

Lesson Plan: Being an Up-stander



Learning Objectives:

- To increase confidence and capability in discussing subjects such as culture and difference.
- To strengthen students' understanding of human rights.
- To raise awareness of some of the ways in which people face discrimination in their daily lives.
- To explore safe ways of being an 'Up-stander' against discrimination.

Success Criteria:

- Students develop an understanding of the ways in which they can stand up for their own and other peoples' rights in the face of discrimination.
- Students develop an understanding of how they can offer support and solidarity with people experiencing discrimination.
- Students are able to identify their own strengths and options for standing up against discrimination in a safe way.

Key Definitions

Human rights:

The basic protections and freedoms that belong to every single one of us.

Discrimination:

Behaviour that treats people unequally because of their group membership – can range from slights to hate crimes. Discriminatory behaviour often begins with negative stereotypes and prejudices.

Up-stander:

A person who speaks or acts in support of an individual or cause, particularly in the case where someone is being attacked or bullied. This contrasts with a bystander who witnesses an incident but does not do anything to support the victim.

Establish group rules

Introductory points:

- Inform students that today's lesson will involve exploring their own values, beliefs and culture.
- Highlight to students that whilst open conversation is encouraged, it is completely up to the students as to the extent to which they would like to share their personal information – students can speak to experiences of friends (external to the school), family, or those that they have heard in media.
- As a group ask the students to define a list of rules to guide the conversation.
- Encourage students to define their own boundaries in the discussion, however some suggestions or core rules could include:
 - Confidentiality – what students share within this class, remains in the class
 - Demonstrate respect for others' opinions by listening, not interrupting, using respectful language if providing feedback or challenging someone
 - Not making jokes or using offensive language about the beliefs, values or culture of another
 - Informing the teacher if any of the content of the class was particularly difficult or challenging
 - Participation and contribution by all – even if it does not involve disclosure of personal information
 - Understand that we are all learning

For more information regarding facilitating conversations around culture and discrimination, consider:



**Facilitating
conversations
about racism
guide**

**VCAA
Teachers
Guide: Navigating
Intercultural Issues
in the Classroom**

Check in activity - Where do you stand? (5-10 minutes – vary amount of questions to suit time availability)

Introductory points:

- Allocate areas of the classroom to represent a scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”, ensuring there is a space for students to choose “undecided” or “neutral”

- Read out a series of statements and ask students to position themselves along the scale based on their personal opinion.
- After each question ask for volunteers or select students to explain why they chose the position they are standing in.
- Explore themes that emerge, for instance are the students in agreement or are they widespread in their position on the scale?
- Explore the difference in opinions if they emerge, it can often be useful to point out that difference in opinion can sometimes occur not because people disagree with each other, but rather they are placing importance in different aspects of the topic. For example, two students can agree that smoking is bad for a persons' health but can disagree as to whether it should be legal because one student prioritises a persons' right to choose whether they smoke, and the other student prioritises public health.

Suggested statements:

- *School uniforms should be compulsory*
- *Junk food must be banned in schools*
- *Everyone should be vegetarian*
- *People with more money are happier*
- *Family is more important than friends*
- *Women should stay at home to raise children*
- *Religious education should be taught in all public schools*
- *Australia's voting age should be changed to 16 years old*
- *It is important we do more to look after the environment*
- *It is better to protect young people from knowing too much about drugs, than to talk openly about the issue*

Video: What are human rights? (10-15 mins)

Introductory activity options:

Choose a short video that best suits your classroom:

Australian Human Rights Commission:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJsUfck01Js&feature=youtu.be>

Amnesty International:

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

Students may complete this short online Module by the Australian Human Rights Commission:

[An introduction to human rights and responsibilities](#)



Discussion points:

- As seen in the 'Where do you stand?' activity, diverse opinions co-exist. In fact it is our right as humans to have freedom to live our lives according to our beliefs as far as it does not negatively impact on another person's human rights.
- This is sometimes more complicated than it seems and varies for many reasons.
- Brainstorm with students some examples of where the enacting of human rights has been complicated/controversial/contested.

For example:

- A person's right to seek asylum in another country vs. a country's right to control migration.
 - A person's right to freedom of speech vs. a person's right not to be subjected to hate speech
- As discussed, whilst human rights are protected legally, ensuring these rights is not always straightforward.

Furthermore, human rights can be compromised through actions that are not illegal or are not easily proved. Therefore it is important that people in their everyday lives are able to recognise and stand up for their rights and the rights of others. The following short clip - The Invisible Discriminator provides a good example of this: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NVevKISMx0>



Activity: What is an Up-stander?

(20 mins) Research and class presentation activity can be adapted to larger assignment

Introductory points

- Explore with the students what the definitions and differences between a 'by-stander' and an 'up-stander' may be.
 - **By-stander:** a person who is present at an event or incident but does not take part in it
 - **Up-stander:** a person who speaks or acts in support of an individual or cause, particularly in the case where someone is being attacked or bullied.
- There are many different ways of standing up for someone or something, and there are lots of people in society who use their talents and skills in creative ways to create change.

Research and class presentation activity:

- As individuals or small groups, identify someone you see to be an Up-stander, explore the following questions and present back to the class:
 - Who is the Up-stander you have chosen?
 - What person/group of people/cause are they standing up for/against?
 - What skills are they using and what actions are they taking to be an Up-stander?

Suggestions for Australian Up-standers may include:

Nayuka Gorrie
(Writer)

Tarang Chawla
(Gender Equality Activist)

Cathy Freeman
(Former Olympian)

Waleed Aly
(Academic & media presenter)

Adam Goodes
(Former AFL Player)

Kurt Fearnley
(Para-Olympian)

Benjamin Law
(Author & Journalist)

Aamer Rahman
(Comedian)

Hannah Gadsby
(Comedian)

Nazeem Hussain
(Comedian)

Behrouz Boochani
(Journalist)

Robert Whittaker
(MMA Fighter)

Briggs
(Rapper)

Dominic Hong Duc Golding
(Disability Activist)

Khadija Gbla
(Human Rights Activist)

Manal Younas
(Spoken Word Poet)

Moana Hope
(Women's AFL player)

Tim Lo Surdo
(Founder of Democracy In Colour)

Yassmin Abdel-Magied
(Writer & Media Presenter)

Case Study Activity: Standing Up at School (20 mins)

Halima, an Ethiopian refugee, arrived in Australia at age 12. She attended English language school and then began secondary school in Victoria. When Halima was in year 9 her family moved to a new area and Halima needed to move to a new school, closer to her house.

At her new school Halima noticed that she was one of the only students from an African background in her school, and the only one in her year level. Halima noticed that the students did not seem to welcome her, want to talk to her, or include her in their conversations or groups. Halima sat by herself in class, and at recess and lunch times she would go to the library or sit alone in the school yard. Before long some students started making mean comments to Halima telling her that she "dresses weird", to "go back to your country", and pulling on her headscarf. These comments would often happen in front of other students, but

when the teachers could not hear. Halima also received these insults on social media. Halima was afraid to tell the teachers or her family what was going on as she believed the behaviour would just get worse.

One day a student started making mean comments to Halima in the school yard and picking a fight with her. There were many other students in the yard who were watching. Halima told the student she would not fight with her. The student then picked up a rubbish bin and threw it at her. At this point another student stood up and said "Stop that", "what are you doing?", and "no one thinks you are funny or cool". At that point the student stopped her aggressive behaviour towards Halima, and walked away.

- Ask the students to explore the following questions in small groups, before returning to the broader group for discussion:
 - How would you describe the behaviour Halima is experiencing from other students?
 - How might Halima feel after these incidents/experiences?
 - How might these incidents/experiences impact Halima's experience of going to school and her education?
 - Are Halima's human rights being compromised?
 - What could be some of the reasons why the students didn't speak up for her earlier?
 - What are some of the things the students could have done to stand up for Halima?
 - What are some of the things that the school could have done to stand up for Halima?
 - How do you think Halima felt after the student stood up for her?
- Check out the following resources for great examples on being an Up-stander
 - #Ihaveyourback (Melbourne Football Club in collaboration with Victorian secondary school students) www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/ihaveyourback.aspx
 - 5 easy ways to fight racism by Asanga Seneviratne (The Foundation For Young Australians) www.fya.org.au/2020/04/08/5-easy-ways-to-fight-racism/



Closing activity: I am an Up-stander (10 mins)

Ask students to identify:

- An issue or issues they feel particularly passionate about standing up for.
 - Three acts they can take in their day-to-day lives to be an Up-stander.
 - A particular action/skill/talent they can utilise to stand up regarding an issue (think back to the 'What is an Up-stander activity')
- Have students share their answers with the class through a sharing circle, through creating a poster, through making a pledge, or any other suitable method.

Excellent Additional Resources:

The Australian Human Rights Commission have developed great student resources for learning about human rights, including:

- Worksheets for students from Year 7 – 10:
<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/education/teachers/story-our-rights-and-freedoms>
- The Charter of Human Rights in 'Easy English':
<https://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/home/our-resources-and-publications/know-your-rights-brochures/item/540-charter-of-human-rights-and-responsibilities-easy-english>
- Check out this wonderful alternative resource for students by the Canadian Museum for Human Rights on being an Up-Stander for further ideas and information:
<https://humanrights.ca/upstander/#/>