (53.1 per cent).

Source: Eime, R., et al. 2021. 'Five-Year Changes in Community-Level Sport Participation, and the Role of Gender Strategies.' Frontiers in Sports and Active Living 3.

Think: Why do you think this is so? What effect might this have?

Sport can also feel like an unfriendly place for people who have a diverse gender or sexuality. In 2015, a group of researchers questioned people around the world and found that 80 per cent of people had witnessed or experienced homophobia when playing or watching sport. Homophobia is behaviour that discriminates against and attacks people who are not heterosexual.

Think: What effect might this have?

Source: Out on the Fields 2020 Statistics on Homophobia and Transphobia in Sport, https://outonthefields.com/impact-and-harm/

Fact card 6: Home duties

In Australia, women do 5 hours more unpaid housework a week than men, even when they are the primary breadwinner. Women do 24.1 hours of housework per week and men do 19.1 hours per week.

Think: Why do you think this is so? What effect might this have?

Source: Status of Women Report Card – 2023, Department of Prime minister and cabinet https://www.pmc.gov.au/resources/status-women-report-card-2023

Gender fact cards

Fact card 7: Road traffic accidents

In Australia, road traffic accidents are one of the leading causes of injury and death for young people in the 15 to 24 age group. The death rate from road traffic accidents is 3 times higher for young men than for young women.

Also, young men are far more frequently and severely injured in road traffic accidents than young women of the same age.

The graph below shows the death rate from road traffic accidents in 2017-2021. It shows that young people are more likely than other age groups to die in road traffic accidents. See where the graph peaks for both men and women in the 16 to 19 age group. It also shows that men are more likely than women to die in road traffic accidents at all ages, but especially in the younger age groups. Compare the pink and blue lines. Gender-diverse data was not available.

Think: Why do you think this is so? What effect might this have?

Source: Department of Infrastructure and Transport 2020. Young Drivers and Road Safety Fact Sheet, South Australian Government Department of Infrastructure and Transport, https://www.dit.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/247508/Young_People_involved_in_road_crashes_2017-2021.pdf

Fact card 8: Worry about school or study

In 2022, 48.2 per cent of young women in Australia aged 15 to 19 reported that they were very worried about school or study problems. This was compared to 21.5 per cent of young men and 48.6 per cent of gender-diverse young people.

Think: Why are these numbers so different? What might this suggest about gender pressures?

Source: Mission Australia 2022. Mission Australia Youth Survey Report 2022, https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/publications/youth-survey

Fact card 9: Mental health of young people

In Australia the pattern for young people aged 15 to 19 who are very or extremely concerned about their mental health is very gendered. The rates of high distress were greatest for gender-diverse young people (65.9 per cent), followed by girls (45.8 per cent), and lower again for boys (21.5 per cent).

Think: Why are these numbers so different? What might this data suggest about gender pressures?

Source: Mission Australia 2022. Mission Australia Youth Survey Report 2022, https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/publications/youth-survey

Fact card 10: Body image distress

In Australia young people aged 15 to 19 report high levels of body image distress. The rates at which people reported feeling very or extremely concerned about body image shows a difference by gender. The rates were highest for gender-diverse young people (50.9 per cent), followed by girls (44 per cent), and lower again for boys (14.7 per cent).

Think: Why are these numbers so different? What might this suggest about gender pressures?

Source: Mission Australia 2022. Mission Australia Youth Survey Report 2022, https://www. missionaustralia.com.au/publications/youth-survey

Fact card 11: Personal concerns about discrimination

In 2022, 14.6 per cent of young women in Australia aged 15 to 19 reported that they were very or extremely concerned about discrimination. This was compared to 8.2 per cent of young men and 40.9 per cent of gender-diverse young people.

Think: Why are these numbers so different? What might this suggest about gender pressures?

Source: Mission Australia 2022. Mission Australia Youth Survey Report 2022, https://www. missionaustralia.com.au/publications/youth-survey

Activity 4: Media messages, gender policing and peer pressure

Informed by the evidence base

Research shows that children become aware of gender at an early age, being well aware of gender norms and making efforts to fit within gendered expectations by the time they are in kindergarten.[50] They learn their different roles through the way they are treated by their parents, the toys they are given to play with, watching others, the way they are dressed and treated, and through the images and messages they hear and see in books and the media. Gender norms and roles are socially constructed.[50–54] They are social norms that are differentiated for girls and boys, and men and women.

Gender norms include attitudes about what it means to act, speak, dress and express oneself as masculine or feminine. While not all gender norms are perceived to be damaging or negative, they can be harmful or restrictive in that they limit people's life choices, lead to inequitable treatment or discrimination, and foster acceptance of gender-based violence.

Gendered norms and expectations also contribute to the process of 'gender policing'. This term is used to describe what people do to enforce the dominant masculinities and femininities by governing or 'punishing' those who do not fit these norms.[73, 74] The cycle of gender policing exerted as peer pressure can accelerate social anxiety about levels of acceptance within the peer group. This stress can be alleviated via use of learning activities that provide opportunity for young people to critique gender stereotypes, become aware of the ways that certain gender norms work in harmful or limiting ways, and develop positive strategies for intervention.[67, 75, 76]

Learning intentions

Students will be able to:

- describe the ways gender norms are perpetuated by the media, including how social media can influence beliefs about how to behave
- identify strategies that peers may use to negatively reinforce gender norms through a form of peer pressure called 'gender policing'
- identify strategies that can be used to challenge gender policing.

Equipment

- Blank or scrap paper for shared brainstorming
- Pens, pencils, workbooks and paper or digital devices
- A cheerful game to play or some cheerful or bouncy music for dancing

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Method

1. Inform students:

   In this session, we will consider some of the health and wellbeing problems that can arise because of gender norms– that is, because of the different expectations of and treatment of people that relate to gender. If you find that the lesson makes you feel upset, using your coping strategies may help you to stay calm. You can also speak to me or to another teacher or helper to get some support. If this topic is upsetting for you today , you can do one of our quiet activities or we can arrange another place for you to work. You might want to talk later with someone else here at school or perhaps at home, and that is also okay. Remember to be considerate in the way you discuss situations of this nature and mindful of how your actions may affect other people. We can help each other by working well together.

   Part A: Gender norms in the media

2. First, students will identify some of the key gender norms and stereotypes they encounter via the media. Ask students to list examples of the different types of visual media they consume on television or streaming services, in movies or advertisements, and on apps and various forms of social media and so on.

3. Divide students into mixed groups. Ask them to draw a table to show 3 categories: women, men and gender diverse. Challenge them to conduct a brainstorm to list some of the common ways 'successful' women, men and gender-diverse people are shown in the media.

   - What are some of the common visible signs of success for members of each of the groups?

   - What kinds of bodies and accomplishments are displayed and applauded?

   - What do they get praise, 'likes', positive ratings or attention for doing or being?

4. Arrange for students to report back on their observations.

5. Introduce the idea that these stereotypes can work to generate a form of 'gender pressure'. People can grow up feeling under pressure to meet the success standards shown. People can also put pressure on their peers to meet these standards or give them negative attention when they don't.

Part B: Gender policing

1. Introduce the term 'gender policing'.

Gender policing is a term used to describe the actions that people take to encourage, reward or compliment people who fit gendered expectations (positive policing) and to discourage, exclude or tease those who do not (negative policing). Gender policing often takes place within a gender group: for example, girls or women complimenting other girls for valuing their appearance, or boys or men applauding those who identify as boys for being brave. This messaging can lead to people trying to impress their peers by striving for these standards, which can become a form of internalised peer pressure. Internalised peer pressure is when the pressure is felt inside a person, or when people feel they should take certain actions to gain acceptance even when other people are not telling them to do this. This is a bit like the pressure has become part of your thinking or your self-talk.

2. Challenge students to provide some examples of gender policing that can occur within the school. Explain that they will return to their groups to work on a scenario . First, they will identify the kinds of gender policing occurring in the scenario they are allocated. Then they will provide some examples of their own to demonstrate:

   - actions young people might feel they need to take to impress their peers in response to gender pressures

   - ways peers might compliment or give positive attention to others for fitting with certain gender norms (positive policing)

   - ways peers might send negative signals to others for failing to fit well with certain gender norms (negative policing).

3. Arrange for groups to share their responses with others. You may like to do this via a gallery walk – get students to rotate past each of the table groups to read the responses left on their table. You may wish to leave a 'table expert' behind at the table to explain their responses to others.

4. After students have had a chance to look at the responses of the other groups, invite them to analyse what they have seen, and what it can tell them about gender pressures, either those that come via the media or those that come from peers or others in the community. Some useful questions to deepen the discussion might include:

   - What might it be like for people who get negative comments from their peers about the ways they express their individuality and their gender?

   - What are some of the different ways that peer policing of gender norms might work to limit what people feel they can do, say or feel?

   - What might it look like if people were showing respect for difference?

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Coaching point:
Be on the alert for gender policing. It is important to challenge sexist comments whenever they arise in discussions or informal conversation at school. Prior to activities, anticipate possible student comments which might seek to police the choices of other students and reinforce gender stereotypes. There are no set colours for girls and no set colours for boys. People can like whatever colour they choose. And they can change their minds. We need to be able to let our friends enjoy their own preferences.

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Part C: Strategies for challenging gender policing

1. Invite students to describe some of the strategies that peers can use to challenge or resist forms of gender policing.

   Students might suggest strategies like:

   - Notice what is happening. If you notice something that you think is unfair or wrong this gives you the opportunity to decide whether you will join in or not, or whether you will do something to assertively reject this peer pressure.

   - Ask why, because we often reinforce gender norms without thinking. Why can't boys

wear pink? Why should students be asked to form separate lines as girls and boys? Why can't gender-diverse students choose which rooms they want to join at camp?

- Shrug it off. Decide you are not going to let what others say affect your choices.

- Openly challenge the assumption. Boys can do ballet – my cousin does.

- Be a role model. Be someone who is 'gender fair' and uses a gender-inclusive approach. This helps to show other people how it can be done.

- Refuse to join in. Stay silent. Don't respond or move away from that kind of talk.

- Defend the rights of others. Point out when you don't like the way they are treated.

- Change the system. If you see that your school is not gender fair, or is reinforcing limiting gender norms, draw this to your teacher's attention, and make some suggestions about a better way to do things. Where possible, work with others to make some changes.

Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson

2. Inform students:

   'In our next lesson, we will move on to Topic 8: Positive gender relations. First, we will learn about gender-based violence. We will be listing the different kinds of violence, like physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, financial and online abuse. We will also be discussing how people might feel if they are affected by these kinds of violence.'

   Remind students that if this worries them, they can speak to you or to their helpers to get some support.

3. Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals, for example, ask students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip, which provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay.

   Follow up as soon as possible with any students who have indicated a concerned or worried response, demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help.

4. Provide a fun, energising activity following the review section of the lesson to lift the mood after this potentially sensitive content.

Coaching point: Safety online. If not addressed elsewhere, it may be timely to remind students of the following tips in relation to talking to people online. Only talk to people you know and trust.

- Remember that a person you talk to online can pretend to be different from what they are actually like in real life.

- Never give out your personal details to people you don't know or you're not sure about. This includes your name, address, phone number, school, age and email address.

- If you are in a chat room, make sure you use a nickname.

- Don't give your passwords to anyone else.

- Don't accept friend requests from people you don't know.

- Check your settings. Do not select an option that automatically accepts all friend or group requests. This way you will know exactly who you are adding and allowing to view your profile.

- Set your profile to private.

- Remove any comments or photos that you do not want other people to see.

- Before posting photos or comments, think about whether they may upset someone else.

Review

Review the learning intentions, asking students if they believe that they were able to identify:

- the ways that gender norms place pressures on young people as they enter early adolescence. Invite some students to sum up what some of these pressures are.

- strategies that people may use to police limiting gender norms by treating others in certain ways, for example, they may reward them for fitting in with some norms or punish or send negative messages when they don't. Invite some students to point to some of the gender-policing strategies that they find particularly negative, and to explain their choices.

Reinforce 'gender-fair' values and work with students to reconnect them with the actions they previously identified in the 'school of fish' mapping activity, where they mapped strategies to build a safe, friendly and inclusive school. Invite students to add further strategies to the 'school of fish' map.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

Coaching point:
Sexism, homophobia and transphobia. Interrupt students if they engage in sexist, homophobic or transphobic behaviour and follow up with appropriate consequences.

Common forms of sexist behaviour

- Using 'girl' or words implying femininity in a derogatory way, for example, 'He played like a girl' or 'Don't be a sissy'

- Holding different expectations for the behaviour based on gender, for example, excusing rudeness or violence with expressions like 'boys will be boys' or 'man up'

- Presuming or permitting unequal access to resources, for example, boys assuming the right to have priority access to spaces or resources

- Assigning different roles or opportunities based on gender

- Making sexualised or gendered comments about people's appearance

- Sexual harassment

- Talking over others in gendered ways

- Gendered comments about subject selection or choice of interests

- Using derogatory terms that have gendered connotations

- Spreading rumours that have gendered or sexualised connotations

Common forms of homophobic behaviour

- Refusing to sit with, talk to or work with someone because of their gender identity or sexuality

- Using terms like 'gay' and 'lesbian' as put-downs or to make fun of someone

- Outing someone or threatening to out them

- Bullying someone based on their sexuality

Common forms of transphobic behaviour

- Refusing to sit with, talk to, or work with someone because they're transgender or gender diverse

- Repeatedly or intentionally using someone's wrong name ('deadnaming') or wrong pronoun ('misgendering')

- Outing people or threatening to out them

- Attempting to check or expose a transgender person's body

- Asking a transgender person what their 'real' ('dead') name is

- Asking transgender people about their genitals

- Using derogatory terms about gender identity

- Teasing someone because they are not masculine or feminine enough

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Gender-policing scenarios

Scenario 1

Mia is new to the school. When her grandparent asks how her new class is, she says, 'Bad hair days are a "thing" in this class. The boys always tease each other when someone gets a haircut. If they get what everyone thinks is a "cool" haircut, the teasing only lasts for the first bit of the day, but if it's seen as "lame" they make fun of the person all the time. The girls are always admiring the long straight ponytails of Daisy, Millie and Patria who are the popular girls, and then saying bad things about their own hair for being too curly, or too dark'.

What kinds of gender policing are happening in this scenario?
What kinds of pressure might this form of gender policing put on people?
What could be done to challenge this behaviour?

Scenario 2

Marcos, Li, Jarrah and Abdul spend a lot of time gaming online. They compete about who does best in the game and about how many gaming friends they have. Marcos has older brothers, and it always seems like he has the advantage over the other boys. He's always suggesting they add new gaming friends they don't even know, and then putting them down and saying they're chicken if they resist his suggestions.

What kinds of gender policing are happening in this scenario?
What kinds of pressure might this form of gender policing put on people?
What could be done to challenge this behaviour?

Scenario 3

Sarika feels uncomfortable about the ways the girls in her friendship group are always making body-shaming comments behind people's backs. They comment on everything – skin colour, hair, weight, height and how developed girls' bodies are. They also spend a lot of time taking selfies and trying out different poses and pouts to make themselves look 'hot'. Sarika ends up feeling like she must join in, because otherwise it is like she is not part of the group conversation.

What kinds of gender policing are happening in this scenario?
What kinds of pressure might this form of gender policing put on people?
What could be done to challenge this behaviour?

Scenario 4

Tina and Veronica tease Jamila, saying that she should get together with Assad because they would be a 'good match'. Jamila know they are referring to them having the same skin colour. Their attitude upsets her, because it seems racist, in addition to the horrible way Tina and Veronica pressure everyone to pair up. She is worried that if she shows how she feels, they will cut her out of their friendship group.

What kinds of gender policing are happening in this scenario?
What kinds of pressure might this form of gender policing put on people?
What could be done to challenge this behaviour?

Gender-policing scenarios

Scenario 5

Chen goes to language classes on the weekend to learn Mandarin, which his parents speak. He also learns the 'guzheng' or Chinese zither, a traditional Chinese musical instrument. His friends tease him about this and put pressure on him to join the footy team and play with them on the weekend instead. They suggest that he give up the guzheng and learn something like drums or electric guitar instead. It seems like lately there is more and more pressure in his friendship group to impress other people.

What kinds of gender policing are happening in this scenario?

What kinds of pressure might this form of gender policing put on people?

What could be done to challenge this behaviour?

Scenario 6

Yan affirmed her identity as a girl during Year 5. She likes to express her personality in the way she dresses and does her hair. She has her own ideas about what looks good and refuses to follow fashions unless she actually likes them. Some girls from the 'popular' group in her class interfere from time to time. They try to give her lessons about what she should wear and sometimes suggest that some of her choices aren't right, and this always seems like a put-down. In the popular group, everyone wears the same look.

What kinds of gender policing are happening in this scenario?

What kinds of pressure might this form of gender policing put on people?

What could be done to challenge this behaviour?

Scenario 7

Prue is neurodivergent. She has a strong interest in space travel and asteroids and has an incredible knowledge of astronomy. Lately boys and girls in her class started this game where they are trying to pair people off into 'perfect-match' couples. They've formed the idea that Prue should pair with Aston because he is also interested in science and nature, and cares a lot about climate change. They started teasing the 2 about being a couple. Prue became really distressed when they wouldn't accept that she didn't want to play this couple game. They started laughing at her for being too sensitive and told her they were only trying to 'help her be normal' because it was 'time she grew up'.

What kinds of gender policing are happening in this scenario?

What kinds of pressure might this form of gender policing put on people?

What could be done to challenge this behaviour?

Scenario 8

The boys in the class like to spend time at the local playground on their way home from school. A kind of competition has started around doing stunts on the play equipment. The situation has gotten quite dangerous. Last week Jandamarra was walking across the top of the monkey bars when he fell and broke his collarbone. That didn't stop the competition though. People are teasing anyone who chooses to just watch and not do any stunts, saying they're weak. They keep cheering on anyone who tries new stunts.

What kinds of gender policing are happening in this scenario?

What kinds of pressure might this form of gender policing put on people?

What could be done to challenge this behaviour?

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Teacher note: Teachers should read the content advice guidance in the Introduction well in advance, plan ahead with their school leadership team and colleagues, and revisit protocols for management of students who may show distress or engage in help-seeking. Inform students about upcoming content for Topic 8 in case they want to talk to a teacher, parent or carer in advance of or in response to the activities.

Reflecting on everyday practise

To what extent are patterns of gender-based dominance replicated in the playspace around the school?

What strategies do you use to challenge and prevent the use of gender-based 'put-downs' in the classroom?

What strategies do you use to assist students to mix across gender divides in order to develop effective working relationships with each other?

To what extent does policy extend to consistent practise in relation to the school's anti-bullying or diversity policies, specifically in relation to addressing harassment or discrimination based on sexuality, gender identity or intersex status?

In what ways do you contribute to actions and activities your school has in place to support the implementation of Respectful Relationships?

Optional extension activity for English

Arrange for students to research and report on a positive gender role model. The role model might be a contemporary person, for example, a sportsperson, celebrity, politician or scientist, a historical figure, or a fictional character. Along with their other accomplishments or positive characteristics and contributions, this role model should provide a wider sense of what it possible or desirable for people of their gender to do, be, become and contribute.

After the students have had time to conduct their research, and prepare their presentation, arrange for a gallery walk or presentation session to allow students to introduce their role model, describe some of their accomplishments, and note what they think can be learnt from their selected person.

Consider supporting students to share their presentations with the broader school community, for example, on a school noticeboard, at assembly, in a newsletter or on the school website.

Talking further

Encourage students to talk with parents, carers, grandparents or other adults in their lives about the ways they have found that gender pressures and expectations can affect people's choices and relationships.

Topic
08 Positive gender relationships

Aims

Activities within this topic area will assist students to:

- define gender-based violence

- develop strategies for building positive and respectful relationships

- explore the relationship between negative gender norms and acceptance of gender-based violence

- identify and normalise behaviours that demonstrate respect and recognition of the rights of others within interpersonal relationships

- understand what is meant by 'affirmative consent' in relation to intimate relationships

- demonstrate proactive peer-support and help-seeking strategies that can be used in response to instances of gender-based violence.

Content Advice

Some of the activities in this topic contain content that may be sensitive for some students. It is important to provide content advice in advance of lessons as well as at the commencement of a class. to this resource for further guidance on providing content advice.

The following icons indicate the need for content advice:

Provide content advice prior to an activity / lesson

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity / lesson

Informed by the evidence base

Patterns of gender-based violence in society affect children and young people. Family violence includes a range of physical, emotional, sexual, social, spiritual, cultural, psychological and economic abuses that occur in families, intimate relationships, extended families, kinship networks and communities. Family violence is often witnessed by the children who live in the household.[77] Children are victims of family violence when they hear, witness or are exposed to the effects of family violence on a family member as well as when the violence is directed towards them. In Australia, domestic, family and sexual violence is found across all cultures, ages and socio-economic groups, but the majority of those who experience these forms of violence are women.[78] Children who witness family violence are negatively affected. They are also more likely to be affected by violence as adults – either as victims of partner violence or as perpetrators of violence against children or partners. Some research shows that boys who witness their father use violence against their mother are up to 5 times more likely to use violence against their own partner when they grow up.[79, 80]

Research highlights that one of the most consistent predictors of the perpetration of violence against women at an individual level is a traditional view about gender roles and relationships.[69] A body of research has demonstrated that cultural understandings of 'masculinities' and 'femininities' operate as normative discourses or 'scripts' that shape people's identities, expectations and behaviours, regardless of their gender or sexuality. These discourses and norms intersect with race, class, age and other lines of identity and difference to shape what people presume to be desirable and permissible in relation to their social interactions.[81-84]

Some boys and men can become defensive in response to initiatives addressing prevention of gender-based violence. They may feel that the focus on the violence perpetrated by some men is an attack on men in general, and hence an attack on their own personal identity or integrity. This can lead to the presumption that they are being individually blamed or accused or that they are being expected to redress a wrong they did not perpetrate. In response, there can be an urge to defend one's membership group, to challenge the veracity of the data, to disbelieve the scale or impact of the problem, or to attribute blame on the victims themselves.[85] A combination of relevant and inclusive scenarios and information can help to build recognition of the effects of violence on targets and on witnesses.

Studies show that school-based social and emotional learning, violence prevention and respectful relationships initiatives can make a real difference, producing lasting change in attitudes and behaviours in students. [46–48] In effective respectful relationships programs, children and young people learn about the ways that power relations inform gender relationships. They learn how to translate a belief in respect for others into respectful communicative practises. This requires a focus on skills as well as attitudes. Studies show that effective programs employ participatory and interactive pedagogy. Participatory pedagogies stimulate the critical thinking necessary to interrogate social norms and the skills development needed to engage in a positive way with others.[86]

High rates of victimisation and associated trauma mean that in any class there will likely be students who have been affected by family violence or sexual violence. In any school, there will also be a proportion of staff affected. Some of those affected may find the focus on this material to be particularly sensitive. They may also be without established means of support, as many people do not disclose that they have suffered abuse or sexual violence in childhood or beyond.[87] Disclosures about bullying, family violence and sexual abuse can increase during or following provision of such programs, with some disclosures made to educators, while other students turn to helplines.[88] Given this likelihood, it's important that clear protocols and pathways for teacher response are clearly established in advance, that wellbeing staff are made aware of the timing of program delivery, and that students are provided with information about trusted external help sources that they may access by phone or online.[88]

Trauma-informed approaches to education recommend that teachers be informed about the strategies that may be useful to assist those affected to settle, connect and participate in class. Effective strategies include: providing opportunities for student voice, choice and control; establishment of positive and caring relationships; understanding the effects of trauma; and use of proactive approaches to provide wellbeing support.[89] To signal recognition of the possible effects of trauma being triggered, and to promote awareness of participation options and further support, it is appropriate to provide content advice – both in advance, and at the commencement of lessons addressing gender-based violence. Content advice can include description of options for levels of participation, and information about how to access support within and beyond the school.

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Acknowledge that this is a sensitive topic. Inform students that they will address a range of topics including interpersonal violence, sexual harassment and violence in the home. Reinforce the importance of respectful conversations when the class is dealing with sensitive topics. Revisit the class agreements as appropriate (see guidance in the learning activities provided in the introductory activities section of the resource on page 22) . Remind students that this may be a time to draw on their positive coping strategies as addressed in Topic 3: Positive coping and Topic 5: Stress management, and that help-seeking is also an important mechanism for coping, peer support and peer referral see Topic 6: Help-seeking.

Sample text for content advice about Topic 8

Across the next few lessons we will focus on positive gender relationships. This means unpacking issues like violence, gender-based violence and sexual harassment, exploring the notion of power in relationships developing our understanding of consent and the law, identifying how to have respectful consent conversations and role-playing ways we might seek help, support peers and respond safely to gender-based violence. If you think that the lessons might make you feel upset, your coping strategies may help you to stay calm. You can also speak to me, another teacher or a helper to get support. If this topic is upsetting for you today, you can do one of our quiet activities or we can arrange another place for you to work. You might want to talk later with someone else here at school or perhaps at home, and that is also okay.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

Self-care when teaching about sensitive issues.
Teaching about sensitive issues can cause teachers to reflect on situations affecting them personally or people they are close to. If you want to seek help on your own behalf, a list of support services can be found in the 'Teacher professional preparedness and support' section of the Introduction.

Activity 1: What is violence? What is gender-based violence?

Informed by the evidence base

A substantial body of research shows that social and emotional learning programs have many benefits, including in relation to improved student behaviour, prevention of bullying and harassment [90] and reductions in homophobic name-calling and sexual harassment.[91] Students who participate in social and emotional learning are also more likely to relate in positive and inclusive ways with those classmates who experience emotional and behavioural challenges.[92]

It is important that social and emotional learning programs include a focus on respectful relationships, and prevention of gender-based violence as homophobic and sexualised forms of bullying and harassment tend to start as students enter adolescence and increase as young people reach middle adolescence.[93] Research has found that those who bully others are also more likely to engage in homophobic name-calling, and sexual harassment, with boys more likely to take part in these behaviours than girls. Longitudinal studies have found that those who engaged in bullying behaviours and homophobic name-calling in early adolescence were more likely to engage in sexual harassment in their high school years. [93] Therefore social and emotional learning and bullying prevention programs should include a focus on prevention of homophobic name-calling and sexual harassment.[93]

Effective respectful relationships programs use a combination of critical-thinking and collaborative learning activities.[94] The collaborative learning tasks provide structured opportunities for students to mix across any friendship and gender divides, and further develop their capacity to treat each other with respect. The critical-thinking activities provide opportunities for students to challenge those gender norms and stereotypes which are associated with acceptance or normalisation of gender-based violence. As part of this effort it is important to name the different behaviours that constitute forms of gender-based violence, to consider the effects these actions can have on others, and to develop awareness of the ways that certain gender norms may lead to acceptance or normalisation of these forms of behaviour.

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Learning intentions

- Students will build a definition of interpersonal violence that includes physical, verbal, psychological, sexual, financial and image-based abuse.

- Students will give examples of the types of violence that can play out in face-to-face and digital environments.

- Students will identify the possible effects that violence can have for victims, observers and those who use violence against others.

Equipment

- Body Drawing example

- Pens, pencils, workbooks, large pieces of paper or digital devices

- A cheerful game to play or some cheerful or bouncy music for dancing

Method

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Coaching point:

Protecting privacy. In discussing the scenarios, students may make comparisons with their own experience. Ensure that they do not name the people involved when sharing from their own experience. Explain to them it is best not to use the classroom as a place to discuss worrying things that have happened at home or elsewhere. This is better done when everyone else in the class is not part of the conversation. It is better to tell that story to the teacher in a more private way. Use reminders at the start of the activity when you anticipate this might happen.

Protective interrupting is also a strategy that teachers can use, in an assertive and respectful way, to interrupt students who begin to disclose private or sensitive information about themselves or others. It is a teaching strategy designed to protect the person telling the story from disclosing in front of the class (redirecting students to a more supported context for disclosure instead), other people in the story from having their experiences discussed in a public setting, students from experiencing any distress at hearing the disclosure, and the fidelity of the lesson. If a student begins to disclose private information about themselves or others in the group space, respectfully interrupt the student by acknowledging their contribution and preventing

further disclosure, for example, 'Thank you. It sounds as though you have something important to talk about. Let's chat about this after the lesson when we can talk properly.' Prioritise meeting with the student(s) in a more private, safe space within the school as soon as possible.

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1. Inform students:

    The topic for this lesson will be gender-based violence. We will be listing the different kinds of violence, like physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, financial and online abuse. We will also be discussing how people might feel if they are affected by these kinds of violence. If any part of this lesson makes you feel upset, using your coping strategies may help you to stay calm. You can also speak to me or to another teacher or helper to get some support. If this topic is upsetting for you today, you can do one of our quiet activities or we can arrange another place for you to work. You might want to talk later with someone else here at school or perhaps at home, and that is also okay. Remember to be considerate in the way you discuss situations of this nature and mindful of how your actions may affect other people. We can help each other by working well together.

2. Ask students what they think is meant by the word 'violence'. Map their responses.

3. Build on their definitions by pointing out what while it is common to think of physical forms of violence, we sometimes miss other forms of interpersonal violence that also cause hurt, fear or distress, like emotional or psychological violence, sexual violence and financial violence (for example, when people steal or damage possessions or take money from people), or image-based abuse (for example, when people share private photos without permission, or if they share nudes, or sexual images). We already understand that bullying can take all of these forms. When we use the term 'gender-based violence' we are thinking of the ways that all these different forms of violence can happen because of someone's gender. Just like with bullying, most forms of gender-based violence can be experienced online, as well as face to face.

    Types of interpersonal violence

    - Physical violence – when a person slaps, pushes, kicks, throws objects, or uses objects to hurt a person, or when a person damages property or possessions, for example, smashing, throwing, stealing and hiding possessions

    - Verbal violence – saying, writing, posting or texting mean, hurtful or untrue things about a person to put them down

    - Psychological violence – deliberately excluding people, making rude or

threatening facial expressions or gestures, stalking people, threatening or scaring people, and humiliating, shaming or embarrassing people

- Sexual violence – unwelcome and unwanted sexual behaviour or contact that offends, humiliates, intimidates, upsets or hurts a person. It can be physical, verbal, written, visual or other conduct. It includes behaviour that does not involve actual touching, for example, forcing somebody to watch pornography or engage in sexting.

- Financial violence – when someone damages or steals another's belongings, steals their money, controls their money or prevents them from fair access to money or resources.

- Image-based abuse – when someone shares or threatens to share, a nude, sexual or intimate image or video of another person without their consent.

A definition of gender-based violence

Gender-based violence is a form of interpersonal violence. It includes forms of violence that target individuals or groups based on their gender that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering. Gender-based violence can affect anyone, however, girls, women and people of diverse gender and sexuality and intersex people are more often the victims of gender-based violence.

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Coaching point:
Terminology. Some people prefer to use the word 'target' rather than 'victim' to imply that the perpetrator made a choice and that their act was deliberate. Some prefer to use the word 'survivor' or 'victim-survivor' rather than the word 'victim' as they find this word more suggestive of strength and recovery. Others prefer the word 'victim' as suggesting the innocence of the targeted party. Many argue that it is important to avoid use of the label 'bully', as that suggests an identity, and to comment instead on naming the behaviour of the person doing the wrong thing.

Explain that students will now engage in mapping some of the behaviours that would be included in a definition of interpersonal violence and gender-based violence. Using the body diagram, ask students to map the actions or behaviours that can hurt, distress or harm others around the outside of the body. Ask for a few examples and show how they can be written on the outside of the body to signify that these are actions done to another. If not already suggested, prompt for some examples of verbal and psychological violence.

On the inside of the body students will map possible emotions that people may feel when they are the victim of some of the hurtful or harmful violent acts already identified. These emotional

responses are some of the effects of the violence on the victim. Students may like to refer to the 'emotions' list provided in Topic 1. Encourage them to build on prior learning about emotions.

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Coaching point:
Label the behaviour, not the person. When discussing violence, ensure that you model approaches to naming the violent behaviour, rather than labelling the person. This emphasises that the behaviour is a choice, and not an integral part of someone's identity. For example, talk about the person who bullied someone, rather than 'the bully'. Talk about the person who used sexual violence against another as the person who used violence, rather than 'the perpetrator'. Ensure that you identify that this behaviour is directed towards another person, as interpersonal violence is violence intentionally directed towards another. Careful attention to the language you use will help to draw attention both to the choice made by someone to use violence, and the impact of the violence on others. It is important that students learn that people make a choice whether or not to use violence, and that if they do choose to be violent towards others, it has negative effects on the person experiencing violence, on surrounding others and on the person who uses the violence.

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4. Arrange students into small groups of 3 to 5. Provide each group with a large piece of paper on which a body is drawn (Sample included in this activity). On the paper outside the body, ask students to record all the different types of violent acts that students may experience or witness in or around a school and when online with others. On the inside of the body, students can record the emotions the violence may trigger within the victim.

5. Once groups have completed their brainstorm, give them some time to prepare to report back. Arrange for different groups to report back against different types of violence, including verbal, physical, psychological, emotional, financial, sexual. and image-based abuse. Ask another group to report back on the emotions. Check if any groups want to add to each other's categories.

6. Ask, 'In what ways can witnesses or those closely connected to the victim also be affected by violence?' Have the groups revisit their 'emotions' list and put a tick next to emotions that could also be felt by the witnesses, or those closely connected to the victim.

7. Once this step is complete, ask, 'In what ways can the person who has used violence also be affected?' Invite students to discuss and put a cross next to the emotions that could also be felt by this person, or those closely connected to them. For example, students might consider guilt, shame, that people come to fear or dislike them, and the possibility that someone

who continues to use violence ends up as an adult who does this too.

8. Invite students to report back on what they noticed from this analysis.

9. Reinforce that the upset, hurt, and harm associated with violence can be felt not only by the victim of the act/s, but also observers, those who have used violence, and those in their circle. That is why violence prevention efforts set out to prevent harm that might occur for any and all of the parties, even though it has a focus on protecting the rights of the people who are victimised.

10. Display the completed body maps on the wall to refer to in the following activities.

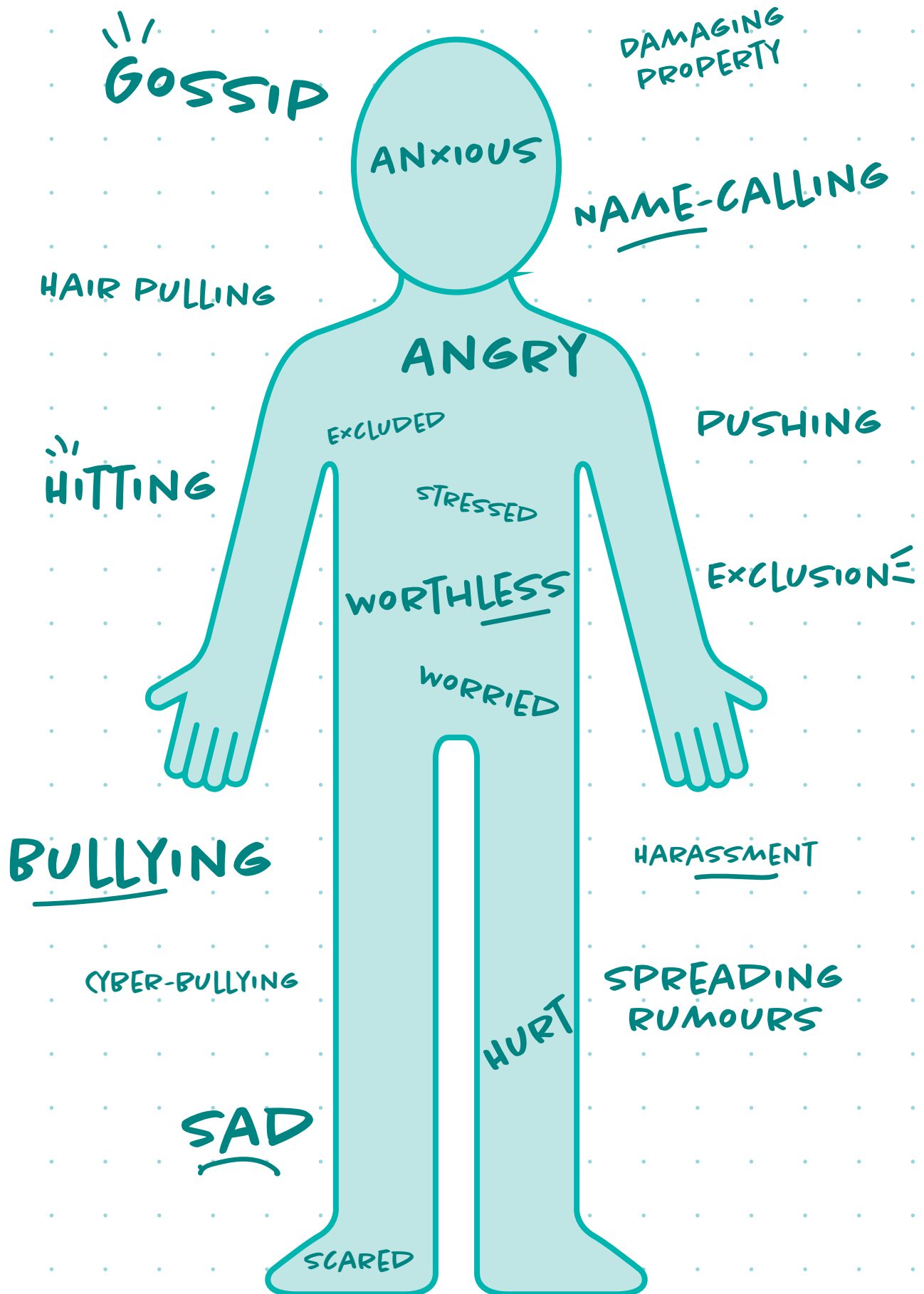**Provide content advice prior to an activity/lesson**

11. Inform students:

'In our next lesson, we will focus on understanding positive and negative uses of power and looking at some data related to the prevalence and patterns of gender-based violence.' Remind students that if this worries them, they can speak to you or to their helpers to get some support.

12. Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals, for example, ask students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip, which provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay. Follow up as soon as possible with any students who have indicated a concerned or worried response, demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help.

13. Provide a fun, energising activity following the review section of the lesson to lift the mood after this potentially sensitive content.

Review

Review the learning intentions by asking students to reflect on the different types of interpersonal violence that were identified in this activity including violence in digital environments and ways that violence can be gendered in nature. Ask some students to summarise the various emotional effects that violence can have on the different people involved. Ask some students to comment on the kinds of forms that gender-based violence can take.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

GOSSIP

DAMAGING PROPERTY

ANXIOUS

NAME-CALLING

HAIR PULLING

ANGRY

EXCLUDED

PUSHING

HITTING

STRESSED

WORTHLESS

EXCLUSION

WORRIED

BULLYING

HARASSMENT

CYBER-BULLYING

HURT

SPREADING RUMOURS

SAD

SCARED
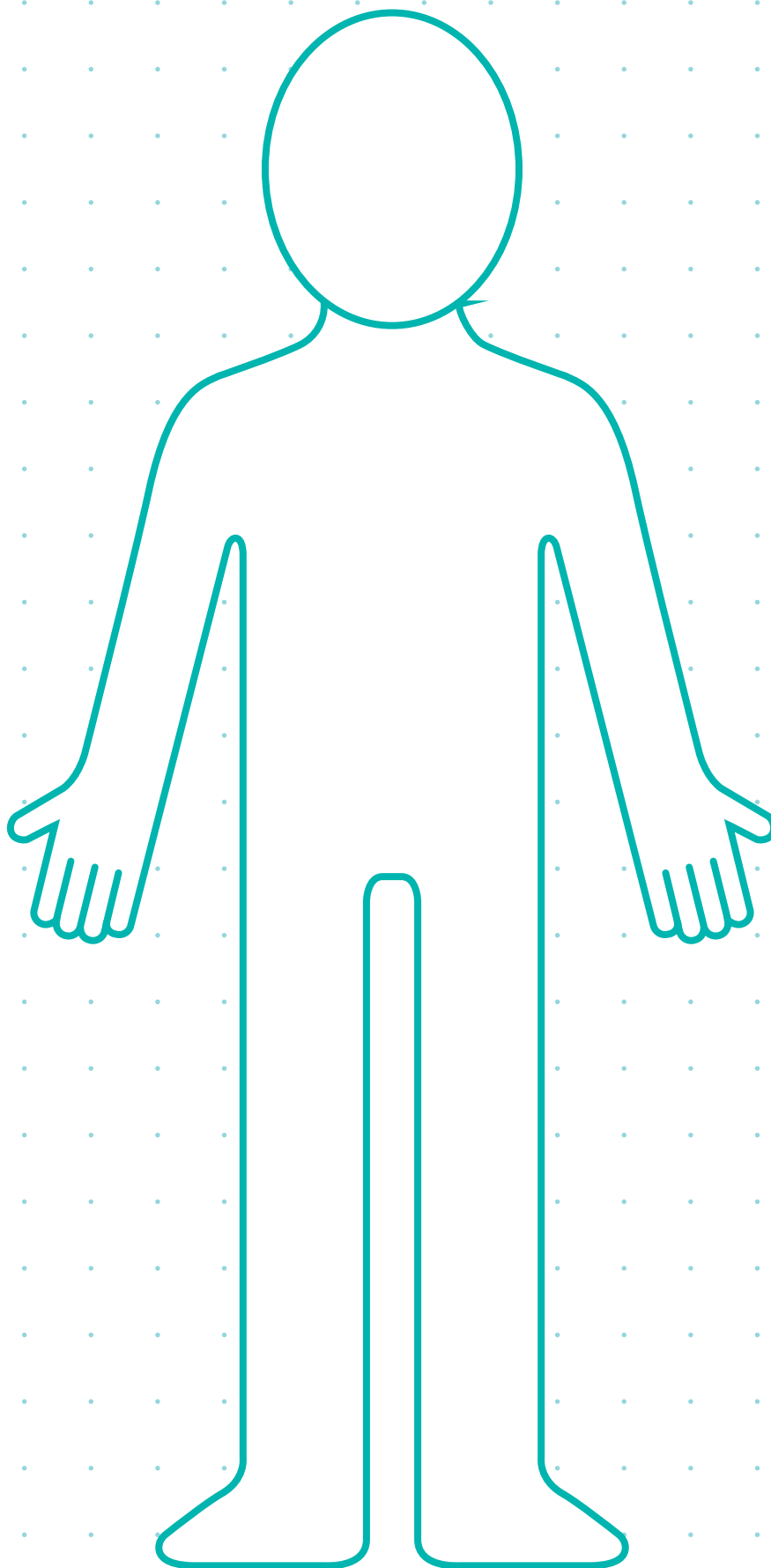
Activity 2: Understanding positive and negative uses of power in relationships

Informed by the evidence base

Research highlights that one of the most consistent predictors of the perpetration of violence against women at an individual level is a traditional view about gender roles and relationships.[95] Academics have demonstrated that cultural understandings of 'masculinities' and 'femininities' operate as normative discourses or 'scripts' that shape people's identities, expectations and behaviours, regardless of their gender or sexuality.[81-84] These discourses and norms intersect with race, class, age and other lines of identity and difference to shape what people presume to be desirable and permissible in relation to their social interactions. Gender-based violence is associated with unequal distribution of power. Power is exercised through control of resources, ideas and knowledge. It can be used in positive and negative ways. [96] For example, someone with power can decide to use their power to create positive change. But power can also be abused. Gender-based violence is an abuse of power. It can include the abusive use of physical power. It can also occur through the abuse of psychological or emotional influence, or coercive control, which is a pattern of abuse over a period of time, inclusive of behaviours that coerce, control and dominate family members.[97] In many societies, women are expected to be submissive to men and men expect to have women submit to them. This results in women having less power. Masculinity research identifies the importance of a focus on positive masculinities and a critique of violence-endorsing attitudes.[98] Gender norms can lead to men and boys believing it is more socially acceptable for them to express anger and rage than to show emotional vulnerability.[99] This can lead to the justification of acts of violence within and between genders and negatively affect their mental health and help-seeking.[100]

People of diverse gender or sexuality often experience disempowerment due to institutional and interpersonal forms of marginalisation and discrimination, and are disproportionately affected by violence.

[12–14, 72] Homophobic, transphobic and biphobic violence are forms of gender-based violence. They reflect negative and prejudiced attitudes and show up when people feel entitled to use violence against those who do not conform to the dominant gender norms. For example, when boys and men are teased because they act in a manner which is held to be 'feminine' or when girls and women are excluded or judged because they want to do things that are believed to be 'too masculine' and not 'proper for girls'.

Some boys and men can become defensive in response to initiatives addressing the prevention of gender-based violence. [101] Attribution theory suggests one reason for this is that the discussion can be experienced as an attack on men in general and on their own personal identity or integrity. This can lead to the presumption that they are being individually blamed or accused or that they are being expected to redress a wrong they did not perpetrate. In response, there can be an urge to defend one's membership group, to challenge the veracity of the data, to disbelieve the scale or impact of the problem, or to attribute blame to the victims themselves.[101] A combination of relevant and inclusive scenarios and data can help to demonstrate the different prevalence rates affecting men and women, while also building recognition of the effects of violence on victims and on witnesses.

Learning intentions

- Students will explore power relations within interpersonal relationships.

- Students will identify what it can feel like when a person with power or influence does not respect the rights or needs of those they have power over.

- Students will identify the importance of behaving responsibly when in a situation of power or influence over others.

- Students will engage with data showing the gendered pattern of interpersonal violence in the adult community, observing higher rates of victimisation for women, and those who are of diverse gender or sexuality.

Equipment

- Room to move
- 'Data' cards
- Pens, pencils, workbooks and paper or digital devices
- A cheerful game to play or some cheerful or bouncy music for dancing

📄 **Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson**

Method

Part A: Developing an understanding of power relations

1. Inform students:

   This lesson will consider understanding positive and negative uses of power and looking at some data related to the prevalence and patterns of gender-based violence. If any part of this lesson makes you feel upset, using your coping strategies may help you to stay calm. You can also speak to me or to another teacher or helper to get some support. If this topic is upsetting for you today, you can do one of our quiet activities or we can arrange another place for you to work. You might want to talk later with someone else here at school or perhaps at home, and that is also okay. Remember to be considerate in the way you discuss situations of this nature and mindful of how your actions may affect other people. We can help each other by working well together.

2. Explain that the class will play a game to explore the way we experience power in relationships. This will help us talk about how to make sure we do not abuse power in our relationships, and it will also help us to understand that it is not acceptable for others to abuse our rights within relationships.

3. Explain how to play the Robot and Controller Game. The game is played in pairs. One person is the robot and the other is the controller. The controller stands opposite the robot and raises their hand with their palm facing the robot's face. The robot must keep their nose the same distance from the controller's hand at all times.

4. The controller will signal through hand movement where they want the robot to move as they take the robot for a walk around the room. This should be done without speaking. The controller may move the robot forward or backwards, up or down, as they progress around the room.

5. Play for one minute. Then signal it is time to swap roles. Repeat the game for one minute.

6. Stop the game. To use the game to open a discussion about power relations, ask participants:

   - 'What was it like to be the robot in that game?' Ask for input about how it feels to be 'pushed around'.
   - 'What was it like to be the controller in that game?' Ask for input about how it feels to be in control.
   - 'When comparing it with real life, what does being the robot remind you of? What is it like when others can push us around without considering our needs or rights?'
   - 'When comparing it with real life, what does being the controller remind you of?'
   - 'What are some of the different ways people with power or influence can treat those they have power over?'
   - 'What responsibilities do people in power have to respect the rights of others with less power?'

7. Introduce the word 'dominant' to describe the position of the controller, with dominant meaning to have control over or more power than the other. Introduce the word 'submissive' to describe the position of the robot, with submissive meaning to go along with, or give in to the influence of another.

8. Explain that the class will now play a second game, the Mirror Game, so they can compare it with the first. This will help them to do some thinking about the qualities they might find in respectful relationships where the power relations are equal, rather than very unequal, like they are in the Robot and Controller Game.

9. To play the Mirror Game, organise participants into pairs and ask one person to be A and the other to be B. Explain that in this game, the aim is to work with your partner to create a perfect mirror reflection. In the first round, A will be the leader and B will play the mirror. With pairs facing each other, A will begin to move, and B will copy every action like a reflection. Challenge A to work out what they need to do to enable B to be a true mirror to their moves.

10. Once they have had a chance to play, ask the partners to swap roles so that B becomes the leader and A becomes the mirror. Select a couple of pairs that were doing a particularly good job of mirroring. Ask them to play again so the class can watch and work out what are some of the ingredients within a strong and equal partnership.

11. Use the game to open a discussion about power relations. Ask participants:

- 'What was it like to be the lead in the Mirror Game? What did you have to do?' Ask for input about how they need to focus on and be aware of their partner's capacity to keep up.

- 'What was it like to be mirror in that game?' Ask for input about how you need to focus on the other party, and how it feels harmonious when you can together accomplish a true mirroring.

- 'When comparing it with real life, what does working as the mirror pair remind you of? What is it like when 2 people work in close harmony or tune in to each other's needs and capacities?'

- 'What are the key differences between the 2 games?'

- 'What were the highly effective pairs we watched doing to be able to work so well together?'

- 'In what ways is this like what you would see in a respectful relationship where people give each other equal value as human beings?'

- 'In this game, harmony is created through mirroring. In real life, how do we create a sense of harmony and respect in our relationships?'

- 'In real life, what sorts of things could go wrong if friends, or couples involved in a romance, put too much effort into being the same, or always mirroring their partner?'

12. Arrange for students to work in pairs to design and demonstrate a boundary setting conversation where one person tells another they don't want to do what that person wants them to do, for example, refusing an invitation, resisting peer pressure, stating what they object to, making a request.

13. During the replay, experiment with changing players in some scenes to see whether it makes any difference to engage in the same communication between pairs of the same gender and pairs that are mixed. Discuss any challenges that present when people are trying to set boundaries with friends, peers and people of the same or a different gender.

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Coaching point:
Affirming strengths and skills used in group work. Opportunity exists to explore the ways that the strengths of leadership, creativity, honesty, forgiveness, kindness and fairness can be applied in group problem-solving situations. Invite students to name the teamwork actions that people in their task group used to help get the job done. Affirm these as important skills in group work and in problem-solving.

Part B: Learning about the prevalence and patterns of gender-based violence

1. Explain that in this activity, students are going to consider some data that tells us about how common different forms of gender-based violence are in our country.

2. Explain that the data for the teenage and adult population shows patterns about which genders are more likely to experience violence and which genders are more likely to use violence against other people. This data can change a bit over time, but the pattern tends to remain the same.

3. Arrange students into 4 groups and distribute 2 of the data cards to each group for them to share and discuss. Students will consider how the data they have compares to what they experience as they look around their school. Remind them to talk about patterns, rather than to report names of particular individuals. If they want to report on individuals' behaviour or experiences they are concerned about, remind them that it is best to make those reports directly to a teacher or wellbeing leader.

4. Each group will then report back to the class. During the report-back, ask students to share their data and summarise their findings. Note that the data is showing us that in general some genders are more likely to be bullied or treated in violent ways than others. This includes girls and women, and those of diverse gender or sexuality.

5. Ask, 'To what extent does it seem like everyone here gets equal access to resources, equipment and playspaces?', 'Does everyone do their equal share of class duties?' and ' To what extent does it seem like everyone here feels safe and respected by their peers?'

6. Inform students:

'In our next lesson, we will focus on active respect in peer relationships.' Remind students that if this worries them, they can speak to you or to their helpers to get some support.

7. Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals, for example, ask students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip, which provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay. Follow up as soon as possible with any students who have indicated a concerned or worried response, demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help.

8. Provide a fun, energising activity following the review section of the lesson to lift the mood after this potentially sensitive content.

Review

- Review the learning intentions by asking students what they learnt about power in this activity.

- Revisit the 'fish' diagram (Topic 7, Activity 1) where students identified the actions they could take to make a friendly, inclusive school that is free of put-downs, including those that relate to gender identity or to sexual identity. Ask students if they need to add any additional actions to make sure that other forms of gender-based violence do not happen at school or between students in non-school environments: for example, online, public transport or at sporting events.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

Coaching point:
Respect for one another. Invite responses that build an understanding of the complexity of the situation and the multiplicity of emotions that each of the parties might feel. Remind students of the importance of listening with respect when people present views that differ from their own. Point out that while various community members may hold different views and beliefs, the school is a place which provides the right for all students to be included and treated with respect, regardless of their views.

Coaching point:
Updating data. It's helpful to use the most up-to-date information available in lessons that use data. However, recent data is not always available, and data that is not recent can remain relevant as it may show patterns which persist. To check for updated statistics, useful sources of data include the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reports on the health and wellbeing of children and young people, and the annual Mission Australia Youth Survey Reports.

Coaching point:
Playtime check-ups. Make regular opportunities to check back in with students about how they are managing to 'play fair' and play 'gender fair' during break times. Reflect on how to ensure gender-fair play. Avoid use of a 'boys will be boys' script as this will signal that this is an acceptable performance of masculinity. Additionally, help students to consider alternative options if you observe that girls, members of minority groups and students with disability acquiesce when dominant students take over a playspace. To simply accept these norms may erroneously signal to students that boys or certain groups are entitled to more than their share of resources and should not be expected to exert the same control over their bodies as others.

Data cards

Question: Is bullying a common experience for young people?

Answer: About 43% of Australian Year 8 students report they were bullied monthly or weekly during the school year.

Around 94% of children who used bullying-like behaviours in the last 12 months had also been bullied by others.

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2022. Australia's children. Canberra: AIHW. Viewed 29 June 2022, https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/australias-children/contents/justice-and-safety/bullying

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Question: Can bullying affect mental health?

Answer: Yes. Research studies show that people who are bullied are around 4 times more likely to experience depression and anxiety than those who are not bullied.

Source: Källmén, H., & Hallgren, M. 2021. Bullying at school and mental health problems among adolescents: a repeated cross-sectional study. Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health, 151, 74. doi:10.1186/s13034-021-00425-y

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Question: Are mental health problems common for young people?

Answer: Yes.

Forty per cent of young people aged 16 to 24 in Australia experienced symptoms of a mental disorder in the previous year. Some of the most common forms of mental health problems included anxiety and depression.

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2020. Mental health. Canberra: AIHW. Viewed 01 November 2021, https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/mental-illness

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Question: What are some of the main issues of personal concern for Australians aged 15 to 19?

Answer: In 2022 the top 3 issues of personal concern for Australians aged 15 to 19 were coping with stress, school or study problems and mental health.

Young women were more than twice as likely to be extremely or very concerned about mental health (45.8%) compared with young men (21.5%), and rates of high concern were highest for gender-diverse people at 65.9%.

Source: Mission Australia 2022 survey of yount people aged 15 to 19 https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/research-impact-policy-advocacy/youth-survey

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Question: Is feeling lonely a common problem for young people in Australia?

Answer: Nearly a quarter of young people aged 15 to 19 (23.5%) said they felt lonely most of or all the time. Rates were highest for gender-diverse young people (44.1%), followed by young women (25.9%) and lower again for young men (15.7%).

Source: Mission Australia 2022 survey of 15–19-year-olds https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/research-impact-policy-advocacy/youth-survey

Data cards

Question: What are the top 3 reasons why young people aged 15 to 19 experience discrimination or unfair treatment?

Answer: The top 3 reasons for people being treated unfairly in Australia are: gender (37%), mental health (28%), and race or cultural background (28%).

Two in 5 (40.2%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported they had been unfairly treated or discriminated against in the last year. Almost half (48.5%) said that race/cultural background was the reason for their unfair treatment. The next most common reasons were mental health (39.2%) and gender (33.2%).

Source: Mission Australia 2022 survey of 15–19-year-olds https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/research-impact-policy-advocacy/youth-survey

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Question: Is sexual harassment common in Australia?

Answer: Yes. Over half (53%) of adult women and a quarter of adult men (25%) report being sexually harassed since the age of 15.

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2019. Family, domestic, and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story 2019. Cat. no. FDV 3. Canberra: AIHW.

Question: Does sexual assault happen more often to women or to men in Australia?

Answer: It happens more to women. 80% or 4 out of 5 victims of sexual assault are women. Younger women experience higher rates. Around a quarter of all female sexual assault victims reported to the police were aged between 15 and 19 years.

Source: ABS 2017b. Recorded crime—victims, Australia, 2016. Canberra, ABS

Question: How common is it for people to observe harassment of people of diverse sexualities or genders at school?

Answer: Very common. Over half (54%) of Australian secondary school students report hearing others harass students of diverse gender or sexuality.

Source: Ullman, J. 2021, Free to Be...Yet?: The second national study of Australian high school students who identify as gender and sexuality diverse. Centre for Educational Research, School of Education, Western Sydney University, Penrith.

Activity 3: Active respect in peer relationships

Informed by the evidence base

The development of empathy is pivotal in the prevention of discrimination and violence. Peers who have an empathetic engagement with the target of violence are more likely to proactively respond with acts of support or kindness.[102] Those with rights-affirming attitudes are less likely to engage in gender-based violence.[68, 69] Research suggests that it is important to equip bystanders to become upstanders who challenge the sexist, homophobic and transphobic attitudes and actions that can lead to forms of gender-based violence.[103] Effective learning activities focus on developing positive strategies for intervention, and on advancing the skills needed to carry out these strategies within complex social contexts.[67, 75, 76]

Continuing to develop students' 'emotions' vocabulary, encouraging them to monitor emotions in themselves and others, and building awareness of people's rights to fair, inclusive and respectful treatment helps to build empathy. While the victims of racist, sexist, homophobic or transphobic treatment are the ones most damaged by it, such behaviours harm everyone. They encourage unhealthy masculine behaviours, normalise disrespect and violence, and perpetuate limiting gender stereotypes.

Learning intentions

- Students will describe the kinds of gender-based violence that may be witnessed, experienced or used against other people in and around the school.
- Students will identify the behaviours and actions they value in respectful friendships.
- Students will identify the key behaviours indicative of respectful relationships and explore these as potential standards for cross-gender relationships.
- Students will nominate what they think 'respect' would look like in romantic or intimate relationships.

Equipment

- 'One hundred positive verbs' handout
- 'Seventy negative verbs' handout
- 'Respect advice needed' scenarios
- Pens, pencils, workbooks and paper or digital devices
- A cheerful game to play or some cheerful or bouncy music for dancing

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Method

1. Inform students:

   This lesson will consider active respect in peer relationships and work on some scenarios to provide useful advice about where students are not being respectful. Some of the examples may remind you of something unpleasant you have experienced. If any part of this lesson makes you feel upset, using your coping strategies may help you to stay calm. You can also speak to me or to another teacher or helper to get some support. If this topic is upsetting for you today, you can do one of our quiet activities or we can arrange another place for you to work. You might want to talk later with someone else here at school or perhaps at home, and that is also okay. Remember to be considerate in the way you discuss situations of this nature and mindful of how your actions may affect other people. We can help each other by working well.

2. Write the word 'respect' on the whiteboard. Ask, 'What is respect?' Collect some ideas from students. Explain that showing respect to someone means acting in a way that shows care for a person's feelings and wellbeing. Respect is something that we show regardless of how we feel. It does not have to be based on an emotion that is, only treating people respectfully when we are in the mood to do it. Rather, true respectful behaviour is based on a decision to treat people in a way that respects their rights.

3. Explain that respect shows up in behaviour. Ask the class to brainstorm positive friendship behaviours. What do good friends *do*? Remind them that 'doing' words are called 'verbs'. They are actions, like 'greet', 'support' and 'wave'. When they brainstorm what good friends do they should try to choose verbs or 'doing' words – things a person *does*. In this case, a verb can be more useful than an adjective,

because it suggests what we can *do*, rather than describing what we are *like*. For example, 'listen' is a verb. 'Attentive' is an adjective. 'Suggest' is a verb. 'Helpful' is an adjective. Put students in groups and start a positive 'verbs race', with groups aiming to think up the largest number of positive 'friendship verbs' in the allocated time. Ask the group with the largest collection to read their words out. Check to see that all the words are verbs. If some are not verbs, invite contributions from classmates who can transform the words into verbs. Invite any groups who had words that were not included in the first group's list to add their verbs. Refer students to the list of '100 positive verbs'. They should check to see if they thought of any that are not on this list.

4. Ask the class to do a 'gender check' on the list of positive or 'befriending' verbs, and note that these actions do not belong to any particular gender. As verbs, they are actions that can be demonstrated by anyone.

5. Introduce the term 'upstander' by noting that a bystander may also decide to become an upstander. An upstander is someone who take positive action to assist the person or people who are the target of disrespect or violence. They may take an action during or after an event, to show they do not support the negative behaviour and that they care about how it affects the person who has been wrongly treated.

6. Ask students to refer to the list of 'One hundred positive verbs' and pick the top 10 they would choose to have demonstrated by their friends. These are also actions that can be used by an upstander, even if they do not see themselves as someone's friend. Prompt them with the phrase, I appreciate it when my friends do this...

7. Ask students to pair–share to make comparisons, explaining their choices. Then arrange for pairs to meet with another pair, making a group of 4 with mixed gender groups where possible. Once in the group of 4, the original partners should introduce their partner's choices, and explain why that person values those actions.

8. Invite students to report back on what they noticed as they compared choices. Ask, 'What sorts of actions are valued within friendships?'

9. Shift the thinking to actions that are valued in friendships with a person of another gender. Ask:
   • 'Would you choose some different verbs or the same ones?'
   • 'Does it make any difference?'
   • 'Would you change your top ten? What would you choose?'
   • 'Why or why not?'

10. Point out that 'respectful' is an inclusive adjective in that it can cover a lot of actions. Ask, 'What does respect look like in action? What does it sound like in action? What is the opposite of respect?' Refer to the list of 70 negative verbs for inspiration. 'What emotions do we feel when we sense that other people are showing respect for us?'

11. Ask the class to anticipate a time in the future when they might enter a romantic relationship. Which of the respectful behaviours do they anticipate they would particularly value in a romantic relationship?

12. Arrange for students to work in groups to respond to one of the **'Respect Advice Needed'** scenarios where a peer is asking for advice about how to show respect in a situation they are finding difficult. Remind them about the role of decision-making here, as highlighted at the start of this lesson.

    Invite students to report back with their advice, highlighting the practicalities of how to show respect in action.

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Coaching point:
Scenario selection. When selecting scenarios to use, you may wish to make modifications to align with student needs and the local context.

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13. Inform students:

    'In our next lesson, we will focus on the important topic of affirmative consent. This will include working with scenarios – for example, when peers pressure others to do things they think are not okay for them, like having sexual contact or watching pornography, and other situations where an adult or a person met online might be grooming a young person. Remind students that if this worries them, they can speak to you or to their helpers to get some support.'

14. Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals, for example, ask students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip, which provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay. Follow up as soon as possible with any students who have indicated a concerned or worried response, demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help.

15. Provide a fun, energising activity following the review section of the lesson to lift the mood after this potentially sensitive content.

Review

Review the learning intentions by asking students for some examples of key behaviours that indicate respect within relationships, including romantic relationships.

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Coaching point:

What respect looks like. A focus on behaviours or on what people can DO to show respect can be more empowering than a focus on qualities. 'I wait my turn' signals more clearly what is expected than 'I am patient'. It is important to be able to name the behaviours that constitute disrespect, and those that are respectful. This specificity helps peers and teachers to address in an educative way comments like 'I was only joking'. Such comments work to erase or excuse gender-based harassment and violence. Naming the behaviour can be an important first step in signalling that it is unacceptable, disrespectful, hurtful or harmful. Equally, it is important to be able to name the positive behaviour to provide endorsement for and encouragement of these behaviours. Use a strengths-based approach to behaviour management, aiming to find at least 5 to 8 positives to acknowledge for any negative behaviour that must be named. For example, 'It's good to see you ready and listening', 'I see you have already made a start', and 'It's great to see you have all lined up so quickly.'

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You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

'Respect advice needed' scenarios

Scenario 1: Respect and religious differences

Joseph was feeling confused. At school he learnt it was important for everyone to be treated with respect, regardless of their culture, gender, sexuality, race, religion or abilities. Joseph really liked the idea of human rights, but there were some differences between this and the religious beliefs of his family. In his community they were taught to treat people with kindness and respect. But they also learnt that their religion did not allow same-sex relationships and would not provide a marriage service or blessing for people of the same sex. He was trying to figure out the way to show respect to someone, and treat them as equal, when his religion did not agree with something they agreed with. He was pretty sure that this would become even more important as he moved into high school, and his friends and classmates started dating.

• What suggestions can you provide for Joseph about how to show respect for others, even when you have different religious beliefs?

Scenario 2: Respect and peer pressure to brag about sexist behaviour

Leo finds himself caught up in a kind of bragging competition with his friends where they set out to impress each other by talking about pornographic videos they've seen online. They're also always trying to make sexual jokes about girls. They never do this where they think they will get overheard or told off. Leo wants this to stop, but he's not sure what to do. The whole 'competition' thing seems to be making it worse and worse.

• What suggestions can you provide for Leo about how to help his friends show respect for others, rather than engage in competitive sexist talk?

Scenario 3: Respect and peer pressure to make race-based friendships

Amarika feels bad about how her group of 3 friends always cut out other people they think aren't good enough to be in their group. She particularly notices how they do this to Chi. She and Chi are neighbours and walk to school together. They get on really well. But when they get to school, her other friends tease Chi about her name and leave her out of group chats. It's made pretty clear that Amarika can't mix with both her friends and Chi when at school. Amarika thinks this decision may be racist.

• What suggestions can you provide for Amarika about how to help her friends show respect for others, and not take racist attitudes about those with different cultural backgrounds?

Scenario 4: Respect and pressure to form romantic relationships

Gabe is sick of the way people in the class are always trying to match-make people into relationships. If anyone has a close friendship with someone, people try to make out that they are dating. Then classmates spread rumours to say these people like each other. For Gabe it gets in the way of the friendships that Gabe has with the boys who play soccer at lunch time. It is even making Gabe wonder if they should quit soccer.

• What suggestions can you provide for Gabe about how to help classmates show respect for people's cross-gender friendships, and not try to push people into being couples?

Seventy negative verbs

Admonish	Bash	Dictate	Grab
Ignore	Nag	Rule	Threaten
Assault	Bump	Divulge	Grope
Interrupt	Offend	Scoff	Terrify
Annoy	Boast	Embarrass	Harass
Insult	Overrun	Squabble	Tease
Argue	Boss	Envy	Harm
Isolate	Prevent	Scorn	Upset
Allege	Cheat	Exclude	Hide
Jeer	Punish	Sneer	Undermine
Attack	Compete	Fight	Humiliate
Judge	Quit	Stigmatise	Vanquish
Berate	Criticise	Force	Hinder
Kick	Rebuff	Snarl	Wreck
Brag	Damage	Frighten	Hurt
Lecture	Ridicule	Spoil	Yell
Bruise	Demand	Grumble	
Manipulate	Ruin	Taunt	

One hundred positive verbs

Agree	Organise	Enjoy	Sympathise
Know	Calm	Respect	Humour
Appreciate	Offer	Forgive	Trust
Laugh	Confide	Reassure	Honour
Assert	Please	Find	Talk
Love	Demonstrate	Rejoice	Heed
Beam	Prepare	Foster	Try
Like	Dedicate	Reward	Imagine
Celebrate	Produce	Fetch	Tell
Listen	Encourage	Remind	Invent
Congratulate	Promise	Gather	Include
Look	Endorse	Remember	Intuit
Commiserate	Protect	Greet	Think
Motivate	Energise	Resist	Insist
Coordinate	Play	Give	Understand
Meet	Enliven	Smile	Invite
Care	Plan	Get	Value
Make	Enthuse	Support	Inform
Consider	Queue	Grin	Volunteer
Nurture	Excite	Surprise	Interpret
Cheer	Risk	Help	Wave
Notice	Entertain	Show	Joke
Clap	Rally	Hear	Wait
Observe	Educate	Settle	Keep
Create	Realise	Hug	Welcome

Activity 4: What is consent? Is this consenting?

Informed by the evidence base

Romantic relationships are common in early adolescence (from 10 to 13 years). [104] By age 12 it is common for young people to refer to each other using common heterosexual romantic terms like 'boyfriend' and 'girlfriend'.[105–107] While attachments at this age are generally brief and involve limited physical intimacy, they typically reproduce normative scripts of 'adult' relationships, for example, they refer to 'asking out,' and 'breaking up' and commonly reproduce potentially harmful gender roles like male dominance and female submission.[105–107]

Australian research found that around a third of those young people aged from 14 to 18 who had been in a relationship had experienced one or more forms of relationship abuse.[108] While reports of physical and emotional abuse were similar for young men and young women in this study, women were almost 3 times as likely to report sexual victimisation in their relationships as men, a finding in line with international literature on adult patterns of relationship violence.[108]

Several research studies illustrate that there can be gender and age differences in understandings of consent. When responding to scenarios, young women are more likely than young men to accurately identify when sexual assault has occurred.[109, 110] Sexual assault is less likely to be identified when it occurs in the context of ongoing romantic or sexual relationships and when females are seen to have initially invited the sexual encounter.[109, 111] Young people are also less likely to accurately identify non-physical forms of sexual coercion than physical forms of coercion.[109] Several research studies illustrate that there can be gender and age differences in understandings of sexual consent. When responding to scenarios, young women are more likely than young men to accurately identify when sexual assault has occurred.[109, 110] Sexual assault is less likely to be identified when it occurs in the context of ongoing romantic or sexual relationships and when females are seen to have initially invited the sexual encounter. [109, 111] Young people are also less likely

to accurately identify non-physical forms of sexual coercion than physical forms of coercion.[109]

Students benefit from learning about the laws, policies and school rules and standards that exist to protect people from gender-based violence and discrimination. Research shows that the law can have a strong influence on community social norms, but that this is dependent on people having a good awareness and understanding of the law.[69, 112] Additionally, women who are aware that violence is against the law are more likely to report violence and are less likely to blame themselves.[113] However, Australian studies show that while most young people recognise that partner violence and sexual assault are against the law, a significant minority do not.[68, 69] There is therefore a strong rationale for teaching students about current laws, including those relating to consent, sexual assault and family violence.

Learning intentions

- Students will learn about the meaning of consent, including sexual consent, in intimate relationships.
- Students will review scenarios to discuss whether consent was asked for, given or refused.
- Students will learn that there are laws relating to sexual assault, sexual harassment, grooming and child abuse.

Equipment

- 'Is this person consenting?' scenarios
- Information about consent and the law, for teacher reference
- Consent script bank
- Pens, pencils, workbooks and paper or digital devices
- A cheerful game to play or some cheerful or bouncy music for dancing

Coaching point:

Protective interrupting. Teachers can use this strategy in an assertive and respectful way to interrupt students who begin to disclose private or sensitive information about themselves or others. It is a teaching strategy designed to protect the person telling the story from disclosing in front of the class (redirecting students to a more supported context for disclosure instead), other people in the story from having their experiences discussed in a public setting, students from experiencing any distress at hearing the disclosure, and the fidelity of the lesson. If student begins to disclose private information about themselves or others in the group space, respectfully interrupt the student by acknowledging their contribution and preventing further disclosure, for example, 'Thank you. It sounds as though you have something important to talk about. Let's chat about this after the lesson when we can talk properly.' Prioritise meeting with the student(s) in a more private, safe space within the school as soon as possible.

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Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Method

1. Inform students:

    In this lesson, we will learn about consent and the law. We will also discuss scenarios to check whether consent has been given or not in a particular situation. The lesson will include situations where people pressure others to do things they think are not okay for them, like having sexual contact or watching pornography, and other situations where an adult or a stranger met online might be grooming a young person. Some of the examples may remind you of something unpleasant that you or someone you know may have experienced, however, the lesson content is designed to help you understand how to stay safe and how the law can protect you. No one needs to reveal or share their own experiences.

    If any part of the lesson makes you feel upset, using your coping strategies may help you to stay calm. You can also speak to me or to another teacher or helper to get some support. If this topic is upsetting for you today, you can do one of our quiet activities or we can arrange another place for you to work. You might want to talk later with someone else, here at school or at home, and that is also okay. Remember to be considerate in the way you discuss situations of this nature and mindful of how your actions may affect other people. We can help each other by working well.

Part A: Consent and the law

2. Ask students what they think the term 'consent' means in relation to sexual interactions.

Definition of 'consent'

Consent is an informed, free and voluntary agreement that is given without any form of pressure, by someone who is in a fit state to make their decision. In terms of sexual contact, 'affirmative consent' is where a person takes active steps to make sure they have found out whether another person is consenting or is a willing participant who wants to engage in sexual activity, before and during sexual activity. This can include but is not limited to verbally asking and getting a verbal 'yes' or a reciprocating move like kissing, or nodding in response to a question about whether they are ha ppy to continue. This includes asking before sexual touching or kissing, as well as before other forms of sexual activity like intercourse. Checking for consent also continues during sexual activity.

In terms of sexual contact, 'affirmative consent' is where a person takes active steps to make sure they have found out whether another person is consenting or is a willing participant who wants to engage in sexual activity, before and during sexual activity. This can include verbally asking and getting a verbal 'yes', or a reciprocating move in response to a question, like kissing or nodding, and it is continuous. This means that people must check along the way. This includes asking before sexual touching or kissing, as well as before other forms of sexual activity like intercourse.

Checking for consent also continues during sexual activity. It is not enough to assume that a person has consented. Each person is responsible for checking. A person cannot be understood to consent just because they do not resist the act either verbally through what they say or physically through what they do. It is also not consent if they were forced, harmed or were in fear of force or harm of any kind, or if they were pressured also called coerced or intimidated made to feel scared. It is not consent if they were asleep, unconscious, strongly affected by alcohol or other drugs or if they were not in a fit mental state to give consent.

A person can withdraw their consent at any time. If a person changes their mind, or says something like 'stop', then they no longer consent, and the activity should stop. The laws about consent also apply to sharing of intimate image, or sexts, sometimes also called nudes. This includes taking or sharing images of someone who is naked, partly naked, posing sexually or doing a sexual act.

3. Explain to students that today they will learn what the law says about the age that people can give consent to sexual interactions. It is important to understand these laws, as the law says that it is illegal to start or continue sexual activity without consent. This does not just apply to sexual intercourse, but other forms of sexual activity as well.

Age of consent

Laws about the age of consent can differ from state to state, and from country to country. The age of consent to sexual activity in Victoria is 16 years. If you are 16 years old and older, you can legally have sex or another sexual activity with another person who is 16 years or older, as long as you both agree to it. However, even if you are above the age of consent, it is a crime for someone who is caring for you or supervising you – like a teacher, youth worker, foster carer, step-parent, religious leader, sport coach or counsellor – to have sex with you while you are under 18. It is also a crime for a person to have sexual intercourse with a close family member who is 16 years or older, including a parent, child, sibling, grandparent or grandchild.

In Victoria, the law says that no one under the age of 12 can agree to sexual activity. They are not old enough to give consent.

If you are aged 12 to 15, even if you agree, legally a person who is more than 24 months older than you can't have sex with you, can't touch you sexually, can't get you to touch them sexually and can't perform a sexual act in front of you.

This means that people who are between the age of 12 to 15 and are also within 24 months of each other's age, can give consent, if they are in a fit state, and if the consent is actively sought and given and truly without pressure.

To check for updates on the law, refer to Youth Law Australia's information about consent and the law. To check for updates on the law, refer to the Youth Law Australia website.

4. Explain that consent is not just about being old enough to give consent. For consent to be truly consent it must be:

- affirmative – this means people need to actively ask and find out whether the other person consents or not

- mutual – all involved are consenting

- freely given – no person feels obliged, pressured or threatened

- informed – every person knows exactly what they are consenting to

- certain – each person is sure that they want to engage in the sexual activities agreed to and certain they understand whether the other person can and has given consent

- clear – each person involved has given the consent in a way that it is fully understood by the other person/s involved

- specific – consent to one kind of sexual activity is not consent to every kind of sexual activity

- ongoing – all people involved must continue to consent to what is happening. This means consent can be withdrawn at any time and this means the activity must end immediately.

- given by someone old enough – this relates to the age of the people involved and the laws about age of consent

- given in a fit state – this means the person must not be asleep, unconscious, or so strongly affected by alcohol or other drugs that they are not in a fit state to give consent.

5. Explain to students that there are a few terms it's important for them to understand. These terms are used to describe actions that are against the law when consent is not given or cannot be given for sexual activity.

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual behaviour in situations where a reasonable person would expect that the person on the receiving end might feel offended, humiliated, intimidated or undermined. Sexual harassment can be physical, verbal or written including texting, social media posting or messaging, or by displaying unwanted sexual posters or screensavers. Sexual harassment can include unwelcome sexual touching, staring, unwanted requests to go on dates, requests for sexual favours, suggestive jokes and any unwelcome gesture, action or comment of a sexual nature aimed at a person or in their presence, like intrusive questions about a person's private life. Sexual harassment is never the fault of the victim. Sexual harassment is against the law, including in workplaces and schools.

Sexual assault or sexual violence is unwanted sexual behaviour, including unwanted kissing and touching and sexual intercourse. It can also include behaviour that does not involve actual touching, like forcing someone to watch pornography or sexual acts. It can also include saying sexual things about someone or telling stories or posting pictures of a sexual nature about someone. Sexual assault or sexual violence is never the fault of the victim. Sexual assault is a crime.

Stalking is when someone won't stop bothering you with unwanted contact or attention and repeatedly contacts, harasses or spies on you in a way that causes distress, fear and disruption. Stalking is never the fault of the victim. Stalking is a crime.

Grooming is when an adult befriends a child and sometimes their family as well to win the trust of the child and then trick them into accepting sexual forms of contact between them, like sexual touching, or sending nudes or sexual images or videos of themselves. This can happen in person or online. A child is not old enough to be able consent to a sexual relationship with an adult. The adult knows this, and this is why they use combinations of trickery, bribery, threats and secrecy when they try to groom someone. Sometimes people who do grooming online even pretend to be a young person to win the trust of the child. Grooming is a crime. It is a crime for an adult to have sexual contact with a child. Being groomed is never the fault of the victim.

Sexting also called image-based abuse, or sending nudes describes sending naked, sexual or indecent photos using a computer, mobile phone or other digital device. Sexting can be a crime if you intentionally send an intimate image of a person under 18 to others, even if that person agrees to the image being sent. Threatening to send an intimate image of a person to others if the person believes that you will carry about the threat may also be a criminal offence. An 'intimate image' means a moving or still image that shows a person engaged in sexual activity, or in a sexual manner or context, or the genital or anal region of a person or if a person is female, or a transgender or intersex person identifying as female, the breasts of the person.

Taking, sending, and storing sexual photos of children under 18 is classified as child pornography and this is against the law. Other people are not allowed to do this to you. And you are not allowed to do this to others. Currently the only exceptions to this being illegal in Victoria are if you are under 18 yourself, and nobody in the image is more than 2 years younger than you, and the image does not show an act that is a serious offence. However, sexting is still understood as a form of sexual offence if it is without consent, and against the wishes of one of the affected parties.

Part B: Thinking about consent in peer interactions

1. Provide students with access to copies of the 'consent script bank' and ask them think about the different ways that people might:

   • ask for and keep checking for consent

   • enthusiastically agree or give consent

   • set limits on consent

   • refuse or withdraw consent.

2. Explain that students will now have an opportunity to check their understanding of consent, by reviewing some scenarios. They will be checking the scenarios to see if they think consent has been asked for or not, given or refused, or given and later withdrawn. They will also be thinking about whether they have any advice for the characters about consent, respect or safety.

3. Before commencing the scenario work, ask students, 'What might be meant by "non-verbal" communication?' Discuss the ways someone might refuse or indicate, without using words, that they do not want to continue something, for example, looking or turning away, not making eye contact, pushing away, leaving, holding up a hand up in a 'stop' gesture, blocking the other person's hand or not engaging in an activity when asked to do so, for example, freezing or responding differently. Explain that with affirmative consent laws, it is important to notice body language or non-verbal cues that someone is not feeling comfortable or confident with what is happening.

4. Arrange for students to work in small groups. Allocate a couple of 'Is this consenting?' scenarios to each group and provide time for them to discuss and prepare to report back.

5. During the report-back phase, ask whether their responses would differ at all if the characters were of a different gender. Emphasise that affirmative consent applies regardless of gender.

....

Coaching point:Using the scenarios to reinforce key information. Aim to address each scenario during the report-back, as the collection covers a range of different types of sexual harassment or sexual assault, and it's important that students are aware of their rights to be free from harassment.
....

6. Remind students of the many help-seeking pathways in the school and elsewhere (refer to Topic 6: Help-seeking). Encourage them to act sometime after class if they want to talk with someone about a concern they have in relation to situations where they, or people they know, have been tricked or pressured or forced to experience something without their consent.

7. Point out that there are some people who try to dismiss how serious it is to sexually harass or sexually assault someone. They might make excuses like: 'I was only mucking around.' 'It was only a joke.' 'They don't mind.' 'Everyone else is doing it.' 'It's not a big deal.' To think something is acceptable does not mean that it is. Sexual harassment and sexual assault are never acceptable.

....

Coaching point:
Why include scenarios about exposure to pornography? Most young people will either accidentally or intentionally encounter online pornography at some time during childhood or early adolescence.[114] A large-scale national survey in Australia found that 44 per cent of children aged 9–16 had encountered sexually explicit material in the previous month.[115] A United Kingdom study with young people aged from 11 to 16 years found that 94 per cent had encountered pornography before the age of 14 years.[116] Pornography consumption can influence people's sexual knowledge, attitudes and behaviour, as well as their perceptions of the opposite sex.[117–120] Research shows a significant relationship between high levels of pornography consumption and attitudes supporting violence against women.[118, 121, 122]

....

8. Inform students:

    In our next lesson we will engage with additional scenarios which include examples of sexual harassment by peers. The focus will be on how to provide peer support for those affected, and on how to be a positive bystander or upstander. It's okay to feel uncomfortable about this content.

9. Remind students that if this worries them, they can speak to you or to their helpers to get some support. Be proactive about having conversations with students prior to this next lesson.

10. Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals, for example, ask students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip, which provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay. Follow up as soon as possible with any students who have indicated a concerned or worried response, demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help.

11. Provide a fun, energising activity following the review section of the lesson to lift the mood after this potentially sensitive content.

Review

Invite students to sum up some of the key information they have addressed in relation to consent and the law. Ask them to make comments about how engaging with the scenarios played a role in clarifying the kinds of situations that require consent.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

'Is this person consenting?' scenarios

Scenario 1:

Melody (14) and Ray (14) had been friends since primary school but ended up in different secondary schools. They met up again at a local football match while they were both there to barrack for their older sisters who were in the team. They got talking, and Melody asked Ray if he would be keen to meet up again the next week during the match, and maybe go for a walk together afterwards. He said yes. The next week they went for a walk to the park at half time. Melody held out her hand and he took it, and she asked if he wanted to kiss. Ray said yes, so they did. She told him she liked him and asked if he wanted them to keep seeing each other. He said yes and they started to make plans about how they could meet up after school as well as at the weekend football match.

Is Ray consenting? Was consent asked for? Was consent refused either verbally or non-verbally? Was consent given?

What advice do you have about consent, respect and safety?

Scenario 2:

Nullah (12) likes to spend a lot of time online. Through one of the games he plays, he made a new friend called Max (15), who likes to swap jokes. Lately the jokes have become sexual, and Max has also been sending links to videos that show sexual acts. At first Nullah thought this was all part of joking around. But now Max has asked Nullah to send a picture of his butt, and sent one of himself with his pants down, making out this would just be another joke. Nullah doesn't feel okay about receiving this picture and doesn't want to send one back.

Is Nullah consenting? Was consent asked for? Was consent refused either verbally or non-verbally? Was consent given?

What advice do you have about consent, respect and safety?

Scenario 3:

Ishan (11) asked Linh (11) to be his girlfriend. She said no. All his friends kept telling him to keep asking her, so he asked her again. His friends kept spreading rumours that they liked each other and kept teasing them and trying to force Ishan and Linh to get together. Linh got upset that Ishan wouldn't leave her alone, and sometimes he followed her around the playground along with his group of friends. Ishan was stressed because his friends would not stop putting pressure on him.

Is Linh consenting? Was consent asked for? Was consent refused either verbally or non-verbally? Was consent given?

What advice do you have about consent, respect and safety?

Scenario 4:

Luella (12) tried to kiss Baden (12), because her friends dared her to have her first kiss and decided it should be with him. Baden pushed her away and told her to leave him alone. But she tried again the next day, with her friends cheering her on. Luella kissed him on the mouth. Baden pushed her away and told her to stop.

Is Baden consenting? Was consent asked for? Was consent refused either verbally or non-verbally? Was consent given?

What advice do you have about consent, respect and safety?

'Is this person consenting?' scenarios

Scenario 5:

Frankie (13) and Jim (12) were friends. Frankie sent some links to Jim which were of adults having sex. Jim didn't like this, so he deleted them. Frankie kept sending more, and asked Jim to send some back. Jim sent him a funny photo of his dog instead. The next day at school, Frankie made fun of Jim about this in front of other kids in his class.

Is Jim consenting? Was consent asked for? Was consent refused either verbally or non-verbally? Was consent given?

What advice do you have about consent, respect and safety?

Scenario 6:

Hugo (15) and Martin (15) went on a date to the movies. During the movie, they leaned against each other and kissed a few times. After a while, Hugo began kissing Martin more intensely, even though Martin had stopped kissing back, and then started trying to touch him inside his jeans. At first Martin just froze, but then he started blocking Hugo's hands. Hugo stopped touching him and went back to just sitting with his shoulder leaning against Martin's shoulder. Martin did not pull away.

Is Martin consenting? Was consent asked for? Was consent refused either verbally or non-verbally? Was consent given?

What advice do you have about consent, respect and safety?

Scenario 7:

Tamara (12) and Liam (12) were good friends and neighbours. They often walked home from school together. One afternoon, they went to Liam's house to do homework together. When they sat down, Liam put his arm around Tamara and started kissing her. She pulled away. But Liam just said, 'We like each other, so let's kiss'. Tamara stood up, grabbed her bag and headed for the door. Liam tried to stop her leaving, saying it was just a joke, but Tamara pushed past and walked out the door.

Is Tamara consenting? Was consent asked for? Was consent refused either verbally or non-verbally? Was consent given?

What advice do you have about consent, respect and safety?

Scenario 8:

Some Year 6 school friends were at a sleepover birthday party. Late in the night after they were supposed to have gone to sleep, Meg and Zara suggested they take revealing photos of everyone in their pyjamas to post on Instagram. They started taking photos. Leila and Hana weren't keen to join in, and said they wanted some sleep, pointing out that Luna and Poppy were already asleep. Then Meg took photos of Luna and Poppy, who were asleep next to each other on the floor, and posted them to some other classmates who weren't at the party.

Are Luna and Poppy consenting? Was consent asked for? Was consent refused either verbally or non-verbally? Was consent given?

What advice do you have about consent, respect and safety?

'Is this person consenting?' scenarios

Scenario 9:

Elijah (13), Chan (12) and Archie (11) were neighbours. One day they were at Archie's place after school, and they were messing around watching funny YouTube videos. Elijah started to click on some pornographic links and insisted that Chan and Archie watch them. They both felt really uncomfortable about what they were seeing. Archie's mum came in to check on them. Elijah closed the video just in time for her not to notice. When Archie's's mum left the room, Elijah suggested they go to his house where they could have more fun because his parents weren't home.

Are Elijah and Chan consenting? Was consent asked for? Was consent refused either verbally or non-verbally? Was consent given?

What advice do you have about consent, respect and safety?

Scenario 10:

Lucy (15) and Tristan (15) went on their first date, meeting up to eat hamburgers down the street. As they walked home, they held hands. Tristan asked Lucy if it was okay for them to kiss. Lucy nodded. They kissed a few times. Then Lucy said it was best for them to stop because it was getting late, and her parents had told her she had to be home before dark. Tristan agreed and they walked on towards home, holding hands again.

Is Lucy consenting? Was consent asked for? Was consent refused either verbally or non-verbally? Was consent given?

What advice do you have about consent, respect and safety?

Scenario 11:

Andie is an adult friend of the family. He often comes and helps with gardening. He sometimes brings presents for Shasa (11) and takes her to the shop to buy ice creams. Sometimes he takes her to the swimming pool and takes photos of her in her bathers. He has started giving her lots of hugs and telling her she's really pretty. She doesn't want these hugs and her body just freezes until he stops.

Is Shasa consenting? Was consent asked for? Was consent refused either verbally or non-verbally? Was consent given?

What advice do you have about consent, respect and safety?

Scenario 12:

Ella (12) and Seth (12) are in the same class at school and often spend time chatting in group situations. Ella tells Seth he's super-cute and asks if he wants them to be together. Seth says he likes Ella, but that his parents don't approve of dating until the end of high school because of their religion. He says there's no way he'd date in primary school because it wouldn't feel right. Ella says that's different from how her family thinks, but that's okay, and they should just keep being friends.

Is Seth consenting? Was consent asked for? Was consent refused either verbally or non-verbally? Was consent given?

What advice do you have about consent, respect and safety?

Teacher notes for 'Is this person consenting?' scenarios

Scenario 1:

Melody 14 and Ray 14

Consent was asked for and mutually given to start and to stop the activity.

Scenario 2:

Nullah (12) and Max (15)

This is not consenting as Max is putting pressure on Nullah to watch pornography and to send intimate images. He has also sent an intimate image without consent. The 3-year age difference between them is too large between them for consent.

Scenario 3:

Ishan (11) and Linh (11)

This is not consenting as Linh clearly said no, but Ishan is stalking her following her around and continuing to put pressure on her to agree. This is also an instance of peer-based harassment as peers are trying to force the relationship. While Ishan seems to find this acceptable, he may also be experiencing this as a form or negative peer pressure or gender policing. It is clearly a form of harassment of Linh because she does not want a relationship with Ishan.

Scenario 4:

Luella (12) tried to kiss Baden (12)

This is not consenting as Luella tried to kiss Baden without first checking for consent. Also, she repeated this the next day, despite that Baden had non-verbally signalled no, and also told her to leave him alone. This is also an instance of peer-based harassment as peers are trying to force the contact between them. While Luella seems to find this acceptable, she may also be experiencing this as a form or negative peer pressure or gender policing as this is something her friends dared her to do. It is clearly a form of continued harassment of Baden because he does not want to kiss Luella.

Scenario 5:

Frankie (13) and Jim (12)

This is not consenting as it involves unsolicited and unwanted receipt of intimate images as well as pressure to engage in further exchange of unwanted pornographic material. It is further compounded by a form of harassment via the fun made of Jim's refusal in front of friends.

Scenario 6:

Hugo (15) and Martin (15)

Initially non-verbal consent was signalled kissing back but consent not initially asked for. Later consent was withdrawn non-verbally and eventually Hugo realised this and stopped the activity

Teacher notes for 'Is this person consenting?' scenarios

Scenario 7:

Tamara (12) and Liam (12)

Consent was not asked for. Consent was refused as a no was clearly signalled when Tamara pulled away and started to leave. Refusal of consent was ignored which Liam tried to justify, and he tried to stop her from leaving.

Scenario 8:

Friends at the sleepover.

Consent was not asked. Suggestions to consider the issue of consent made by Leila and Hana were ignored by Meg and Zara. Consent cannot be given by people who are asleep (Luna and Poppy). Posting revealing or intimate images without consent is a form of harassment.

Scenario 9:

Elijah (13) , Chan (12), Archie (11)

Consent to watch pornography was not sought and not given.

Scenario 10:

Lucy (15) and Tristan (15)

Consent was asked for and mutually given to start and to stop the activity.

Scenario 11:

Andie (adult) and Shasa (11)

This is an instance of grooming. Various forms of pressure and manipulation are being used, including flattery, positive attention, singling out, enticements and repeated unsolicited and unwanted touch. Consent cannot be given due to age difference. Key safety suggestions could include informing a trusted adult and avoiding contact with Andie. Other strategies may include refusing gifts and telling him she does not want to be alone with him.

Scenario 12

Ella (12) and Seth (12)

Different beliefs

Consent was asked for but not given. However, the rejection was given in a respectful way and accepted with appropriate respect for different values and beliefs held by the other person. Their friendship remains unaffected.

Information about consent and the law

What is Consent ?

Consent is an informed, free and voluntary agreement to do something. It is given without any form of pressure, by someone who is in a fit state to make their decision. In terms of sexual contact, 'affirmative consent' is where a person takes active steps to make sure they have found out whether another person is consenting or is a willing participant who wants to engage in that sexual activity. Consent must be given before and during sexual activity. This can include but is not limited to verbally asking and getting a verbal 'yes' or a reciprocating move like kissing or nodding in response to a question. This includes asking before sexual touching or kissing, as well as before other forms of sexual activity like intercourse. Checking for consent also continues during sexual activity.

Under the law, asking and getting consent is important before any sexual activity with another person.

There are laws about consent and sexual activity.

Consent is needed for any sexual act, not just those that involve intercourse or penetration. Consent is also need before sending sexual images or pictures.

Without consent, any sexual activity is against the law.

Consent is important for all people, of all genders and sexualities and in all kinds of relationships.

What does the law say about consent?

In law, 'consent' is free and voluntary agreement between people.

The law says a person must ask and get consent before starting or continuing any sort of sexual activity with another person.

The 'affirmative consent' model places the responsibility on each person participating in a sexual act to actively seek consent from the other person(s), rather than relying on the other person(s) to provide consent. It is not enough to assume that a person has consented. A person should be able to answer the question 'what did I do to confirm that the person was consenting to sexual activity and gave active, positive and explicit consent?'

The affirmative consent law makes it clear that everyone has a responsibility to get consent before engaging in any form of

sexual activity. For their belief that they were given consent to be reasonable, a person must have taken steps by saying or doing something to find out if the other person consents. Here consent must be a clear and enthusiastic go-ahead.

Asking can include but isn't limited to verbally asking and getting a 'yes', as it can also be a physical gesture like a nod or reciprocating a move like removing clothes.

However, a person's belief that they have received consent must take into consideration if the steps they took to ask went far enough or were clear enough. They must also check if there were cues like pushing away the accused's hand or facial reactions that mean consent was not given or was withdrawn.

A person cannot be understood to consent to an act just because they do not resist the act either verbally through what they say or physically through what they do. It is also not consent if they were forced, harmed or were in fear of force or harm of any kind, or if they were pressured (also called coerced) or intimidated (made to feel scared).

The law also says a person can never assume that just because someone has given consent in the past, that this means they will agree to the sexual activity again next time. Consent needs to be asked for and given each and every time.

The law also says that a person who said yes can change their mind at any time during sexual activity and the person being asked to stop must stop when consent is withdrawn.

The consent laws also state that sexting or sending or forwarding nudes without consent is also a crime.

What is sexual activity?

In the law, sexual activity includes a range of activities:

- Sexual touching, which includes kissing, touching through or under clothing, and touching genitals.

- Sexual intercourse, which includes any penetration of a person's genitalia or anus by any part of another person's body or by an object, and any kind of oral sex.

When does the law say a person cannot have given consent?

The law says that there are times when even if a person says 'yes', it does not mean they have consented. These include times when:

- they don't have the capacity to consent because of their age, for example, being too young, or the age difference being too great (see more information below) their cognitive abilities are too low or they are strongly affected by drugs or alcohol

- they are scared of or feel threatened by the person wanting to engage in sexual activity, so they think they cannot object or are too afraid to say no

- they consent to one type of sexual activity, but the other person does something else. For example, they may have agreed to touching through clothing, but the other person placed their hand inside their clothing, touching genitalia

- they are locked in and not allowed to leave, for example, they are locked in a room and are not allowed out without doing a sexual act

- they are mistaken about the identity of a person they were engaging in sexual activity with, for example, they were in a dark room

- they consent because the other person has a position of authority over them, for example, they are a boss, parent, family member, religious leader, teacher, carer, coach or support worker.

The law says a person can never give consent if they are asleep or unconscious.

What does age of consent mean?

The age of consent is the age at which the law says a person can agree to sexual activity. If a person is under that age, the law says they cannot legally agree to any sexual activity. Any person who does something sexual with a person under the age of consent is breaking the law.

Different states in Australia have different laws about the age of consent. In Victoria, the age of consent is 16. The law is different depending on a person's age, as outlined below.

If a person is **16 years or olde**r, they can legally have sex or do other sexual activity with someone else who is 16 or older, as long as both people are consenting. The exception to this rule is that someone who is 16 or 17 years old cannot consent to sex

with someone who is in a position of care or authority over them, for example, a tutor, coach, teacher, family member, religious leader or counsellor.

If a person is aged **from 12 to 15 year**s, they cannot consent to sex or sexual activity with someone who more than 24 months different in age from them.

A person under **12 years of age** cannot consent to sexual activity **at all**.

What is grooming?

Grooming may occur where an adult over 18 communicates with a young person who is under 16 years old, seeking to win their trust, so that they can then sexually abuse that young person. They may deliberately build a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them sexually.

Grooming can happen online or in person and may take place over a long period of time.

Online grooming may involve adults creating fake profiles and posing as children or teens to befriend someone and gain their trust. In-person grooming might happen when an adult shows an interest in the young person, befriending them and their family, and giving gifts or positive attention. The child or young person will often not realise that they are being groomed.

An adult who grooms a child or young person may trick their family or carers into thinking they are a good friend of the family. They may make the child or young person keep the secret by telling them there will be terrible consequences for refusing to do something sexual; by pretending that they love them and trying to get the young person to feel that they are in love; or by targeting a need the young person may have, like friendship, care, shelter, money or gifts. They may tell the child that no one will believe them if they tell, or that what they are doing is not wrong, or that it is the child or young person who has done something illegal and will be in trouble if they tell anyone.

Grooming is not the fault of the child or young person. It is a deliberate act by the adult, who will also keep it secret as they know what they are doing is against the law. The grooming of a child under the age of 16 years by a person 18 years and over is a criminal offence under the Victorian Crimes Amendment Grooming Act 2014.

What might 'checking for consent' look like?

- Ask the person what they might like or not like to do, or what are their boundaries?, for example, 'Are you comfortable with doing this?'

- Keep checking in to make sure each person is still consenting, especially if one person is looking or seeming unsure or uncomfortable.

- Noticing a person's body language to see if they are still looking comfortable but remember while this can be helpful in figuring out what people might be feeling, it does not replace verbal communication and active checking in.

It is best to think of consent as an enthusiastically spoken 'yes' in response to explicitly asked questions and check-ins about what each person wants to do.

What can 'asking for consent' sound like?

- 'Do you want to...?'

- 'Would you like to ...?'

- 'Are you ready?'

- 'What would you like to do?'

- 'How does that feel?'

- 'Should we try...?'

- 'Should I keep going or do you want to stop?'

Adapted from:

Youth Law Australia. For updates see: https://yla.org.au

Kidshelpline, What is Consent? Consent is important for any sexual activity. But what exactly does it mean? https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/what-consent

Consent script bank

Asking for consent	Enthusiastically agreeing	Setting limits on consent	Refusing or withdrawing consent
Would you like to walk home from school with me?	I'd love to. Let's go.	Not today. Friday would be okay.	No, I want to walk home with my friends. We always do that together.
Is it okay with you if we hang out alone?	Yes, that'd be great. (Grins broadly.)	Sometimes that will be okay, but not all the time, because I want to be with my friends as well.	Not anymore. I want us to go back to just being friends.
Do you feel okay with this?	Yes, I do.	I don't feel okay about doing this here.	No. (Pulls away.)
Can I touch you?	Yes, you can.	You're rushing this. I don't want this to happen so fast.	I want you to stop. You're in my space and I don't like it.
Are you okay if I kiss you?	Yes, definitely.	Not right now. Let's just hold hands.	No. I don't want us to kiss.
Are you happy to keep going?	Yes, I am.	Let's take a break for a bit and go see what everyone else is doing.	Stop. I don't want to do this anymore.
I really like you and want us to be a couple, is that okay?	I'd love that too.	I really like you too, but just as a friend.	No. (Steps back.) I don't want to pair up with anyone.
Can I hug you?	Yes. (Leans in.)	Only when we say hello, not after that. I don't want you to keep on hugging me.	I don't want to hug.
Can I put my arm around you?	Yes! Can I put my arm around you too? (Snuggles up.)	Not when we are at school, only when we are walking home.	No. I don't want us to do that anymore.

Activity 5: Upstanders – providing peer support in response to gender-based violence

Informed by the evidence base

Research shows that young people are reluctant to seek help for personal problems. However, they are more likely to seek help if supported by a proactive peer.[123] Research also demonstrates that help-seeking attitudes are influenced by gender norms, with males less likely to indicate that they would seek help than females. [124] Further, those from marginalised communities including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders,[42] religious or cultural minorities,[43] and those who identify as LGBTIQ+ [44] may also be less likely to seek help, particularly if they anticipate that the help services will be poorly attuned to understanding their cultural needs, belief systems or identities. It is important therefore to normalise help-seeking, and build the skills and knowledge that young people need to provide peer support, peer referral and to help-seek. Education about availability of inclusive help services can support help-seeking within marginalised communities. Effective learning activities focus on developing positive strategies for intervention, and on advancing the skills needed to carry out these strategies within complex social contexts.[67, 75, 76]

Learning intentions

Students will identify strategies people can use to assert standards and boundaries or to help-seek if they witness sexual harassment occurring among their peers.

Equipment

- 'Responding to sexual harassment' scenarios
- 'Peer-support actions' reference list
- Pens, pencils, workbooks and paper or digital devices
- A cheerful game to play or some cheerful or bouncy music for dancing

Coaching point:
Reconnecting with prior learning. In this activity, students consider actions they can take if they encounter a situation involving sexual harassment or abuse. The activities in Topic 4: Problem-solving and Topic 6: Help-seeking provide an important prerequisite for these activities. Consider revisiting some of these activities prior to this lesson.

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Method

1. Inform students:

   In the next activity we will do some work in small groups to think about what people can do if they discover that a friend or classmate is experiencing sexual harassment. This is important, as friends can play an important role in providing peer support, helping to set standards about what is acceptable behaviour, or in assisting a victim to get help. If any part of the lesson makes you feel upset, using your coping strategies may help you to stay calm. You can also speak to me or to another teacher or helper to get some support. If this topic is upsetting for you today, you can do one of our quiet activities or we can arrange another place for you to work. You might want to talk later with someone else, here at school or at home, and that is also okay. Remember to be considerate in the way you discuss situations of this nature and mindful of how your actions may affect other people. We can help each other by working well together.

2. Organise for each group to get a scenario card which presents a situation where someone is experiencing a form of sexual harassment. The task is to read the scenario and use the accompanying questions on the card to guide them as they work out who is being harassed, who is doing the harassing, and then what the observers friends or witnesses could do in this situation to help. When complete, the group will present their scenario and suggestions for action to the class. They may think up their own actions or use some suggestions from the 'peer-support actions' list provided below.

3. Choose one of the scenarios and lead the class through a worked example to guide their approach.

'Peer-support actions' list

- Refuse to join in.

- Speak up to say you don't like what is going on.

- Send a verbal or non-verbal message of support to the victim.

- Distract peers by introducing a different topic or game.

- Follow up with the person afterwards to tell them you thought what was happening was not okay.

- Ask the person afterwards if they are okay.

- Ask for advice from a trusted adult, like a parent, carer or teacher.

- Tell a teacher, parent or carer that your classmate is being harassed and needs some help.

- Tell a teacher, parent or carer that a classmate is being abusive and needs to be told to stop.

- Help a friend to work out who to go to for help.

- Go with a friend to report the matter and to seek help.

- Go alone to ask a trusted adult to help the person and stop the abuse.

- Ask other peers to go with you to report the matter and ask for someone to step in to help the person.

- Follow up with the person afterwards and offer to help them report the matter.

- Tell your friend that even though they asked you not to tell anyone about their problem, you think it's so serious someone needs to know.

- Tell the person that to keep the matter a secret may lead to it getting worse or also happening to others.

- Reassure the person that change is possible if the right support is found.

- Tell the person that it is not their fault that this has happened to them, so not to feel ashamed.

4. Once the groups have completed the task, arrange for them to report back. Record some of the key actions suggested for the friends/ bystanders.

5. Following the report-back, deepen the thinking to invite consideration about which of the strategies could also be useful in situations involving adults or older children who have sexually harassed someone.

Useful questions include:

- Would the responses be any different if the person who sexually harassed someone in the scenario was an older child, for example a teenager?

- Would the responses be any different if the person who sexually harassed someone in the scenario was an adult?

- Would the responses be any different if the genders of person who was sexually harassing someone, the victim and observers were different?

- Would the responses be any different if the interactions happened in a similar way online, rather than face to face?

6. Students may identify that the same actions are needed. However, there may be greater fear due to the power difference between an older child or adult perpetrator, and the victim and witnesses. There may also be difficulties in relation to ongoing harassment or assault if committed by parties close to, or within the family of the victim. Remind students that harassment or assault is an even more serious matter when the person doing this is older or more powerful than the victim.

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Coaching point:
Positive peer leadership. Point out that everyday actions can also be understood as a form of peer leadership. There are times when we see people take these kinds of positive actions, and even though we haven't been the ones to act first, we can lend strength to their leadership by joining in and following the lead that they have set. Observers can help to make the world a better place when they refuse to join in with or follow a negative leader and add their support to the actions of positive leaders. In addition, everyone will experience a time when it is they who are the leader or the first to act. To take this first step can require courage. For further resources and guidance on how to be an upstander, please refer to the #Ihaveyourback campaign.

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7. Review the list of key 'peer-support actions' to consider possible ways to categorise the different sorts of strategies suggested. For example, students may see that some strategies fit in the category of peer-to-peer support, some fit into the category of help-seeking; some are solo strategies enacted alone, but others are collective strategies which can be carried out together with others; some are used during the incident, whereas others are follow-up actions. Each category of strategies is important. However, most important is the understanding that harassment and assault is a serious abuse of a person's rights and so it must be stopped. Equally, those involved in doing it need to learn it is not okay, it causes hurt and harm to others and is against the law.

8. Emphasise that if students are concerned about an experience that has happened to themselves or someone else, they may seek help from you or from a family member. Explain how they can approach you or another teacher for support. Also identify other support that can be accessed in the school. Reconnect students to the Kids Helpline numbers and website in case they prefer to seek advice via this method. Explain that sometimes a victim of harassment does not seek help until a long time after the experience. However, it is still useful for them to get support, even if it comes a long time afterwards. Remind students that if they now realise that they have done the wrong thing, they can also seek help to change their behaviour and will be supported to do so.

9. Display the 'peer-support' strategies developed by the class as a tool for future reference and as a reference point for students who may be considering taking action on behalf of themselves or a peer.

10. Inform students:

    Our next lesson will focus on help-seeking in response to experiences of sexual harassment and body-shaming by peers. There will be a focus on the different kinds of strategies that people may need to use when seeking support in response to these forms of gender-based violence. This will include some role-plays to show how a help-seeking conversation might go. It's okay to feel uncomfortable about this content. Remind students that if this worries them, they can speak to you or to their helpers to get some support.'

11. Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals, for example, ask students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip, which provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay. Follow up as soon as possible with any students who have indicated a concerned or worried response,

demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help. Be proactive about having conversations with students prior to the class. Ensure students are again provided with full content advice at the beginning of the next session.

12. Provide a fun, energising activity following the review section of the lesson to lift the mood after this potentially sensitive content.

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Coaching point: Help-seeking reminders for 24-hour availability. Remind students about the availability of online help sources. The time at which a child decides to seek help might not coincide with the availability of teachers or parents. The Kids Helpline is a free 24-hour counselling service for Australian children and young people. Telephone and online counselling is available. Write the number and web address on the board and ask students to copy it into their books or diaries so they have it on hand.

Phone number: 1800 55 1800.
Website: http://www.kidshelp.com.au/

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Review

Review the learning intentions, asking students if they were able to identify strategies people can use to assert standards and boundaries or to help-seek if they witness sexual harassment occurring among their peers. Ask for some examples.

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

'Responding to sexual harassment' scenarios

Scenario 1: Out of line

Bruno (11) started paying a lot of attention to a girl in his class called Iluka (11). He sometimes stood so close he was touching her when they were waiting in line to go into class.

A few times during physical education he tried to grab her bra straps under her T-shirt. This made Iluka feel distressed. She tried to keep away from him, but for the last week Bruno has done something like this every day. Others in the class can see when this is happening. Some people laugh, but others can see that it's making Iluka upset.

Discuss:

- Who is being harassed?
- Who is doing the harassing?
- Who are the bystanders?
- What could friends of Bruno do to help?
- What could the friends of Iluka do to help?
- Should an adult be informed about this? If so, who?
- Write the script for one of the following:
- What Bruno's friends could say to him.
- What Iluka's friends could say to her.
- What could Iluka's friends could say to Bruno.
- What Iluka's friends could say to a teacher.

Scenario 2: Mean girls

Mayuca (11) was always competing with Lakshmi (11) because they were the 2 best players at every sport and Mayuca liked to win. After Lakshmi won the hurdles and sprint in athletics, Mayuca started saying mean things about Lakshmi not being a 'real' girl, for example, she should not be allowed to play with the girls in sporting activities or go into the girls' toilets and she should go back to 'being a boy'. One day, when they were changing for sport, Mayuca tried to pull Lakshmi's skirt up, saying, 'If you're a real girl then prove it.' Lakshmi ran out of the change room. The other girls in the class saw this happen.

Discuss:

- Who is being harassed?
- Who is doing the harassing?
- Who are the bystanders?
- What could friends of Lakshmi do to help?
- Should an adult be informed about this? If so, who?
- Write the script for one of the following:
- What friends could say to Lakshmi.
- What friends could say to Mayuca.

'Responding to sexual harassment' scenarios

Scenario 3: Against the rules

Lowanna (11) and Katerina (11) decided that they would like to play 'kiss chasey' with the boys. They collected 2 other friends and then approached a group of 3 boys from their class. First the girls asked the boys if they wanted to play 'chasey' and they said yes. Then they said it had to be 'kiss chasey'. The boys said no – no kissing, but 'chasey' was okay. They started to play, and Lowanna said she would be 'it' first. As soon as they started running, both Lowanna and Katerina went after Ahmed 11. When they caught him, they both grabbed him and tried to kiss him. He yelled out for them to stop, and his friends came rushing over to help him. They realised that this was really not a good situation for Ahmed, as his family had quite strict rules about contact between boys and girls, and Lowanna and Katerina had shown him no respect at all.

Discuss:

- Who is being harassed?
- Who is doing the harassing?
- Who are the bystanders?
- What could the friends of Lowanna and Katerina do?
- What could the friends of Ahmed do?
- What could Ahmed himself do?
- Should an adult be informed about this? If so, who?
- Write the script for one of the following:
- What the friends of Lowanna and Katerina could say to help.
- What the friends of Ahmed could say to help.
- What Ahmed's friends could say to a teacher.

Scenario 4: Nasty notes

Angelica is very upset to discover that a piece of paper with her name on it has been passed around the classroom. She heard laughter and sniggers as it was passed around. When her friend Prue passed her the page, she saw it was a picture of a woman in a sexual position and someone had written 'Angelica' on the page. She doesn't know who drew it. Later, Jonah told her there was a similar drawing stuck up on the mirror in the boys' toilet the day before, but he took it down and threw it away. This made Angelica even more upset.

Discuss:

- Who is being harassed?
- Who is doing the harassing?
- Who are the bystanders?
- What could Angelica's friends do?
- What could Angelica herself do?
- What else could Jonah have done?
- Should an adult be informed about this? If so, who?
- Write the script for one of the following:
- What Angelica's friends could say to her.
- What Angelica's friends could say to the person who made the rude note.
- What Angelica's friends could say to those who have been passing the note.
- What Jonah could have said to a teacher when he found the drawing in the toilet.
- What Angelica's friends could say to a teacher.

'Responding to sexual harassment' scenarios

Scenario 5: Creepy coach

Charlie (11) and his mum went to collect Tran (11) for soccer training. Charlie went up to the door to collect Tran but found him not even dressed for training. Tran told Charlie that he was quitting. Charlie was surprised as Tran was a really keen player. When he asked why, Tran said the coach was weird. Charlie said, 'No way, he is an awesome coach! Look how many games we've won!' Tran said, 'You don't have to stay late, just you and the coach! He creeps me out. He wants me to get a massage from him when I stay back late waiting for my dad. He tries to touch me!' Tran started to cry. Charlie's mum appeared on the path. She noticed Tran was upset and said, 'You look stressed Tran, what's been happening?'

Discuss:

- Who is being harassed?

- Who is doing the harassing?

- Who are the witnesses?

- What could Charlie do to help?

- What could Charlie's mum do to help?

- Should an adult be told about what is happening? If so, who?

- Write the script for one of the following:

- What Charlie could say to Tran.

- What Charlie could say to his mum.

- What Tran could say to Charlie's mum.

- What Charlie or his mum could say to Tran's parent(s).

Activity 6: Help-seeking in response to gender-based violence

Informed by the evidence base

Some groups of people are at greater risk of family, domestic and sexual violence, particularly Indigenous women, young women, pregnant women, women separating from their partners, women with disability and women experiencing financial hardship. [125] Young people are also a high-risk group for gender-based violence.[126] Compared to other age groups, younger women experience both victimisation and intimate partner violence at much higher rates than do young men.[126] Students who identify as or are perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer and questioning LGBTIQ+ are also disproportionately affected by bullying and violence in school settings.[72, 127] Those experiencing discrimination, exclusion, bullying and other forms of violence have higher rates of depression, suicidality, drug use and school difficulties and can benefit from access to support. Research also demonstrates that it can be the people who most need help who are least likely to feel that they can enter a help-seeking pathway. [45] If they do seek help, they may be more likely to turn to peers, rather than to formal sources. It is important therefore to build skills for peer support and peer referral, as well as to normalise help-seeking as a legitimate action.

Learning intentions

Students will practise peer referral or help-seeking skills in response to situations involving sexual harassment.

Equipment

- 'No, Go, Tell, Change' model (display a large copy of the poster provided or write it on the board)
- Pens, pencils, workbooks and paper or digital devices
- A cheerful game to play or some cheerful or bouncy music for dancing

Provide content advice at the beginning of an activity/lesson

Method

1. Inform students:

   In this lesson, we will focus on help-seeking in response to experiences of sexual harassment and body-shaming by peers. There will be a focus on the different kinds of strategies that people may need to use when seeking support in response to these forms of gender-based violence. This will include some role-plays to show how a help-seeking conversation might go. Some of the examples may remind you of something unpleasant that you or someone you know may have experienced, but the lesson will enable you to practise ways to help-seek in the future. If any part of the lesson makes you feel upset, using your coping strategies may help you to stay calm. You can also speak to me or to another teacher or helper to get some support. If this topic is upsetting for you today, you can do one of our quiet activities or we can arrange another place for you to work. You might want to talk later with someone else, here at school or at home, and that is also okay. Remember to be considerate in the way you discuss situations of this nature and mindful of how your actions may affect other people. We can help each other by working well together.

2. Remind students of the 'peer-support' strategies they developed in the previous activity. Identify that in the moment of encountering a situation of gender-based violence, people can find it stressful, and hard to think about what to do. This is where a simple model or guide can be a help.

3. Introduce the simple No, Go, Tell, Change model. Display the summary below to help you introduce the model.

   The No, Go, Tell, Change model

   - Step 1: Say 'no' or make clear you do not like what is happening.
   - Step 2: 'Go' – get away from the situation – walk or run to get yourself somewhere safe or switch off the device.
   - Step 3: 'Tell' a trusted adult about what has happened. It is not your fault if you are harassed. It is the person who has used gender-based violence who was at fault.
   - Step 4: Work for 'change', or to work to prevent gender-based violence.

4. Point out that in the previous activity, students identified several strategies that people could use at either the 'no' or 'tell' level of the model. However, although it is one thing to think of a strategy, it can be more challenging to actually carry it out. To build on these ideas, students will engage with the challenge of transferring an idea into action. To do that, they will create some role-plays to try out what it might be like to engage in some of the peer-support or help-seeking strategies that can be used to respond to gender-based violence.

5. First, they are going to brainstorm some 'getting started' lines – what a person can say right at the start when they are beginning a help-seeking conversation. For example, they might say, Can I please talk to you in private? Encourage them to think back to the scenarios discussed in the previous activity. This will provide a reference point for thinking about what the characters involved might have needed to say to start a conversation with the person they have chosen to ask for help.

6. Invite students to work in pairs to generate some lines. Collect the suggested lines and write them up on a display. See the table below for some suggestions which can be added if students do not generate these ideas.

7. Ask students to return to their pairs and generate some lines that could be used to assist the help-seeker get to the point or to the naming of the problem. Provide some examples:

   • Someone dealing with a big problem at home might say something like, 'Things are not good at home, and it's making it hard for me to concentrate in class. Can I please talk to you privately?'

   • Someone dealing with bullying online might say something like, 'People are being mean to me online, and I'm so stressed now that I feel sick about coming to school.'

   • Someone who is being pressured or made to do things that they know are not right might say something like, 'A person is making me do stuff that is not right, and I don't know how to make them stop.'

8. Highlight that in these examples, the person has tried to name the problem, or say something about how it is affecting them, or has just asked if they can talk in private. These are all useful ways to start a help-seeking conversation.

9. Invite the class to work together to brainstorm some lines for naming problems. Collect the suggested lines and write them up on a display. See the table below for some suggestions which can be added if students do not generate these ideas.

Getting time to talk Some lines to request a conversation	Naming the problem Some lines to help you get to the point
'Can I talk to you in private?'	'I am worried about what is happening to [X].'
'Have you got time to help me with a problem?'	'I need help.'
'I don't know who to ask but I need some help.'	'There is a sexual harassment situation we need help with.'
'Can I make a time to see you?'	'Something bad has been happening to [X] and they need help.'
'Are you the person I should talk to about a bullying situation?'	'Something bad has been happening to me and I don't know what to do.'
'I am not sure where to go, but I need some help.'	'I am scared about what is happening.'
'Can I talk to you about a personal problem?'	'We've tried but we can't get [X] to stop [Y]. Can you help?'

10. Explain to students that they are now going to experiment with using some of these suggestions in role-plays to see what it would take to carry them into action in a conversation. Arrange for pairs to identify who will first play the role of the help-seeker and who will play the role of the adult helper.

11. Provide a generic scenario with an example of male-to-male gender-based violence for all help-seekers to play. Use or modify the following scenario.

> **Scenario: Homophobic body-shaming**
>
> Than and Harry have been making homophobic remarks about Lachlan. They push him around and tease him about his looks. He makes out that he doesn't care. But others can see that it's really nasty. People have been letting Than and Harry get away with it, because they think they could be the next target if they speak up.
>
> In this scenario, the help-seeker could be a friend or classmate who notices that this is happening, or it could be Lachlan himself.

12. Arrange those in the 'helper' role to occupy a base somewhere, for example, seated on a chair or at a desk. Ask the help-seekers to move a few steps away from their partner. The scene will start when you say 'action'. The first thing the help-seeker will have to do is walk in to gain the attention of the helper and to get permission to talk with them. Then they should move on to saying how they feel, or to naming the problem or describing the situation. As all players will play at the same time, pairs will need to focus carefully on what is happening in their own conversation. Explain that because they are 'experimenting' or trialing approaches, you will ask each pair to play the scene 3 times over, each time introducing an additional challenge. The scenes will be very short, and students stop when you call 'cut'.

Round 1: Approaching the friendly person

Ask helpers to be the friendliest sort of person and to help the conversation move along by asking useful questions about what happened, and by reassuring the help-seeker that they did the right thing to come and ask for help.

Round 2: Approaching the busy person

Ask helpers to be in a busy or rushed mood, so the help-seekers have to, at first, do more work to get their attention. However, they can then switch to helpful once they realise this is needed.

Round 3: Approaching the person who at first doesn't understand how serious this is

Ask helpers to at first suggest that the student can handle this themselves. Ask the help-seeker to not leave the scene, but to persist in explaining that the situation is more serious, and that they have already tried the 'peer-support' strategies and they have not worked.

13. To debrief and explore the challenge of help-seeking and the strategies associated with success, use questions like:
    - What was it like to be the help-seeker in these situations?
    - What fears or concerns did the help-seeker have?
    - What strengths did the help-seeker have to use to start or continue the conversation?
    - What was it like when the helper started to engage and attempt to be useful to the help-seeker?
    - What was it like to be the helper? Students may identify uncertainty or anxiety – what if I do not know how to help?
    - What fears or concerns might the helper have in that situation?
    - What strengths did the helper have to use in the conversation?
    - What did the helper find useful on the part of the help-seeker?

14. Ask students to swap roles and swap partners. This allows students a turn to play both roles in the help-seeking interaction, and with a different partner.

15. Introduce the scenario below, which provides an example of male-to-female gender-based violence, and repeat the above steps.

> **Scenario: Sexist body-shaming**
>
> Over the last week, Naresh and Arlo have been making body-shaming remarks about Adika's changing body, including comments about how she looks and about her breasts – saying things like 'Are they implants?' and 'Is that a padded bra?' At lunchtime that day, Naresh and Arlo were showing everyone a picture they found online. It was a model in an advertisement for underwear.
>
> They also started what they called a 'rating game', which involved them asking other boys in the class to score girls from best to worst according to their looks.
>
> In this scenario, the help-seeker could be a friend or classmate who notices that this is happening, or it could be Adika herself.

16. Following the role-plays, guide some reflection with the class. Questions to explore include:
    - What sorts of lines or statements were successful ways to open the conversation in both scenarios?
    - Both scenarios involved forms of sexual harassment and body-shaming that could happen at school. Could these strategies for help-seeking also work if someone was

seeking help about other forms of sexual assault, online sexual harassment or a form of inappropriate sexual contact from an adult to a young person?

- Are there any additional supports for help-seeking that might be needed in a situation of this nature?

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Coaching point:
Acknowledging help-seeking barriers. When exploring the experience of help-seeking, students may identify that the help-seeker can feel shame, embarrassment, fear of making a situation worse, fear of rejection or dismissal, fear that the helper may not be useful, fear of breach of privacy or fear of undue escalation. This is an opportunity for them to identify that help-seeking is an act of courage. They may suggest that given the anxieties about help-seeking, the strengths needed to engage in this act include courage, determination, belief in people's rights, and a sense of fairness or responsibility.

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17. To heighten the positive and educative influence of strong peer role models, invite pairs to discuss which of their scenes would provide the best model of how to have help-seeking conversations and ask them to practise it again.

18. Move around the room to identify some strong models. Invite them to provide a short replay for the class to watch. Ask the class while watching to mentally take note of what the help-seeker was doing that was working well.

19. Arrange for the observers to name what these effective strategies were. Draw out or add comments about body language, persistence, clarity of information, use of assertive reiteration if needed, naming of behaviours, explaining how you feel, explaining what has already been tried, being clear about the effects on the victim and the bystanders.

20. Invite additional pairs to present their response. Ensure that both scenarios are represented to normalise help-seeking on behalf of male as well as female victims.

21. Emphasise that you as the teacher, and the school staff in general do want to help, and that no student should be subjected to gender-based violence. Reinforce the school policies and remind students of the work they did to identify both in-school and beyond-school help-seeking pathways.

22. Provide positive feedback to the class for their work on this issue. Play an energising and uplifting collective game following the review section of the lesson to lift the mood. See the optional additional games section for possible games or choose one of the class favourites.

23. Use universal approaches to collecting feedback to avoid singling out individuals, for example, ask students to complete a 'Talk to a teacher' slip, which provides a safe and confidential way for students to signal that they may need extra support, or to let you know if they are feeling okay. Follow up as soon as possible with any students who have indicated a concerned or worried response, demonstrated changed demeanour or behaviour, or indicated their desire for help.

Review

Review the learning intentions with students, asking if they found it useful to practise help-seeking in relation to situations involving peer-based sexual harassment. Ask some students to nominate some examples of where they saw peers demonstrating effective approaches, and how those approaches might also be useful when help-seeking about other challenges.

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Coaching point:
Using solutions-focused approaches in role-play. Avoid naturalistic re-enactments of violence in classroom role-plays. They can attract laughter in response or become the most riveting part of the presentation. This can inadvertently work to normalise the violence or to minimise its negative impact.[128, 129] This is particularly true when those role-playing the target feel they must show their 'strength' and thereby refuse to reveal the negative effects of the victimisation upon them. Use the help-seeking role-plays to show the help-seeking action, not to re-enact the gender-based violence contained in the scenario.

....

You must follow the department's PROTECT guidance and Four Critical Actions if you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Further information can be found in the introduction pages 16-17.

Reflecting on everyday practise

- How can you use opportunities during the school day to acknowledge students' respectful, inclusive and fair behaviours?

- How can you encourage and acknowledge positive peer support among students?

- What strategies could you use if students come to you for help relating to an experience of gender-based violence?

How confident are you about following the **Four Critical Actions** https://www.schools.vic.gov.au/report-child-abuse-schools?Redirect=1 if you receive a disclosure or suspect child abuse? Who would you approach in your school for appropriate advice?

- Do you need further professional learning about how to address your legal and reporting responsibility?

Optional extension activity for English

- Ask students to develop a short story, flyer or poster. The aim of the text should be to illustrate or educate a reader about how to go about seeking help in response to an incident of gender-based violence.

- Select relevant characters from a class text who have experienced some form of harassment or bullying. Develop a letter of advice to the character, or to peers of the character, about how to intervene or address the rights of the character to be free from harassment, including their right to seek assistance from peers and from responsible adults.

Talking further

- Suggest that students share what they have learnt about respectful friendships/relationships in this topic with their parents or carers and check in with them to benefit further from their guidance.

- Encourage students to share the protective and assertive strategies they have learnt in relation to help-seeking and respectful peer relationships with their families.

Games Collection

The Greetings Game to explore friendship and welcome

Learning intentions

- Students will identify social norms and practises that are used to signal friendliness and welcome to others.
- Students will identify everyday practises that might create inclusive and gender-friendly communities.
- Students will propose how they can enact these practises at school in their position as gender role models for younger students.

Equipment

- Room to move with space for a circle of movement
- Bell, whistle or other method for attracting attention

Method

1. Explain to the class that they are going to play the Group Greetings Game to open up some thinking about what people do in positive relationships.

2. To play the game, ask the class to arrange themselves into a circle, and then walk around inside the circle space. When the bell rings they take a nearby person as their partner. Check to see that everyone has found a partner. If there are odd numbers, make a trio. This person will be their Partner Number 1 as later in the game they will get other partners.

Each pair has about 45 seconds to make up and practise a special greeting in the form of a handshake, or special movement or sign. The greeting should be the sign that they belong to the same special group. It should include a sound as well as a physical greeting signal.

3. Ask the pairs to practise their greeting a few times, then ask them to walk around in the space. When the bell rings they are to find their Partner Number 1 as quickly as they can, and then do their special greeting.

4. Once this is done, ask the group to walk on again. Ring the bell.

5. Now the players must randomly find a new partner. This person becomes their Partner Number 2. Together they must design a completely new greeting. Give them one minute to practise it 3 times.

6. Ring the bell. Ask them to move on. When the bell rings again they are to find their Partner Number 2 and perform their greeting. Then they must find their Partner Number 1 and perform their original greeting.

7. Repeat with another round, to establish Partner Number 3.

8. In the final round, instead of finding a partner, students form a group of 4. In this group of 4 they design and practise a greeting suitable for the 4 people to do together.

9. Replay the whole set, first finding the group of 4, then partner 3, then partner 2, then partner 1, then returning to complete the game by finding the group of 4.

10. Arrange for the groups of 4 to perform their greeting in rapid sequence around the room to give everyone a sense of what they created. Discuss:

   - What would it be like to know that whenever you arrived somewhere, you would get a friendly greeting?

   - What could we do to build that sense in our class and in our school, with a particular focus on building a sense of equal friendships between students of different genders?

   - What difference could this class make to the whole atmosphere of the school, just through use of daily friendly greetings?

   - How might you take these ideas and use them both in our classroom and within the broader school environment where younger children see you as role models? List these ideas. Invite students to try some out and find a follow-up time for them to give feedback on what they did and how it went.

Review

Review the learning intentions, asking students if they were able to identify the social norms and practises that are used to signal friendliness and welcome to others. Ask them to give some examples. Ask some volunteers to identify some everyday social actions that create respectful, inclusive and gender-friendly communities.

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Coaching point:

Games are beneficial. When effectively and purposefully facilitated, collaborative games can be used to help students to mix and to strengthen social connectedness, which is a protective factor for mental wellbeing. Structured play can assist those who are anxious in social situations to participate with their peers. Games can also be used to advance social and emotional skills.[39] Following participation in the game, ask students to identify the skills they used which can also be used in other life situations. Encourage them to find key 'messages' in the games about how to conduct respectful relationships. Games can also be used to lift the mood after engaging with sensitive material, to engage or re-energise the class, and to bring a spirit of fun and joy into the class.

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The Airport Controller Game to explore responsibility and trust

Learning intentions

- Students will discuss the importance of:
- behaving responsibly within trust relationships.
- clear, reliable and honest communication within respectful relationships.

Equipment

- Room to move
- Blindfolds or instructions about when to keep eyes closed
- Sheets of paper or simple obstacles, for example, cones

Method

1. Explain to students that they will play the Airport Controller game to open some thinking and discussion about the role of trust and honesty in positive gender relationships.

2. In this game, people work in pairs or trios. The person 'airplane pilot' is blindfolded. Their partner, the 'air traffic controller', must talk them through the obstacle course to travel down the runway to their safe landing spot. They may not guide them with their hands. However, they can walk close by so they can be heard and to prevent any 'emergencies or crashes'. For an added challenge, if playing in trios, the pilot can have a passenger who stands behind them with hands on the pilot's shoulders. They must follow the pilot, but do not have to be blindfolded. However, they cannot speak. Best to try in pairs first!

3. Set up a few pairs to play at a time, with others as the observers. Each plane can have its own 'runway' to travel across one side of the room to another, with either some simple obstacles to steer around, like a cone or chair, or alternatively some sheets of paper on the ground to mark places to steer around.

4. Play the game again swapping roles, so all students have the experience of being trusting and trusted.

5. After the game talk about:
   - What was it like to be the blindfolded pilot?
   - What was it like to be the air traffic controller?
   - What is it like when you have to trust someone else to keep you safe?
   - What is it like when you are in charge of someone else's safety?
   - What kinds of communication helped to make it work?
   - When else in life is it important to have clear, helpful and honest communication?
   - If in real life, if you had put your trust in someone, and they were abusing that trust, and either hurting you or scaring you, or putting you in danger – what could you do?
   - How can you tell the difference between someone who is good for you and someone who is bad for you?

6. Ask for or emphasise the importance of getting help if you are in a scary or hurtful situation, and of noticing the things people may feel when someone is abusing their trust – like an uncomfortable feeling in the stomach, or a sick or guilty feeling like maybe something is wrong. This game also provides opportunity to emphasise that those who can 'see' what is going on, can have a responsibility to let others know who can't see this. This can be an important way to provide peer support by helping to look after others' as well as our own safety.

7. At the conclusion of the game ask, 'In what ways did the discussion about trust and safety change the ways you thought about and played the game the second and third times?' Emphasise that talking about what builds trust and makes you feel safe, and trusting is important to help build respectful relationships.

Review

Review the learning intentions, asking students to summarise the importance of behaving responsibly within trusting relationships. Ask students to reflect on the importance of clear, reliable and honest communication within respectful relationships .

The Animal Grouping Game to explore power, hierarchy and belonging

Learning intentions

- Students will reflect on group dynamics.

- Students will think critically about groups, hierarchy and power.

Equipment

- Room to move

- Chairs in a circle

- 'Animal' cards

- Bell, whistle or other method for attracting attention

Method

1. Explain that the class will play the Animal Grouping Game to get them thinking about and mixing for the next activity. This game will give them a chance to think about how people's behaviour can change depending on who they are with.

2. Give each person an 'animal' card. The card will tell them if they are a dog, cat, chicken, cow, snake, bird or mouse. They should not show this card to anyone. Tell students how many cards you distributed in each category, for example, there are 5 in each category except 'mouse' of which only 4 were distributed.

3. Ask the players to stand up and mix evenly within the space made by the circle of chairs. When the whistle blows, they are to close their eyes. The only sound they can make is that of their animal – dogs can bark, chickens can cluck, cows can moo and mice can squeak. They need to find the other members of their animal group using the sounds as the clue, moving in slow motion in the room to avoid causing any injuries. They should make their sound intermittently, rather than constantly. Tell them that if they really need to, a few peeps are permitted for safety. Once they find another person in the same animal group, they should join with that person and stay together until everyone in their group is located.

4. The game is finished when all have found their group. Invite students to open their eyes and find out who is in their group. Discuss the following questions:

   - How is this game similar or different from real life? How do people work out who to get together with in real life?

   - What difference does it make in life if you think you or your group are at the bottom of the 'pecking order', having to watch out for or make way for more dominant or powerful groups?

   - Sometimes people behave badly or better, depending on the group they are with. Why do you think this happens?

   - What kind of personal strengths do people need to do what is right for them, even if their group is behaving badly or against their standards?

   - What might this have to do with the continuing presence of gender-based violence in our country?

   - What is negative peer pressure?

   - What is positive peer pressure?

Review

Review the learning intentions, asking students why group dynamics, hierarchy and power affect everyone in some way. Invite students to identify 2 positive peer pressure actions they could adopt.

ANIMAL CARDS

Cow	Cow
Dog	Dog
Chicken	Chicken
Snake	Snake
Cat	Cat
Bird	Bird
Mouse	Mouse

Cross-referencing to Catching On

Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships Resources Level 5-6								
	Essential relationship skills	Respect and inclusion	Ethics and decision-making	Understanding Gender	Respect and safety in the digital world	Consent	Help-seeking	Gendered violence
Introductory activities	●	●	●					
TOPIC 1: Emotional literacy								
Activity 1: What do emotions look like?	●							
Activity 2: Recognising positive, negative and mixed emotions	●							
Activity 3: Intense emotions	●							
Activity 4: A roller-coaster of emotions	●							
TOPIC 2: Personal and cultural strengths								
Activity 1: Respect for rights, culture and heritage	●	●	●					
Activity 2: What are personal and cultural character strengths?	●							
Activity 3: Using strengths in everyday life	●	●	●		●			
Activity 4: Respect in action	●	●	●					
Activity 5: Role-playing strengths	●	●	●					
Activity 6: Talk can harm, Talk can heal	●	●	●		●			

Cross-referencing to Catching On

	Essential relationship skills	Respect and inclusion	Ethics and decision-making	Understanding Gender	Respect and safety in the digital world	Consent	Help-seeking	Gendered violence
Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships Resources Level 5-6								
TOPIC 3: Positive coping								
Activity 1: Introducing the concept of self-talk	●							
Activity 2: Strengthening skills in positive self-talk	●							
Activity 3: Personal coping profiles	●							
TOPIC 4: Problem-solving								
Activity 1: We have a problem; how can we deal with it?	●		●					
Activity 2: Exploring what works			●					
Activity 3: Problem-solving panel	●		●					
TOPIC 5: Stress management								
Activity 1: Stressors	●							
Activity 2: Lifting the mood	●							
Activity 3: A guided meditation	●							

Cross-referencing to Catching On

	Essential relationship skills	Respect and inclusion	Ethics and decision-making	Understanding Gender	Respect and safety in the digital world	Consent	Help-seeking	Gendered violence
Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships Resources Level 5-6								
TOPIC 6: Help-seeking								
Activity 1: I wonder if I need help with this?	●		●		●		●	
Activity 2: Thinking about trust and courage	●		●				●	
Activity 3: Help-seeking, who to turn to and who to thank	●		●				●	
Activity 4: Rehearsing help-seeking conversations	●		●		●		●	
Activity 5: Communicating clearly	●		●				●	
Activity 6: Revisiting key learnings via the roller-coaster day storyboard	●		●				●	
TOPIC 7: Gender norms and stereotypes								
Activity 1: Talking about gender, from inclusive language to inclusive actions	●	●		●				
Activity 2: Born or made? The intergenerational gender machine	●			●				
Activity 3: Facts about gender and equality of opportunity	●			●				

Cross-referencing to Catching On

	Essential relationship skills	Respect and inclusion	Ethics and decision-making	Understanding Gender	Respect and safety in the digital world	Consent	Help-seeking	Gendered violence
Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships Resources Level 5-6								
TOPIC 7: Gender norms and stereotypes								
Activity 4: Media messages, gender policing and peer pressure	●		●	●	●			
TOPIC 8: Positive gender relationships								
Activity 1: What is violence? What is gender-based violence?	●		●		●	●		●
Activity 2: Understanding positive and negative uses of power in relationships	●		●			●		●
Activity 3: Active respect in peer relationships	●		●		●	●		●
Activity 4: What is consent? Is this consenting?	●		●		●	●		●
Activity 5: Upstanders: providing peer support in response to gender-based violence	●		●				●	●
Activity 6: Help-seeking in response to gender-based violence	●		●		●	●	●	●

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