 Stairs to inclusivity

Suggested duration: 30-45 minutes

This activity encourages students to consider and reflect on where certain attitudes, behaviours or actions, including language, fit on a sliding scale and the impact this can have on self and others.

It should be emphasised that the impact of our attitudes, actions and the language we use is even more significant to those who feel or hear negative messages all the time. Young people absorb negative messages long before they are directed at them.

The stairs to inclusivity encourage students to challenge the use of language that reflects attitudes and actions that are not inclusive and consider positive actions that promote inclusivity.

Review of the terms and definitions before the activity is important for all teachers facilitating the activity. Teachers will have differing definitions of key terms and should become familiar with the definitions used in this activity.

Course outcomes

2.1 Show respect for the ideas, feelings and contributions of others in various contexts.

2.2 Challenge inequity, discrimination and harassment based on age, sex, gender, race, religion, disability and sexuality.

3.1 Evaluate how contextual factors influence attitudes, values and behaviours.

5.1 Critically analyse situations, attitudes and behaviours that influence independence, health, safety and wellbeing in different contexts.

6.2 Demonstrate behaviours that model positive values, beliefs and attitudes and promote inclusion and equity for self and others.

What do we want students to know, understand or be able to do?

* Recognise key terminology associated with diversity.
* Increase awareness of attitudes and actions that are inclusive.
* Examine the impact of our language and response to situations on the wellbeing of others.
* Evaluate the influence of values and beliefs on personal actions towards individuals and groups.
* Identify ways students, teachers, parents and carers can encourage or promote inclusivity and move beyond tolerance and acceptance to mutual understanding and celebration of diversity.

Suggested content

| Learning context | Content |
| --- | --- |
| Independence  Focus: Building self-concepts and independence | Personal values and beliefs   * influences on values and beliefs, e.g. technology, social and cultural norms, media, family, relationships * influence of values, attitudes and beliefs on decisions and actions in various contexts * recognising and assessing strengths, aspirations and potential * self-concepts |
| Independence  Focus: Preparing for participation in community, education and employment | Building and participating in community   * respect and responsibility for others * inclusive language * inclusivity, equality and fairness |
| Relationships  Focus: Promoting safety, equality and respect in relationships | Valuing and advocating for the rights of self and others   * changing perspectives and challenging stereotypes * respecting others * asserting a stance on a situation or decision * challenging discrimination based on race, sex, age, disability, religion, culture, gender and sexuality * upstander behaviour online and offline |

Teaching notes

Creating a safe and supportive learning environment

There are a number of strategies that can be used to create a supportive learning environment which enables students to feel safe to learn and ask questions. They include:

* Making students aware at the beginning of Life Ready sessions that disclosing personal information that indicates they may be at risk of harm will be reported to the school principal in all instances. This includes personal disclosures related to instances of abuse, drug use, neglect or sexual activity under the legal age of consent.
* Being aware that some parts of Life Ready can be confronting and sensitive for some students.
* Enabling students to withdraw if they find issues personally confronting to protect them from making harmful disclosures. Equally, it is important to be prepared for issues that arise as a result of a student making a public disclosure in the classroom.

More information on creating a safe and supportive learning environment can be found on the [Life Ready website.](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/pdhpe/life-ready)

Evaluating resources before use

Preview and evaluate all strategies, resources and teaching and learning approaches in full before use with students to determine suitability for student learning needs, stage of development and local school context. Consider the age, maturity, cultural background, sexuality, gender, sex, health and other characteristics of students in your care. Apply professional judgements to all strategies, teaching and learning approaches and resources including audiovisual materials (e.g. videos, media clips and YouTube), interactive web-based content (e.g. games, quizzes and websites) and texts.

Use the [resource review flowchart](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/083acd3a-daca-4307-9afe-bc6c888f694a/1/final-resource-flowchart-html5.zip/index.html) to decide about the suitability of teaching and learning resources.

Materials should be reviewed in full and endorsed by the school principal before use in NSW government schools.

Communication with parents and caregivers

Some aspects of Life Ready may be viewed as sensitive or controversial, such as learning about abuse, child protection, drugs, respectful relationships, sexual health, sexuality and violence. Inform parents and carers, prior to the occasion, of the specific details of the Life Ready program, so that parents and caregivers have time to exercise their rights of withdrawing their child from a particular session. In this regard, a parents or caregiver’s wish must be respected.

Establishing how parents and caregivers will be informed about programs and involved in consultation is a school-based decision. Where parents and caregivers indicate they wish to withdraw their child from a program it is useful to negotiate which parts of the Life Ready program they are concerned about. A sample information letter is available on the [Life Ready website](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/pdhpe/life-ready).

Required resources and materials for preparation

* Stairs to inclusivity term cards – 1 per student or pair
* Stairs to inclusivity definition cards – 1 per student or pair
* Butchers paper or online space (e.g. Padlet) for graffiti wall
* Scenario cards – 4-5 scenarios per pair or group of 3 students
* Stairs to inclusivity visual layout for display (A3)

Learning experiences

Activity one – Becoming familiar with key terminology (5 minutes)

1. Individually, in pairs or small groups, students are allocated a card from the *Stairs to inclusivity* cards. Cards are either a term or a definition.
2. Students consider the word or definition on the card and move around the group to find their matching partner, i.e. match the term with the correct definition. Allow a few minutes for participants to complete.
3. Clarify that all students have placed themselves in the correct pairs. Students discuss and share the terms with the correct definitions.
4. As a group, discuss:
   1. are there terms and definitions that surprise you?
   2. did you have other ideas on the meanings of some terms? Where have your meanings come from?

Activity two – Orderingthecards (10 minutes)

1. Students work in pairs or small groups to place the words (and matching definition) into an order, showing what they believe to be the least inclusive practice (most negative) to the most inclusive practice (most positive).
   1. Students place the cards on the wall or floor, like a set of stairs or ladder showing that each term is a step or progression from least inclusive to most inclusive.
   2. Allow a few minutes for students to discuss the order of the cards.
   3. Observe, noting key words for further discussion as a group.
2. Once all students have decided on an order, facilitate discussion using the following questions:
   1. what thoughts or discussions did you have when deciding where to place the cards? If participants are reluctant to volunteer thoughts, choose a card that was the centre of discussion between students and ask everyone why this was the case.
   2. which cards caused more discussion than others? Were certain cards harder to place or agree on than others, if so which ones?
3. Show the suggested order of the stairs to inclusivity and pose the following questions:
   1. are there any surprises in the order of the stairs?
   2. where do you think your school fits on the stairs at the moment?
4. In groups, students create a graffiti wall or brainstorm ideas and strategies for the following question. “How can people in the school community, e.g. students, teachers, parents and carers use the stairs to inclusivity to encourage or promote moving beyond tolerance and towards the top step of celebration?”

Activity three – Scenarios (15 minutes)

1. In pairs or small groups, students are allocated a set of scenario cards
2. Groups discuss each scenario and make judgements about the attitudes, behaviours or actions of the characters within each scenario. Groups determine where each scenario fits on the Stairs to inclusivity, justify why and suggest the hidden messages that might be embedded within the scenario.
3. Groups place each scenario on the Stairs to inclusivity.
4. As a larger group, discuss each scenario and the position or placement of the scenario from each group. Groups might present one scenario each or the facilitator might lead discussion on each scenario using the following questions:
   1. what thoughts did you have when deciding where to place the cards? If students are reluctant to volunteer thoughts, ask- Where did you place scenario 1 on the stairs?
   2. why did your group place the scenario at that step?
   3. what hidden messages are behind the scenario? What might others hear or feel as a result?

Activity four – Concluding the activity (5 minutes)

1. Conclude the activity by revising the purpose of the Stairs to inclusivity and the influence of our values and beliefs on our actions.

For example, ‘The Stairs to inclusivity allow us to see where certain attitudes, behaviours or actions, including language, fit on a sliding scale and the impact this can have on ourselves and others around us.

It is important to remember that the impact of our attitudes, our actions and the language we use is even more significant to those who feel or hear negative messages all the time.’

Our response to the actions of others can reinforce the attitudes on the Stairs to inclusivity. By responding with a more inclusive approach we can move others and ourselves beyond tolerance and promote respect, mutual understanding and celebration.

Teacher notes – Ordering - Stairs to inclusivity

The definition of inclusive

[Oxford dictionary](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/inclusive) defines inclusive as:

not excluding any section of society or any party involved in something (Of language) deliberately avoiding usages that could be seen as excluding a particular social group.

Prejudice and discrimination

* These cards are often a focus of discussion amongst groups.
* Prejudice and discrimination are often interchangeable, because prejudice can be seen as a ‘form’ of discrimination.
* Prejudice is based on letting others ideas or values influence our own actions.
* Discrimination assumes that people have levels of knowledge or understanding on which they make judgements. Being educated on an issue is considered a step forward. This is not to say that Discrimination is a good thing, it’s not, but it is a step forward from prejudice.
* It could be considered that dislike; tolerance and acceptance are all ‘forms’ of discrimination.
* Ultimately if we teach people to be informed and educated they will move past discrimination and a number of other steps in one go.

Mutual understanding and respect

* Groups often place these cards on the stairs in the opposite order.
* Respect involves challenging **your own** personal beliefs and attitudes.
* Mutual understanding involves combatting the negative attitudes and behaviours of **others**.
* It is often more difficult, for young people in particular, to combat the attitudes of others than it is to challenge their own.
* Students can challenge their own beliefs anonymously without making it public knowledge whereas when they combat the attitudes of others they have to publicly speak up or take action.
* You cannot have mutual understanding without respect.
* Something to teach students is the idea of “First seek to understand and then to be understood.’

Tolerance and acceptance

* Students may overlook the definitions for these two terms.
* It is important to make the group aware that both tolerance and acceptance bring with them a sense of power or control over diversity and the need to give permission for difference to exist.

Emphasise with students that we need to move beyond tolerance and reconsider how we use these two terms in our everyday language.

Stairs to inclusivity

Scenario cards

Teachers are to choose scenarios that suit the school context and student’s needs. Sample scenarios might include:

1. You overhear a family member say in conversation “It doesn’t bother me that people are gay, it’s their choice, if they want to do it they can”.
2. A non-English speaking parent contacts the office and makes the request that schools should make information available in local community languages. You overhear a teacher say to the parent ‘If we did this for all languages it would be too expensive. Parents are welcome to request the information in their own language if they need it. We can’t make it available in all languages just for one person’.
3. A friend comes to school frustrated and makes the comment “I was just driving behind this Asian. Far out Asians are all bad drivers aren’t they?”
4. Another student sends a text message to your year group. It is full of insulting, offensive, stereotypical jokes and remarks about Muslim people.
5. A friend is telling you about something shocking one of their cousins did on the weekend. They laugh and say, “How gay is that?”
6. A school P & C meeting is held to provide information regarding to the new Aboriginal Education strategy. When pitching the idea, one parent says “Aboriginal parents and students at this school get too much support already. We don’t need this”.
7. In class a friend laughs and then says to you “Take a look at this, it’s funny as”. They proceed to show you a text that was sent to their mobile. The text is a racist joke about Aboriginal people.
8. A group of students in the SRC want to start an anti-homophobia campaign, to make the school a safer place for students who do not identify as opposite sex attracted and to support the rights of students who are same sex attracted.
9. School X has the Australian and Aboriginal flag in their main hall and on the flag pole in the main playground. They celebrate culturally significant days and events and hold a multicultural day for the community every year.
10. Staff member X says “Aboriginal parents and students at this school get too much support” and staff member Y replies by saying “There are a lot of things Aboriginal people haven’t had for years. They have had their land and families taken away from them, they don’t always get treated fairly and most Aboriginal people experience racism at some point in their lives. We should be supporting them and helping them as much as possible, so they get a fair go”. Where does staff member Y fit on the stairs?
11. An English speaking parent suggests the school should make school information available in local community languages e.g. newsletters and permission notes.
12. Coach Z says “I use to use the term ‘Asian’ to refer to the players in my team. Now I recognise where each individual comes from because they are all different and I have realised I shouldn’t label them.”
13. Your principal makes the following comment at an assembly “There are a number of overseas students at this school so we need to allow them to speak in their own language sometimes.”
14. A parent comments “I don’t agree that the school should be letting students enrol when they can’t speak English, but I’ll just deal with it, like I always do”.
15. One of your friends says to you “I don’t mind if people are gay as long as they don’t try to crack on to me.”
16. A group of students don’t want student Y to sit at their table. You hear them say “I don’t like him, he’s gross, he is disgusting”.
17. In the playground you overhear a group of students saying to one of their friends “Don’t go out with her, she’s not good enough for you”.
18. In a PE lesson the same student always gets left out of teams because no-one in the class ever picks them to be in their group.
19. In a PE lesson student A never passes the ball to student X because they have a disability. Student A doesn’t think student X can play as well as other team mates. Where does student A fit on the stairs?
20. You overhear a staff member at work talking slowly and in a condescending manner to a client over the phone. When you ask them why they were talking that way they make a derogatory comment about the client’s background and say it was because the client couldn’t understand English very well.
21. School Y has a practice where students are only allowed to speak English at the school. If they are found talking in their own language they are suspended.
22. The class is watching a video and during the first scene a student yells out, in reference to one of the characters “she’s got to be gay, look at what she is wearing.”
23. Two students get into a verbal fight when doing a values activity around the issue of sex before marriage. They start to call each other names because they disagree with one another’s cultural beliefs.

Scenarios – Stairs to inclusivity – Teacher information

|  | Scenario |
| --- | --- |
| Acceptance | You overhear a family member say in conversation “It doesn’t bother me that people are gay, it’s their choice, if they want to do it they can”. |
| Dislike | A non-English speaking parent contacts the office and makes the request that schools should make information available in local community languages. You overhear a teacher say to the parent “if we did this for all languages it would be too expensive. Parents are welcome to request the information in their own language if they need it. We can’t make it available in all languages just for one person.” |
| Prejudice/discrimination | A friend comes to school frustrated and makes the comment “I was just driving behind this Asian. Far out Asians are all bad drivers aren’t they?” |
| Hate/prejudice | Another student sends out a text to your year group. It is full of insulting, offensive, stereotypical jokes and remarks about Muslim people. |
| Discrimination | A friend is telling you about something shocking one of their cousins did on the weekend. They laugh and say “How gay is that?” |
| Dislike | A school P & C meeting is held to provide information in regards to the new Aboriginal Education strategy. When pitching the idea one parent says “Aboriginal parents and students at this school get too much support already. We don’t need this”. |
| Hate/Prejudice | In class a friend laughs and then says to you “Take a look at this, it’s funny as”. They proceed to show you a text that was sent to their mobile. The text is a racist joke about Aboriginal people. |
| Celebration | A group of students in the SRC want to start an anti-homophobia campaign, to make the school a safer place for students who do not identify as opposite sex attracted and to support the rights of students who are same sex attracted. |
| Celebration | School X has the Australian and Aboriginal flag in their main hall and on the flag pole in the main playground. They celebrate culturally significant days and events and hold a multicultural day for the community every year. |
| Mutual understanding | Staff member X says “Aboriginal parents and students at this school get too much support” and staff member Y replies by saying “There are a lot of things Aboriginal people haven’t had for years. They have had their land and families taken away from them, they don’t always get treated fairly and most Aboriginal people experience racism at some point in their lives. We should be supporting them and helping them as much as possible, so they get a fair go.” Where does staff member Y fit on the stairs? |
| Mutual understanding | An English speaking parent suggests the school should make school information available in local community languages, e.g. newsletters and permission notes. |
| Respect | Coach Z says “I use to use the term ‘Asian’ to refer to the players in my team. Now I recognise where each individual comes from because they are all different and I have realised I shouldn’t label them.” |
| Acceptance | Your principal makes the following comment at an assembly “There are a number of overseas students at this school so we need to allow them to speak in their own language sometimes.” |
| Tolerance | A parent comments “I don’t agree that the school should be letting students enrol when they can’t speak English, but I’ll just deal with it, like I always do.” |
| Tolerance | One of your friends says to you “I don’t mind if people are gay as long as they don’t try to crack on to me.” |
| Dislike | A group of students don’t want student Y to sit at their table. You hear them say “I don’t like him, he’s gross, he is disgusting.” |
| Dislike | In the playground, you overhear a group of students saying to one of their friends “Don’t go out with her, she’s not good enough for you.” |
| Dislike | In a PE lesson the same student always gets left out of teams because no-one in the class ever picks them to be in their group. |
| Discrimination | In a PE lesson student A never passes the ball to student X because they have a disability. Student A doesn’t think student X can play as well as other team mates. Where does student A fit on the stairs? |
| Discrimination | You overhear a staff member at work talking slowly and in a condescending manner to a client over the phone. When you ask them why they were talking that way they make a derogatory comment about the client’s background and say it was because the client couldn’t understand English very well. |
| Discrimination | School Y has a practice where students are only allowed to speak English at the school. If they are found talking in their own language they are suspended. |
| Prejudice | The class is watching a video and during the first scene a student yells out, in reference to one of the characters “she’s got to be gay, look at what she is wearing.” |
| Hate/Violence | Two students get into a verbal fight when doing a values activity around the issue of sex before marriage. They start to call each other names because they disagree with one another’s cultural beliefs. |

Stairs to inclusivity cards

Celebration

To nurture and treat a person or group with genuine sincerity or delight.

To value a person or group’s worth and be an advocate for their rights.

Mutual Understanding

To appreciate and support the rights of a person or group and combat the negative attitudes and behaviours of others.

Respect

To value the diversity in a person or group and challenge your own personal beliefs and attitudes.

Acceptance

To acknowledge difference but feel the need to approve or give permission for it to occur. (Someone who accepts difference is still placing themselves in a position of power, implying there is something that requires ‘acceptance’).

Tolerance

To put up with difference that you disagree.

To allow difference to exist or occur without interference.

Dislike

To withhold approval from a person or group.

To have a feeling of distaste towards a person or group.

Discrimination

To treat a person or group differently, usually in an unfair manner, because of your personal attitudes and beliefs.

Prejudice

To treat a person or group differently, usually in an unfair manner, because of a preconceived opinion.

To make a prejudgement or form an opinion without knowledge of the facts.

To express bias against a person or group based on stereotypical views.

Hate/Violence

To feel intense dislike, towards a person or group, so strong that it results in negative behaviours and actions towards the person or group

Stairs to inclusivity term cards

Celebration

Mutual Understanding

Respect

Acceptance

Tolerance

Dislike

Discrimination

Prejudice

Hate/Violence

Stairs to inclusivity definition cards

To nurture and treat a person or group with genuine sincerity or delight.

To value a person or group’s worth and be an advocate for their rights.

To appreciate and support the rights of a person or group and combat the negative attitudes and behaviours of others.

To value the diversity in a person or group and challenge your own personal beliefs and attitudes.

To acknowledge difference but feel the need to approve or give permission for it to occur. (Someone who accepts difference is still placing themselves in a position of power, implying there is something that requires ‘acceptance’).

To put up with difference that you disagree.

To allow difference to exist or occur without interference.

To withhold approval from a person or group.

To have a feeling of distaste towards a person or group.

To treat a person or group differently, usually in an unfair manner, because of your personal attitudes and beliefs.

To treat a person or group differently, usually in an unfair manner, because of a preconceived opinion.

To make a prejudgement or form an opinion without knowledge of the facts.

To express bias against a person or group based on stereotypical views.

To feel intense dislike, towards a person or group, so strong that it results in negative behaviours and actions towards the person or group

Stairs to inclusivity – Visual layout

