

Learning Objectives

- ✿ To develop self awareness of personal and social identity
- ✿ To empathise with the feelings of being excluded from a social group
- ✿ To relate and apply this learning to the school community.

Total Time
45 mins
+15 mins
extension
activities

Teacher's Notes

This is the first of three lessons in citizenship looking at the theme of social inclusion and challenging discrimination.

The lesson involves some group discussion, please read out the ground rules before you start.

Resources

Photocopy Worksheet 1 for each student.

Ground rules: In this lesson we will be covering some sensitive issues. You may be affected personally by one of the topics that we are discussing today, or you may know someone else who is. Please be respectful and thoughtful of others, and treat the subject responsibly. If you would like to talk to someone after the lesson, you can go to ... (please either give the contact person in the school, for example a school counsellor, or an outside number, for example Samaritans).

Starter Exercise: Show me some ID

The purpose of this exercise is to explore how we define our personal identity.

EITHER

Ask: Who can show me some ID? What information does your ID record? What other forms of official identity do people have? (passport, birth certificate, medical records). Now identify yourself to the person next to you.

On the board: How did you identify yourself? What categories did you use? List categories on the board. For example, identified by name, by age, by school, by hobby, by who they are friends with. Highlight that every person is totally unique but that we belong to a number of groups.

OR

Explain: We're going to read out two statements. You have to move along the line to show your opinion of the statement. If you stand at the left end of the line it means you strongly disagree with it. If you stand on the right it means you strongly agree. If you're not sure stand somewhere along the middle.

Move all the students to the front of the class and have them standing along the imaginary opinion line. Read out these statements. After each one ask students at opposite ends of the line why they have chosen to stand where they stand. Both statements have valid yes or no answers, discuss both options.

1. Official documents like passports or fingerprints are used to check a person's identity. Is a passport a good representation of who you are?

Discuss: Agree, it shows your unique features. Disagree, a person is more than that, a passport doesn't capture people's personality, beliefs and experiences.

2. If you know a person's is age, gender, nationality and religion, does it give you an idea of who they are?

Discuss: Agree, it gives an idea of background, and can be helpful for example if they were joining school we'd know what year group they would go into and if they were from a non English speaking country we might ask if they needed help with language. Disagree, you have no idea about their personality or situation, you can't make assumptions about them.

Time
5 mins



OR

Time
5 mins



My identity profile

The aim of this exercise is to get students to reflect on their own identity, group membership and what it means to be socially excluded.

Hand out: blank sheets of paper.

Explain: You are going to draw your own social identity profile. On a piece of paper, draw a picture of yourself in the middle. Below the picture, list the things that identify you as a person. Around the picture put the groups that you are part of. You have just a couple of minutes to do this.

Explain: This is a very simplistic personal and social identity profile. Sometimes we choose to be a member of a group (e.g. football club), others we can't choose (e.g. age group, ethnicity).

Now add an example of each of the following:

- * a group that people assume you are a part of but you don't feel part of (e.g. your parents have grown up in a different culture which you don't relate to, or if you are part of a religious community but you don't believe in the religion in the same way, or you hang out with certain people in school but really you would rather make other friends).
- * a group that you wanted to be part of but the group didn't accept you (e.g. you wanted to hang around with older brothers and sisters but they said you were too young. You moved to a new school and wanted to make friends but were bullied because people thought you were different).

Facilitate a discussion: Starting with feedback on what they put on their profiles. Ask:

* **Why do we choose to be part of some groups not others?**

Answer: We look for people that share some part of our identity

* **Why do people care so much who is in their group, surely the more the merrier?**

People tend to form groups with others who share some part of their beliefs and identity. Partly this goes back to evolution, where animals live in social or family groups. When someone from outside the family enters the territory they are seen as a threat and are chased away. Hence, some groups will not accept anyone who they believe is 'different.'

* **What does it feel like if you are not accepted by a group you want to be part of?**

List the feelings on the left side of the board.

* **How might it feel for someone, if it was not safe to reveal part of their identity?**

What would the effect be on their emotional health? (For example: someone who is homosexual but doesn't feel safe to be open about this. Someone who has a religious belief that is not shared by the majority group. Someone who wants to celebrate a cultural event but there is no one else of that culture in the community.)

Reflect: People are sometimes unfairly rejected by parts of society on the basis of their gender, age, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation. This is called discrimination. Ask the class for a couple of examples of discrimination (racism, people not getting jobs because they are said to be too old, buildings not having wheelchair access). They will be learning more about discrimination in the next lesson.

Time
20 mins



Creating a sense of belonging in the school community

The aim of this exercise is to help students relate their learning to others as part of developing empathy skills and taking responsibility for the wellbeing of others in their community.

Handout: Worksheet 1: Welcome pack .

Explain: You are going to design a plan to make new students joining the school feel welcome and included. Your group will be responsible for one student. You will be given some details of their identity based on the school records. For the purpose of this exercise, it is OK to make some assumptions about this character. As a group agree what your assumptions are. Then plan what you could do to make them welcome. You will also be asked to make recommendations on what the school could do to make them feel welcome.

Read out: the two profiles (or add your own). Suggest students note the details of the character they are going to look after.

A) Age: 11 Gender: Male Ethnicity: White Irish Disability: None recorded
Interests: gymnastics

B) Age: 12 Gender: Female Ethnicity: British Asian Disability: Hearing impaired, uses a hearing aid
Interest: reading, public speaking

What could the group do to make the student feel welcome?

What could the school do to make the student feel welcome?

Take feedback from the class after 10 minutes.

Time
15 mins



Optional Extension Activities

EITHER

Develop the welcome pack

Use this time to allow students to produce a Welcome Pack for new students. They can do this in their groups, suggest that each member of the group takes responsibility for one page. To turn this into a more creative activity supply some photos of the school, coloured pens, magazines to cut out of and so forth. You may also want to handout information leaflets about services in the community that would be useful to a new student and could be included in the pack.

OR

Building a more connected community

This activity aims to help students think about how they can influence a more connected and hence emotionally healthy community.

Thought storm as a class, some of the different groups in your community. There are many possible ways of grouping people, so just choose a few. Make sure though, that you include some minority groups and at least one 'hidden' group e.g. people who carers of relatives, people suffering from a particular illness.

Ask a number of volunteers to come to the front, one for each of the groups on the board. Each volunteer represents a group, and should hold up a piece of paper with the name of that group on.

Explain: Each volunteer represents a group in the community. We know some groups get on better than others, and some groups don't know each other at all. It is up to you to arrange the groups according to how well they get along. Put groups that get along well close together and groups who don't stand far apart.

Allow the students to debate for a few minutes, making sure they challenge each other opinions and do so respectfully, remind them of the groundrules if necessary.

15 mins
each
activity

Time
15 mins



OR

Time
15 mins



Explain: We know some groups get on better than others. In pairs, pick two groups that you think should get on better. Prepare an Email to send to the leaders of both groups with suggestions of how they could work together better. Think about what activities or events or information they could provide. Remember you might only get one chance to send the Email so it is best to think of 2 or at most 3 good ideas and then really sell them. You will be asked to read out the Email to the rest of the class.

Feedback after 5 minutes, asking some of the groups to read out their emails. Ask how students think the leaders of these groups would react if they got these letters. Reflect that every member of the community plays a part in making it a more connected welcoming place.



Summarise

Ask the students to summarise what they have learned this lesson. Thank people for their contribution during the discussions. Emphasise how important it is for the emotional health of the community that individuals feel safe, well, confident, have a sense of belonging and feel positive about the future. Every person in the school has a responsibility for achieving this.

Time
5 mins





WORKSHEET

Worksheet 1 - Student Welcome Pack

You are going to design a plan to make new students joining the school feel welcome and included. Your group will be responsible for one student. You will be given some details of their identity based on the school records. For the purpose of this exercise, it is OK to make some assumptions about this character (in real life you wouldn't assume, you would ask the person themselves). As a group agree what your assumptions are. Then plan what you could do to make them welcome. You will also be asked to make recommendations on what the school could do to make them feel welcome. Think as widely as you can, for example how can you help them to feel confident before they get to school, what happens on their first day, what information do they need etc.

How are you going to make them feel welcome?

What are you going to recommend to the school about how to make the new student feel welcome?
