

Prejudice, Discrimination and Consent

Note: This topic introduces concepts of gender identity and sexual orientation. Teachers should be aware that:

- *45% of LGBT young people experience bullying at school.*
- *Half say they regularly hear homophobic language in school.*
- *LGBT young people are at greater risk of experiencing hate crime and to experience lower quality of life*
- *LGBT young people are more likely to suffer from mental illness and are at higher risk of suicide, probably connected to the emotional impact of discrimination and bullying*

In 2017 the pressure group Stonewall published a report into the experiences of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students in British schools. The report can be downloaded here:

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/school-report-2017>

Homophobic bullying is defined as abuse that is aimed at people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). It can affect people who define themselves as being a member of these groups, or those who have friends and relatives who are LGBT; it can also target people who are thought to be LGBT, regardless of whether they actually identify as such – often because they fit a stereotypical view of how an LGBT person looks or behaves. Transphobic bullying is that aimed at people who have changed, or in the process of changing, the gender they were given at birth. As with homophobic bullying, transphobic abuse can be aimed at a child who has a trans friend or relation, or at children who are wrongly perceived to be transgender.

Teachers should be mindful that some families may have strongly-held views about issues of sexual orientation. It is good practice to ensure that parents and carers are given the chance to ask questions and seek reassurance before delivering this topic; it can be helpful to point out that schools have a legal duty to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender reassignment. Ofsted will also examine the work being done in schools to reduce homophobic and transphobic bullying.

Learning Intention:

- To develop respect for others and oneself

Learning Outcome:

- To understand that we all have our own personal identity
- To understand the different ways people can identify themselves
- To understand that some elements of our identity should remain private, with an emphasis on children's online activities

- To understand that we have the right to give or withhold consent for things we do or do not want to do
- To practice asking for, giving and refusing consent in a safe environment
- To know where to go for help if our identity or refusals are not respected

Resources:

- Paper, pens, crayons and a large envelope per child
- Child-friendly anti-bullying policy
- “Who am I?” cards - images of well-known and distinctive public or fictitious figures (eg the Queen, Harry Potter, the Headteacher of your school)
- “Who am I?” question cards – see activity 1
- A4 sheet printed with basic human outline.

A suitable outline can be found Appendix 2. The image should be printed in the centre of the sheet (allowing space to write inside and outside the outline)

Activity 1:

Put the children into pairs and give one child a “Who am I?” card. The cards should show the image of the person, with their name underneath. Give the other child a “Who am I?” questions card. This should show key questions which the second child will ask (these can be adapted to fit the images chosen):

- Is the person male or female?
- Are they young, middle aged, or old?
- What colour is their hair?
- Do they wear glasses?
- Have they got a beard or moustache?
- Do they have any special talent or power?
- Do they have a special title?

The first child has to answer the questions honestly. At the end, the second child has to try to guess who is in the picture.

Ask the children how they found this game. Were some questions more useful than others?

Then ask the children to each answer the questions about themselves. Do they think that this information would be enough to describe them properly?

Also useful for: UE, CF, RR

Activity 2:

Ask the class what they think “identity” means. Children will probably answer with their names.

Explain that “identity” has another, deeper meaning; it is the things that we believe about ourselves, or what kind of person we see ourselves as being. These can include:

- Things we are good at (sporty, academic, helpful, jokey)
- Things we are not so good at (reading, art, science, doing what we are told)
- Things we like (games, food, activities)
- Things we believe about our bodies (strong, weak, gender, ethnicity)
- Things we think (the things we agree or disagree with, our faith, morals)
- Things we believe about our feelings (who we like, the kind of person we want to be)

Put these prompts on the board or flipchart.

Give each child a body outline sheet. Reassure them that this will remain private so they can be honest. If possible, give each child space so nobody else can see their sheet. Ask them to write, draw and decorate the outline so that it illustrates their own thoughts about their identity. Encourage them to be honest, but help them to phrase their ideas in a positive way (for example, “I could be better at...” rather than “I am bad at...”). Examples are:

- I believe we should all be honest
- I see myself as British and Jamaican
- I see myself as a kind person
- I believe my disability should not get in my way
- I see myself as someone who likes gentle people
- I believe in God
- I see myself as a boy
- I see myself as someone who could be better at maths

When each child has finished, offer them an envelope so they can keep their picture private. Whilst it is unlikely that a child will use this exercise to raise questions about their sexual orientation or gender, they may take the opportunity to voice likes or beliefs that may be difficult for them to admit in public (for instance, a boy who describes himself as liking dolls or a girl who says she feels more comfortable in male clothes). Allow the children to store their picture securely at school if they wish. Remind them of sources of support in school.

Also useful for: UE, CF, RR, MW

Activity 3:

Explain to the children that some people might disapprove of parts of our identity (perhaps give a safe personal example, such as “my mother doesn’t like my wearing trousers because she thinks that women should only wear skirts.”) Ask if the class can think of any further examples. It may be useful to revisit the work done around stereotypes to help the children make the association between truth and assumption.

Explore why people might disapprove of someone else’s identity. Identify fear, insecurity and ignorance as key factors and discuss how these can lead to prejudice and discrimination.

Ensure the children understand these terms: prejudice means a preconceived opinion, not based on facts or evidence; discrimination means treating someone unfairly or unkindly because of the way we think about them.

Give the children a grid showing examples of discrimination. Ask the children to write down why they think someone behaved as they did, such as:

What happened?	Why is this prejudice?	Why was this discrimination?
Mickey wanted to get some friends to join his football team. He didn't ask Ann to play but he did ask all the boys.	Mickey is prejudiced because he thinks only boys should play football.	Ann didn't get asked to join the team just because she is a girl.
Edwin wanted to join the sewing club at school. Tom now doesn't want to sit next to him in class and calls him "Edwina."	Tom is prejudiced because he thinks sewing is just for girls.	Tom is being unkind because he thinks Edwin is doing something only girls should like.
Andrew and Peter are in year 6 and spend all their time together. Lisa calls them names and says they love each other. Andrew and Peter didn't get asked to Lisa's birthday party that term.	Lisa is prejudiced because she thinks that boys should not form very close friendships with other boys.	Andrew and Peter did not get invited to the party because Lisa thought they should like girls instead of each other.

Then explore how things could be different if we learn a bit more about other people before making up our minds about them:

- What if Ann’s dad is a Premier League football coach who taught her how to play?
- What if Edwin’s mum is a fashion designer who makes clothes for people on TV and Edwin wants to do the same job when he grows up?
- What if Andrew and Peter have both been adopted and they like having someone to talk to about how this makes them feel?

Would Mickey, Tom and Lisa feel differently and behave differently if they knew these things?

Explain that even if we change our behaviour, we might still be prejudiced unless we change our beliefs.

Also useful for: UE, CF, RR

Activity 4

This activity is to be used to challenge prejudice against pupils who may be LGBT. The aim of the activity is to help children understand that even if they have religious or cultural views on homosexuality, discrimination and bullying are never acceptable and will not be tolerated in school.

Return to the example of Andrew and Peter in the previous activity. Ask the class why they think the other children were mean to the boys and the kind of unacceptable behaviour that may have arisen.

Scribe a list.

Explain that using language like “gay” as an insult is never acceptable and that to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender is not something to be ashamed of or bullied about.

If necessary, explain these terms (and others, including the term “straight”) using the child friendly language recommended by Stonewall. It is not expected that teachers will use this list as routine and they may wish to only explore some of the terms:

Gay - The word gay is used to mean someone who falls in love with, or wants to have a relationship with, people who are the same gender as them. This means that a gay man is someone who loves another man and a gay woman is someone who loves another woman. Some gay women prefer to be called lesbians.

Because of this, some children might have two dads or two mums. (Explain that in this context “love” means to be in a romantic relationship with someone, rather than the “love” we might feel for a parent or pet. The activity on page 129 may help with this).

Lesbian – this word describes a woman who falls in love with, or wants to have a relationship with, another woman. An example is two mums who are married to each other. Some lesbian women prefer to call themselves gay.

Bisexual - Bisexual is a word used to describe someone who falls in love with, or wants to have a relationship with, either someone of the same gender as them or with someone of a different gender to them. For example a bisexual man might fall in love with another man, or with a woman. A bisexual person might say that the gender of the person they fall in love with doesn’t matter to them.

Gender – this is the division of people into male and female, but based more on social and cultural issues than biological ones. Some people feel that they are a different gender to the one other people believe them to have. Other people feel they do not belong to any one gender. (Consider add the WHO definition of gender)

Sex – biological sex is defined by a person’s anatomy and genetics, rather than their beliefs or social attitudes. Some people do not have a clear biological sex and may be described as “intersex”.

“Trans” is short for **transgender**. This is a word that describes people who feel that the gender they were given as a baby doesn’t match the gender they feel themselves to be. For example, someone who is given the gender ‘boy’ as a baby but feels that they are really a girl could say that they are “trans.” Sometimes people have medical treatment and operations so their bodies match the gender they feel themselves to be, but not all trans people choose to do this.

LGBT – this is short for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender. Sometimes people add “Q” for “questioning” – people who are thinking about their sexuality or gender but have not made a decision about how they see themselves. Sometimes it means “Queer,” which was in the past an offensive term but is now adopted by many young people who do not see themselves as fitting into any of the usual categories around sex and gender.

Straight - A straight or heterosexual person is someone who falls in love with, or wants to have a relationship with, people who are the opposite gender to them. For example, a man who only wants

to be in a relationship with a woman, or a girl who only wants to be in love with a boy, would probably say that they are straight.

Teachers may need to discuss religious attitudes to homosexuality. Explain that although people may have different opinions, there are laws that make it illegal to be nasty to someone just because they are LGBT. It is also illegal to be nasty to someone just because they seem to be LGBT, regardless of whether or not they actually are.

Remind the class that just as there are laws for the whole country, there are similar rules in school, such as the anti-bullying policy. Teachers may want to revisit this with the class.

Ask the class what they think Peter and Andrew could do about the way Lisa is being unkind to them. Scribe their answers. Ask what they think might be behind Lisa's behaviour and how she could be helped to understand that regardless of whether Peter and Andrew are gay or not, they deserve to be treated kindly and with respect.

Also useful for: UE, CF, RR

Activity 5:

Note: these activities are concerned with the issue of consent. Teachers should be mindful that some children may live in circumstances where their experience of consent is limited – for instance if they are being coerced into abusive activity. Some children may be in situations where a grooming process has led them to believe that they are consenting to abuse, or there may be cultural factors which foster a sense that consent is not relevant.

Ask the children what they think the word "consent" means and scribe their answers. Agree on a suitable definition, such as "permission for something to happen or an agreement to do something."

Ask the class for examples of things they have given their consent to that day. Ensure that safe examples are used, such as "I consented to my sister borrowing my hair band". Ask what made them give their consent in each situation – for instance, was there a successful negotiation with another person? Scribe this list, splitting responses into positive consent ("I wanted my sister to look nice for the choir concert") and those which were less so ("I said yes because my mum said I had to lend her the hair band.")

Highlight those responses which involved another person's opinion.

Refer to the list of factors that influenced consent. Discuss the characteristics of positive consent, such as:

- I wanted to give permission or agree because it would make me happy
- I knew it was a good/kind/friendly thing that I was agreeing to
- I was able to think about it and make up my own mind

Discuss the role of other people and how this can influence our decision to give consent to something. Explore ways in which this can be positive:

- My mum whispered that my sister really wanted to look nice for the concert, so I lent her my hair band
- My teacher said that if our photographs were put on the school website our names would not be shown, so I agreed that my photo could be used
- My doctor told me that if I let him look at my sore arm he could tell me what was wrong with it, so I allowed him into my personal space

Discuss with the class the ways that other people can negatively affect our decision to give consent, for example through peer pressure or bullying. Scribe the characteristics of negative consent, such as:

- The other person doesn't listen to what I want, whether I consent or not
- The other person doesn't care that I am upset or scared about what they are asking me to do
- The other person wants me to do something that I think is bad or wrong

Compare the two lists of ways in which other people can affect our decision to give consent. Explore ways in which the children feel they can be positive influences on others. Teachers may find it helpful to refer back to the activities on pressure and influence (page 143) at this stage.

Also useful for: UE, CF, RR, BS

Activity 6:

Explain that there are rules in place that give children rights, including around their ability to give consent. These are set out in something called the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. A child-friendly version is available here:

www.unicef.org/rightsite/files/uncrcchildfriendlylanguage.pdf

Key points for discussion with the class are:

Article 12 – “You have the right to give your opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously”

- Ask the class for ideas on how adults could listen to their views and how your school seeks to hear the pupil voice. Is there anything they would change?

Article 16 - “You have the right to privacy.”

- Children can ask to see a doctor or nurse by themselves and can ask for their treatment to be private. Doctors will decide whether this is in the child's best interests and whether he or she is able to make such a decision safely. Help the children practice ways in which they could explain that they wish to be seen privately.

Article 36 - “You have the right to protection from any kind of exploitation (being taken advantage of).”

- Understanding their right to refuse consent is a key part of protecting children from exploitation. This Scheme of Work sets out key skills that can help children to recognise abusive and exploitative situations. Teachers may wish to revisit some of these when discussing how children can be kept safe.

Also useful for: CF, RR, BS

Activity 7:

Explain to the class that there are some things which children are not allowed to do, regardless of whether or not they consent.

These things are set out in laws that are designed to protect children from harm or exploitation.

Ask the children what age they think someone has to be before he or she can do the things on the following list (answers are in brackets):

- Buy cigarettes (18)
- Get a part time job (14)
- Get married (16 with one parent's permission)
- Take a photo of themselves with no clothes on (18)

Discuss with the children why these rules are in place and how they protect children.

Note: anyone under the age of 18 who takes or shares a nude image of themselves is creating and distributing an indecent image of a child. For more information on this, see the UKCCIS document "Sexting in Schools and Colleges," which can be downloaded from

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexting-in-schools-and-colleges>

Children may use the term "age of consent" in the context of consenting to sexual activity. Teachers need to explain that a child aged 12 or under cannot give consent to sexual activity, regardless of whether they believe that they have given such consent.

The age of consent in England and Wales is 16, and schools will need to work closely with their safeguarding lead and local social care in cases where children between 13 and 16 are sexually active. In the first instance, report any such cases through your school's safeguarding processes.

Also useful for: CF, RR, BS, OR, BS

