The Destructive Effects of Stereotypes and Assumptions

Lesson Plan

Resource: H&PE Elementary Resources

Unit: Human Development and Sexual Health

Grade(s): 6

Lesson: 2 of 5

H&PE Curriculum Expectations

2019 H&PE Curriculum Expectations: A1.4, A1.5, A1.6, D3.3

Materials

- Access to a shared document (chart paper and markers or online interactive tool)

- **Teacher Resource: Checklist**

Learning Goals

- We are learning to apply our relationship and self-awareness skills to assess the effects of stereotypes and assumptions on an individual's self-concept, feelings of inclusion and relationships.

- We are learning to use our critical thinking skills to identify ways to appropriately respond to and change harmful assumptions and stereotypes that lead to destructive social attitudes about others.

Overall Assessment

Using the Teacher Resource: Checklist, observe and provide written and verbal feedback on students' ability to assess the effects of stereotypes and assumptions on an individual's self-concept, feelings of inclusion and relationships, and identify ways to respond to and change harmful assumptions and stereotypes that lead to destructive social attitudes.

Minds-On

Share the learning goals with the class and co-construct success criteria with students. Consider posting the success criteria in the learning space for reference throughout the lesson.

Review the ground rules/agreements established in Lesson 1. Have students identify why each ground rule/agreement is important and how it creates an emotionally safe and inclusive learning environment.

Create a **T-Chart** for students to view. Label one column "Being Included" and the other "Being Excluded". Use the following teacher prompts for the class to generate what being included or excluded looks like, feels like, and sounds like.

- **Teacher prompt:** "What does it look like, feel like, and sound like to be included?"

Student responses:

- ○ "Being asked to join a group or an activity."

  ○ "Being accepted and welcomed."

  ○ "When everyone is respected for who they are."

  ○ "When we try to learn about each other's culture."

  ○ "When we all feel safe enough to contribute to ideas."

- **Teacher prompts:** "What does it look like, feel like, and sound like to be excluded?"

Student responses:

- ○ "When someone is being made fun of for their appearance."

- ○ "When someone is being disrespectful of another person's culture or beliefs."

- ○ "When someone is not accepted for who they are or who they love."

- ○ "It can feel lonely and sad."

- ○ "When someone is not invited to be part of a group or intentionally excluded."

- ○ "When someone is being made fun of because of their abilities."

Action

Show a variety of social media profiles of well-known personalities with whom students might identify. Use a **Think Pair Share** strategy for students to identify features the personalities use to describe themselves (e.g., their position in their family, their likes, their culture, their gender) and hashtags that help to expand their social media audience. Alternatively, have students view their social media feeds for examples of how others have constructed their social identity. Have pairs share their observations with the class.

Post the following definitions and review them with students:

- Culture: the customs, beliefs, behaviours and/or achievements of a particular time and/or people; behaviour within a particular group.

- Ethnicity: sharing a distinctive cultural and historical tradition often associated with race, place of origin, ancestry or creed.

- Gender identity: how a person identifies based on an intrinsic sense of self and a sense of being female, male, a combination of both, or neither regardless of their biological sex.

- Gender: the social classification of people as masculine and/or feminine.

- Race: a social construct. Society forms ideas of race based on geographic, historical, political, economic, social and cultural factors, and physical traits, regardless of the fact that these cannot legitimately be used to classify groups of people.

- Sexual orientation: a term for the emotional, physical, romantic, sexual and spiritual attraction, desire, or affection for another person. Examples may include but are not limited to asexual, heterosexual, bisexual, and gay or lesbian.

(*The definitions were extracted from: Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2013).* [**Appendix 1 Glossary of human rights terms**](#)*.*)

Using Direct Instruction, explain that these terms are all factors that make up an individual's identity and make them unique. Have students reflect on the social media profiles they viewed to determine which characteristics were included in the profile.

Use the following teacher prompts to lead a group discussion about the effects of stereotypes and assumptions on an individual's self-concept, feelings of inclusion and their relationships and ways of responding.

- **Teacher prompt:** "What does it mean to stereotype someone and how can stereotypes and assumptions be harmful to someone's self-concept, feelings of inclusion and relationships with others?"

Student responses:

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  - "When we stereotype someone, it means we are making a false assumption or a generalization about them based on a characteristic they may have in common with others like their race, gender, ability or sexual orientation. We don't respect their individual differences."
  - "We might make assumptions about what is 'normal' or expected for people based on their sex or gender like nursing is a female's job and firefighting is a male's job, or males are good at soccer and females are good at dancing."
  - "Making assumptions can make people feel confused or bad about themselves or that they don't fit in."
  - "It can hurt how people feel about themselves, which can lead them to stop doing the things they love."
  - "It can also cause people to discriminate against and exclude those who are seen as different."
  - "Stereotypes are harmful because they can lead to homophobia and other prejudices based on fear, hatred, and mistrust which can result in violence against others."

- **Teacher prompt:** "Everyone needs to feel accepted in school and in the community. Why do you think such stereotyped assumptions come about? What can be done to change or challenge them?"

Student responses:

- - "Stereotypes happen when we do not have enough information and we make assumptions from beliefs that are not accurate. One way we can start to address stereotypes is by finding out more about people. By being open-minded, observing and listening, asking questions, getting more information, and considering different perspectives, we can work to change stereotypes."
  - "We know that not all couples are male-female so we can use words that are more inclusive like 'partner' instead of 'husband' or 'wife'."
  - "We need to be inclusive and welcoming. If we have newcomers from another country in our class, we can try to find out more about them, their culture, and their interests."
  - "If we hear things that are sexist, homophobic, or racist, we can show our support for those who are being disrespected."
  - "If we hear someone using words like 'crazy' or 'nuts' to describe a person who has a mental illness, we can explain that having a mental illness is no different than having any other illness, and that we wouldn't call someone names if they had any other illness."
  - "It is important to respect each other's differences and their right to be who they are."

Consolidation

Highlight for students that everyone has a right to feel safe and included in their school and community, and that everyone has an important role to play in challenging stereotypes and assumptions that can be harmful and lead to violent behaviours and actions against others.

Using an **Elbow Partner** strategy, have students create a hashtag to include in a social media profile to challenge stereotypes and assumptions and promote inclusion.

Provide students with an **Exit Card** to reflect on their learning and respond to the following questions:
- What can you do to change or challenge stereotypes in our school and community?

- What can you do to create a safe and inclusive school community?