

Respect and Power

Overview

This lesson encourages students to think about difference and power and how difference is used to justify unequal power relations. The lesson aims to give students an understanding of different forms of power and the ways in which power is used, misused and abused. It explores examples of bullying and physical violence, acknowledging both what may seem to be the rewards of physical violence and bullying as well as the ways in which it is damaging and destructive. It uses bullying and racial, sexual and other forms of harassment as examples of the misuse of power that everyone will be familiar with. Young people may often be the perpetrators as well as the victims. They are also in situations where forms of powerlessness are not acknowledged, and where the ways young people may attempt to redress power imbalances are seen as inappropriate.

Aim of the lesson • To explore the concept of power.

- To explore who has power in society and why.
- To explore the kind of power young people have and the power others have over them.
- To look at different forms of bullying.
- To understand how it might feel to be a bully and to be bullied.
- To look at how people misuse power to try and control others

Learning outcomes

In this lesson students will have the opportunity to think about and define difference, to be aware of difference and diversity within groups and the wider community and to challenge the acceptability of using difference to discriminate. The lesson will also enable discussion on how to deal in a positive and non-violent way to resolve certain situations.

Activity 1: What is power?

Ask the students to think about 'power' and what it is. In small groups, ask students to decide on a definition of 'power' and to think about who has power, and why they have power, and who decided who has power and why?

Activity 2: It's a choice

Break the students into single sex groups. Ask each group to consider how to deal with the situation. They must not use bullying or violence or abuse to remedy the situation. The examples here are of difficult situations. These have been chosen specifically so that students can discuss how to resolve in a positive way.

It's a choice (boys) handout

- A girl you have liked for weeks calls you 'ugly' in front of your friends. You call her a 'bitch' who no one would want to go out with anyway.
- Your best friend falls out with you for no reason. He begins to be friendly with another boy in your class and you feel excluded. You meet the other boy in the street and you punch him.
- You are feeling annoyed about something. A smaller younger boy walks into you in the corridor by accident. You push him forcefully into the wall.
- Your best friend asks you to help him 'frighten' a girl who doesn't want to go out with him. You don't feel happy about doing it but you agree to help him because he is your best friend.

It's a choice (girls) handout

- You found out that someone hit your little brother in the street. You go looking for her to hit her back.
- You are sick of this girl who is 'teacher's pet'. You decide with a group of girls that you will all completely ignore her and whisper and giggle when she goes past.
- Your best friend falls out with you for no reason. She begins to be friendly with another girl in the class. The next day you send her an abusive message via Facebook messenger.
- A new girl has arrived at school. You hear she has a reputation for being 'hard'. You and your friends decide to take her on in a fight to show her you are 'harder'

Bring the students together and ask:

- Was it difficult to think of other options?
- If it was difficult, why?
- Was it easier to think of violent or negative options?
- If it was easier to be violent, why?

Finish lesson By discussing with the students that 'violence is never inevitable', and by exploring why a choice always has to be made.