Spice of Life

Resources
The Spice of Life
Learner Survey – ‘Respect for Difference’

1. I feel safe at school.
   - Always
   - Mostly
   - Sometimes
   - Never

2. I have been bullied/harassed.
   - Never
   - Sometimes
   - Quite Often
   - All The Time

3. I bully/harass others.
   - Never
   - Sometimes
   - Quite Often
   - Regularly

4. I feel able to intervene when I see bullying/harassment happening to others.
   - Never
   - Sometimes
   - Quite Often
   - Always

5. If someone is being harassed, I tell someone about it because I think they will be able to help.
   - Never
   - Sometimes
   - Quite Often
   - Regularly

6. Names I have been called are:

7. Names I have heard other people being called are:

8. The worst harassment I have seen has been:

9. Bullying is OK.
   - Strongly disagree
   - Disagree
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree
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10. Being bullied is a natural part of growing up.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

11. Choose the top three groups most likely to get bullied/harassed.

- Aboriginal Girls
- Aboriginal Boys
- Girls from ethnic backgrounds
- Boys from ethnic backgrounds
- Girls with a disability
- Boys with a disability
- Economically poor Girls
- Economically poor Boys
- Gay Boys
- Lesbian Girls
- Skinny Girls
- Skinny Boys
- Girls/young women
- Boys/young men
- Fat Boys
- Fat Girls

Contexts and Definitions Resource
Discussing difference and hopefulness issues and where we get our ideas from.

Culture – a broad concept embracing all aspects of human life which focuses on patterns for living (Seelys 1985)

Sex – the biological physical state i.e. either male or female.

Gender – gender differences are historically and socially constructed, eg within family and relationships, and the institutions of society, including schooling. Expectations and assumptions and beliefs construct different behaviours and attitudes in different contexts. The identification with being either male or female is understood in terms as opposites early in life. It is of human making and therefore, like any other human experience, it is capable of change and more flexibility.

Homosexuality – is the sexual feeling a person has for someone of the same sex. The term has often in the past been used to refer only to males making invisible the lives of homosexual women.
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Lesbian – is a term for a homosexual female.

Gay – is a term for a homosexual male.

Sexual harassment – is where boys or girls are harassed on the basis of their sex and performance of gender

Feminine – qualities and actions that are often stereotypically (without exploration) associated with the female sex

Masculine – qualities and actions that are often stereotypically (without exploration) associated with the male sex.

Learners also consider the kinds of influences and experiences that interact with how they identify and work on establishing their sense of self. Identity is unfixed, it’s a fluid concept, and this task is an ongoing engagement for people to some degree all their lives.

Influences can include:
- ethnicity
- heritage
- culture
- parents and family origins
- gender
- sexuality
- relationships
- socio-economic status
- religion
- social life and groups
- leisure activities

Stepping Out Questions
There is room to add or leave out some of the questions keeping to the intent of questions to support reflection on advantage and disadvantage.

1. Can you get anywhere you want to go easily?
2. Can you discuss difficulties in relationships with someone else?
3. Can you be fairly sure you won’t be put down or harassed by other people at school?
4. Do you have friends who stand by you?
5. Do you feel fairly sure that you will be able to find a job when you leave school?
6. Would you be able to take your partner to the school dance?
7. Do you see people like you represented on TV programs?
8. Do you know many other people like yourself?
9. When you go to the shop do you always get good service from shop attendants?
10. Are you able to walk down the street and feel safe from name calling or harassment?
11. Do you think the bank will be willing to lend you money when you are older?
12. If there were several spare seats on a bus, would most people seem willing to sit with you?
13. Do you feel comfortable about going to a school camp and able to participate fully?
14. Is it easy for you to go out on a Friday night with friends?
15. Can you talk openly to friends about who it is you are attracted to?
16. Do other people know what you are talking about when you talk about your home and your family?
17. Are your parents likely to attend a parent/teacher evening?
18. Do you think you’ll have money to get things you want when you are older?
Scenario Cards for Stepping Out

A 14 year old girl who is in a wheelchair.
A young Asian man who is gay.
A 15 year old young woman who wears size 20 clothes.
A young white woman who is going out with the captain of the school football team.
A young Aboriginal man living in the city.
A teenage young woman who is pregnant and without a partner.
An ‘out’ gay full forward for the football team.
A 16 year old young woman who is injecting drugs regularly, and has become infected with HIV-AIDS.
A 16 year old young man who has been blind since birth.
A 17 year old young woman with a mild intellectual disability.
A bisexual young man in a steady relationship with a young woman.
A boy who has lived away from his parents since he was 10 years old and has been in 5 foster homes over the last 4 years.
A young woman whose family is very poor.
An Aboriginal girl who does well at school.
A young woman who has been sexually abused.
A girl whose father is the local bank manager and whose mother owns her own business.

A young homeless lesbian woman.

A young man who has attempted suicide several times.

An ‘out’ lesbian who is a successful TV star.

A 14 year old boy who loves singing and is doing drama.
Assumptions, expectations and norms

What assumptions/expectations are there around homophobic harassment?

That all boys are expected to:

•
•
•
•
•

If thy don’t, they are outside of the ‘NORM’

That all girls are expected to:

•
•
•
•
•

If they don’t, they are outside of the ‘NORM’
Opposites – Are They?
There is considerable debate about the fact that it is inappropriate to expect males and females to have certain behavioural characteristics because of their biological sex at birth. Traditional views of male and female characteristics do not take into account personality, lifestyle choices and social and ethnic differences in individuals which can influence their behaviour. What does it mean to be masculine or feminine? Note the opinions of your class on the board and then compare your list with the following characteristics often attributed to males and females:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Masculine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nurturing</td>
<td>Domineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Aggressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet</td>
<td>Boisterous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neat</td>
<td>Untidy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Powerful/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent/Caring</td>
<td>Independent/Non-caring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrational</td>
<td>Rational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gentle</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intuitive</td>
<td>Logical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Do you see anything wrong with this kind of categorising of feminine and masculine characteristics?
- How can females who show these stereotypical ‘male’ characteristics be viewed?
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- How can males who show the stereotypical ‘female’ characteristics be viewed?
- What role do you think the media plays in constructing images of what are appropriate versions of masculinity and femininity?
- What problems can stereotypical views of masculine and feminine behaviours cause for individuals?
- What other characteristics does our society often attribute to males and females?
Strategy Scenarios

# 1
There is a group of several students waiting at the bus stop outside a co-educational public school. They include students from a variety of Year levels, and some boys and some girls.
A group of three students walk past the bus stop, and yell racial taunts at Tranh, a Vietnamese student who is one of the students waiting there.
- What can Tranh do? How do you think he is feeling?
- Why do you think people in this situation harass others?
- What can the other students do?
- What should we as a school set up or do in this sort of situation?

#2
Bindi usually has lunch with a group of 5 other girls from her class. Lately, however, a new girl, Steph, has joined the group and she has started whispering about Bindi, suggesting to the others that she is a slut. The other girls are becoming much less friendly towards Bindi, laughing behind their hands and joking about her just outside her hearing. Today she comes to join them and they all turn their backs and make comments about not wanting to be with sluts like her. This conversation is heard by another group of girls sitting near them.
- What can Bindi do? How do you think she is feeling?
- Why do you think people in a situation as this harass others?
- What can the others observing the interaction do?
- What do you think the other girls in the group are feeling?
- What should we as a school do to change this situation? To make it less likely?

#3
Matthew is a talented actor who has a leading part in the school play. His part is a really great one, even though he has to wear a skimpy outfit in it. During dress rehearsals, Matthew is getting a lot of teasing about his outfit, especially from the ‘jocks’ who are suggesting he is gay – a ‘poof’ and a ‘faggot’. He has been able to brush this off mostly, but today, after rehearsal, a group of boys corner him and start beating him up. There are 6 other boys in the changing room watching.
- What could Matthew do? How do you think he is feeling?
- Why do you think people in this situation harass others?
- What could the boys who are watching do?
- How do you think the boys who are attacking Matthew are feeling?
- What should we as a school do to help/change the situation? To make it less likely?
Preferred and Fair Futures for each and all

The future as a branching time-line

PAST

1950s

- Aboriginal people did not have the vote.
- No equal pay for women.
- Homosexual people more often jailed, experienced physical violence.
- Young people with disabilities could not go to school.

HERE

NOW

- Harassment
- Stereotyping
- Power used negatively
- Ongoing narrow ‘norms’

If no-one takes action to change attitude /behaviour to shape a fairer class/school community

PROBABLE FUTURES

PREFERABLE FUTURES FOR EACH & ALL

Key question
How can I/we make our preferable futures more probable and our probable futures less probable?

(From EL-Future in General Introduction)
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Sticks, Stones and Stereotypes (Meaghan Morris, 1997)

Basically, these guidelines give an etiquette for dealing with the complexity of our own society. As a guide to good manners in the midst of diversity it is more experimental, but much simpler, than the etiquettes of old which tried to produce uniformity. It boils down to four basic principles of politeness: don’t harp about people’s differences when it isn’t necessary; do try to treat everyone equally and fairly; don’t use euphemisms for disabilities or make jocular remarks to people you don’t know about their race, their looks or sexuality; do call people whatever they prefer to be called, and if you don’t know, ask them. In what sort of society are these principles thought sinister or laughable? Not ours I hope.

It boils down to four basic principles of politeness:
• don’t harp about people’s differences when it isn’t necessary
• do try to treat everyone equally and fairly
• don’t use euphemisms for disabilities or make jocular remarks to people you don’t know about their race, their looks or sexuality
• do call people whatever they prefer to be called, and if you don’t know, ask them.

A note on homophobia
Homophobia is endemic within Western education systems. However, rarely are issues of masculinities and violence placed on the social justice agenda of schools. Unless homophobia is recognised as a significant social justice issue, many of the dominant concerns about boys in schools are unlikely to be adequately and effectively addressed. (Dr Martin Mills, 2001).