



Citizenship

Respecting diversity

This topic will develop students' awareness of the factors that influence racism and other forms of prejudice.

This topic is made up of three parts. You can present them one at a time or follow on depending on the needs of your students and the time you have available.

## Learning Intentions

When students have finished this topic, they will be able to:

- Identify some of the ways people learn about their culture
- Identify some of the reasons why people discriminate against each other
- Identify some useful strategies to use when treated unfairly

They will learn these skills by:

- Participating in group discussions
- Watching a video
- Completing worksheets

Activity	What the students will do	What you will need before you start
<p>Activity 1</p> <p><i>‘How do we learn about our culture?’</i></p>	<p>Video and activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Butcher’s paper, whiteboard or Smartboard</li> <li>• Computer with internet connection to play presentation</li> <li>• ‘How do we learn about our culture?’ presentation from website</li> <li>• Copies of previously completed Connections Circle worksheet from <i>Identifying personal strengths and areas for improvement</i></li> <li>• (optional) Paper, pens and other art materials to make collage or poster</li> </ul>
<p>Activity 2</p> <p><i>‘Why do people discriminate?’</i></p>	<p>worksheet</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Butcher’s paper, whiteboard or Smartboard</li> <li>• Computer with internet connection to play video</li> <li>• Copy of graphic organiser for each student</li> <li>• Video ‘First contact’</li> </ul>
<p>Activity 3</p> <p><i>‘What do you do about discrimination?’</i></p>	<p>Self reflection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Butcher’s paper, whiteboard or Smartboard</li> <li>• Paper and pens for students groups to use</li> <li>• Scenario cards</li> </ul>

## Word list

**diversity** = difference.

**racism** = the idea that people of different racial backgrounds are 'alike as a group' in a way that makes one group 'better or worse' than another.

**sexism** = the idea that people of different genders (male or female etc.) are 'alike as a group' in a way that makes one group 'better or worse' than another.

**discrimination** = when someone is treated unfairly because they are 'seen' as being different (e.g. when a person is treated differently and unfairly just because they are either: a man or a woman; or Aboriginal or European; or young or old; or whether they do or not have a disability).

**prejudice** = when one person discriminates unfairly against another, it is often because they have not taken the time to get to know the other person for who they really are. Instead, they may have 'pre-judged' (made up their mind beforehand) based on what they can see on the outside (e.g. an old white man, or a young Aboriginal girl).

**generalisation** = where a whole group of people are thought to be the same, in a way that is unfair. For example: 'Women are not as strong as men' or 'Old people don't have much to offer' or 'People in wheelchairs can't drive' or 'Aboriginal people don't want to work' or 'White people only care about themselves'. When people listen to and believe in unhelpful generalisations, they can often behave in ways that are 'unfair', 'prejudiced' and/or 'discriminatory'.

**belief** = something you 'know in your heart' to be true. Some beliefs are fair and based on fact yet some are unfair and may be based on wrong information or fear. Different cultures can hold and pass on particular beliefs. For example, one culture may encourage belief in an all-powerful god. Another may reject anything that is spiritual. And another may see the earth as a mother to all.

**value** = what you value is what you think is important. Some people value their family more than anything else. Some people value success, and so on. Different cultures can hold and pass on particular values. For example, one culture may value women as homemakers and men as money earners. Another culture may value equality.

**attitude** = the way you think or feel towards something. You can have a tolerant attitude that accepts difference. Or, you can have an intolerant attitude that does not accept, or is afraid of, difference. You can have a caring attitude or an uncaring attitude and many more.

**tolerance** = when you can accept that there are people, ideas, values, beliefs and behaviours that are different to your own. Being tolerant does not mean you have to agree with everyone you meet. It means you accept their right to be different and to be treated with as much respect as you would like for yourself.

**respect** = when you treat someone fairly and, as you would like to be treated, you are showing respect.

## Part 1: How do we learn about our culture?

### Objective – What do we want the students to know?

Students will learn about the ways that all cultures are shaped, through: shared beliefs, values and attitudes.

### Overview – How will they learn this?

Students will have a closer look at the Connections circle worksheet from *Identifying strengths and weaknesses*. They will then be guided to work out and name the beliefs, values and attitudes that are important to them and the culture(s) they belong to. They will create a collage, artwork or other work (whether visual, audio or written) that represents their culture(s).

### Resources – What will I need?

- Butcher's paper, whiteboard or Smartboard
- Computer with internet connection to play presentation
- 'How do we learn about our culture?' presentation from website
- Copies of previously completed Connections Circle worksheet from *Identifying personal strengths and areas for improvement*
- (optional) Paper, pens and other art materials to make collage or poster

### Lesson plan – What do I need to do?

1. Introduce students to today's lesson:

What: how we learn about and become part of our culture.

How: by looking back at our 'Connections circles' and making art or other work to represent our own cultural beliefs, values and attitudes.

Why: the better we understand ourselves, the better we can understand others. Better understanding leads to less conflict and better relationships.



2. Hand out copies of the graphic organisers to students. These can be completed in groups or individually depending on literacy levels
3. Play “How do we learn about our culture?” presentation
4. Ask students, “what are some of the things we learn from our families and community about our culture from the time that we are born?” Write input on the board. This may be easier to do in small groups.
5. Highlight that attitudes (how people think or feel), values (what’s important) and beliefs (ideas people think are true) are the key things we learn from our culture. When we know these things, we know how to act, how to think, how to belong and who we are.
6. Give students their previously completed Connections Circle worksheet. Ask them to think about which parts of their answers would be a belief, value or attitude.
  - Is this something that’s important to me? (Is it a value?)
  - Is this how I think or feel about something? (Is it an attitude?)
  - Is this something that I think is true? (Is it a belief?)

Use an example to illustrate this. For example:

- You might enjoy spending lots of time in nature.  
(*‘Nature is important’* – You value nature)
- You might think that important natural sites should be looked after.  
(*‘We should take care of natural sites’* – You have a caring attitude)
- You might have strong beliefs about nature.  
(*‘I believe everything in nature is connected’* – You know why you value nature).

Explain it’s not important to be able to specifically identify whether cultural knowledge is a belief, a value or an attitude, it’s just important to know that we all have them and where these thoughts and ideas come from.

7. Introduce the activity: students will now create a piece of work (whether visual, aural or written) to show what they think is important about the cultures they belong to. They can choose to show this any way they like.
  - Visual: artwork, painting, drawing, collage, sculpture, print, dance, film
  - Aural: song, story, music, interview
  - Written: story, poem, poster, PowerPoint
8. Students, either individually or as a group, create a written, audio recording or artwork
9. Summary: we learn about our culture(s) from our families and communities. We develop an understanding of what is important to our community by learning about cultural values, beliefs and attitudes.



## Part 2: Why do people discriminate?

### Objective – What do we want the students to know?

Students will learn about the factors that influence forms of discrimination such as sexism, racism and prejudice.

### Overview – How will they learn this?

Students will watch a presentation which looks at why some people may have negative attitudes about other people's race, culture, religion, age, sexuality or gender.

### Resources – What will I need?

- Butcher's paper, whiteboard or Smartboard
- Computer with internet connection to play video
- Copy of graphic organiser for each student
- Video 'First contact'

### Important Note:

The suggested video 'First Contact' comes from the SBS series, which explores some of the attitudes and beliefs held by some 'white' Australians about Aboriginal people. There is swearing in parts, there are some confronting scenes as well as some very racist views expressed by some of the people taking part. To balance this, some of the people taking part have more tolerant attitudes and the views of all participants are consistently challenged by the Aboriginal people they meet. As the show continues, the viewer sees that the racist attitudes are wrong.

It is strongly recommended that you watch the show and talk to others in your community **before** you decide to show it to your students. It is challenging, but it is also a very good example of how people can move forward from holding racist beliefs towards seeing people for who they really are.

## Lesson plan – What do I need to do?

1. Introduce students to today’s lesson:  
What: the different ways people can discriminate against each other when they hold negative beliefs that are unfair.  
How: by watching a video and being supported to talk about it.  
Why: when we learn where racism comes from (its roots, or what causes it) we can better tackle or challenge it.
2. Explain that discrimination means to think, act or speak in a negative or unfair way towards someone because of their race, culture, religion, age, sexuality or gender. Ask students if they can think of any of the ways people discriminate against each other. Add their input to the board.
3. You can share with student’s the keyword list, which includes terms for different forms of discrimination or prejudice.
4. Explain that there are obvious (or aggressive) ways of discriminating against someone: yelling abuse, or threatening or hurting someone. There are also less obvious (or passive) ways of discriminating against someone, such as avoiding people, ignoring them and making offensive jokes.
5. Ask students “Why do people discriminate against other people?” Write down any input on the board and save this for later.

*Answers might include:*

- *Because they don’t know much about them*
  - *Because they might have had a bad experience in the past*
  - *Because someone they know may have had a bad experience*
  - *Because they don’t understand the way others think and behave*
  - *Because they think the ‘worst’ of someone instead of ‘giving them a chance*
6. Explain that discrimination is very often based on negative beliefs or attitudes that someone holds about other people. For example, a person who believes that romantic relationships should only happen between a man and a woman may lead to

discrimination against gay people. A person who believes that all men are always better at handling machinery may lead to discrimination against women in the workplace.

7. Introduce the video: explain to students that they are going to watch a video where six non-Indigenous people, who have had little or no contact with Indigenous people, will be taken to meet Indigenous people in different areas of Australia. Most of the non-Indigenous people have racist attitudes or beliefs about Indigenous people. Some of these beliefs are strong and others are just naïve (they think they know more than they do).
8. Hand out graphic organisers. Draw students attention to the fact they need to try and record the beliefs and attitudes the non-indigenous people have in the first part of the video on the worksheet.
9. Play introduction of the video.
10. Draw this table on the board

Beliefs and attitudes	Evidence for	Evidence against

11. Ask students “What were the six people’s beliefs and attitudes about Aboriginal people?” In the first column, write down all the beliefs and attitudes students have noted. Add any you have noticed as well.

Possible answers:

<i>Beliefs and attitudes</i>	<i>Evidence for</i>	<i>Evidence against</i>

12. Explain that for the rest of the video, students will be looking for evidence for or against the beliefs and attitudes. For example: Jasmine believed that Aboriginal people got more welfare than non-Aboriginal people. When she visited the house in Redfern and talked to Lavina, she realised that they got the same amount.

Beliefs and attitudes	Evidence for	Evidence against
<i>Jasmine: Aboriginal people get more welfare</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Talking to Lavina in Redfern, found out got the same amount</i>

13. Watch rest of the video. You may need to stop the video after each key point, to draw student’s attention to the evidence they need to collect. Or, you might watch the video several times over several lessons.
14. Ask students for the evidence they collected and fill the table. Ask students “How many of the non-indigenous people’s racist beliefs have evidence to support them? How many are not based in reality?” Record this on the board.
15. Explain that many people develop discriminatory attitudes about parts of the community they don’t know much about and that it’s easier to be prejudiced against people you don’t know. Sometimes the discriminatory attitudes and beliefs come from our cultural identities, we are taught them by our communities. Sometimes we learn them as teenagers or adults. Sometimes we develop these attitudes because of a personal experience. Then, we might blame ‘everyone’ (who is old, or white, or male etc.) for that one bad experience.
16. Ask students, “What impact did the non-Indigenous people’s racist attitudes have on the people they met? How did they react?”
17. Ask students “What would do you think would happen if an Aboriginal person tried to get a job in a company owned by one of the non-Indigenous people? Or wanted to rent a house owned by one of them? Or wanted to marry into their family?”
18. Summary: end the lesson making clear that discrimination can affect people’s ability to work and get money and to get a place to live, making it more difficult to survive. Discrimination can have a terrible effect on people’s self-esteem as well as on their safety and well-being.

## **Part 3: What do you do about discrimination?**

### **Objective – What do we want the students to know?**

Students will think about and plan some strategies to deal with forms of discrimination

### **Overview – How will they learn this?**

Students will move into small groups and be asked to solve the problems they can see in a particular discrimination scenario (or situation). They will come up with as many different strategies as they can think of and then share these strategies with the rest of the class.

### **Resources – What will I need?**

- Butcher's paper, whiteboard or Smartboard
- Paper and pens for students groups to use
- Scenario cards

### **Lesson plan – What do I need to do?**

1. Introduce students to today's lesson:  
What: how to deal with different forms of discrimination.  
How: by working through different situations (scenarios) to find helpful ways to solve problems.  
Why: talking through situations and seeing things from someone else's point of view (role-playing) gives us a bigger picture, better understanding and more choices when facing discrimination in real life.
2. Explain we can rarely change the way other people think or act but we can find ways to handle people who are prejudiced. We do not have to put with their bad behaviour.
3. Introduce the activity: students will move into small groups and be given the story of a person or group being discriminated against. As a group, they will think of as many different ways to deal with the problem.

4. Hand out scenario card and paper for students to record their strategies. Students move into groups. Don't try to control any of the students more aggressive or passive suggestions at this point. You may need to help students think of a wider range of strategies by moving around the groups and making suggestions as you go.
5. Bring the smaller groups together. Ask each group to read out their scenario and then their strategies. List the strategies on the board.
6. Once all of the groups have contributed, draw up the following table:

Aggressive	Assertive	Passive

7. Ask students to identify the aggressive strategies on the board. List them in the left hand column. Encourage students to consider any strategies you think are aggressive that haven't been picked up.
8. Ask students "What are the consequences of using aggressive strategies?" Add as many consequences as you can think of, to build on the students' ideas.
9. Explain that aggressive strategies are very risky. They can make you feel better in the short term, by throwing all your anger back at someone else. But you can get into a lot of trouble at school or with the police if caught attacking someone, even if the other person is being racist.
10. Ask students which strategies are passive. List them in the right hand column.
11. Ask students "What are the consequences of using passive strategies?"
12. Explain that passive strategies don't give you a chance to stand up for yourself and they don't stop racist behaviour. Assertive behaviours are those that help you to stand up for yourself, without getting violent or out of control. Ask students which of

the remaining strategies are assertive. Add these to the middle column.

13. If there are no or few assertive strategies, talk through with students some of the ways people can assertively deal with discrimination.
  - Teach yourself to ‘take a breath’ or ‘step back’ if anger is your first response. There are lots of helpful ways we can learn to manage anger.
  - Gather evidence (facts) about the situation (who did or said or wrote what to whom and when and how)
  - Talk to someone you trust to find out for sure whether what you are facing is actually discrimination (it can be easy to ‘jump to conclusions’ which might make things worse). Ask someone to help you find the laws and policies to check this.
  - Get some support – talk to your family and friends – or find a community organisation that can help you
  - When you are sure you have the facts, be clear and firm.
  - Don’t minimise the problem (or make it small).
  - Use evidence (exact words said, when, where, to who)
14. Explain that sometimes the best strategy is to get away from the situation. This is the case when the other person is being or about to get violent, under the influence of alcohol or drugs or not responding to your attempts to reason with them. Making sure you are safe is more important than being assertive.
15. Summary: end the lesson making clear that you can’t stop people from having discriminatory beliefs, but you can deal assertively with anyone discriminating against you.