

CELEBRATING DIFFERENCE

EXPLORING APPEARANCE RELATED BULLYING



RESPECT STARTS WITH YOU
#CHOOSE RESPECT

chooserespect.scot



PURPOSE

To explore the importance of celebrating difference; increase awareness of the experiences of those living with a visible difference; and improve understanding of appearance-related bullying.

GROUP

Ages 5 – 18 years, see link with Experiences and Outcomes below

TIME

70 minutes
(Can be delivered across a number of sessions)

MATERIALS

Balloons or paper; craft materials, accompanying PowerPoint slides provided, 'one thing I will do today to celebrate different' template for each participant (See end of this document)

PREPARATION

Remind your group of the key messages from the Iceberg Activity from the first stage of the #ChooseRespect campaign on 'self-reflection'. During this exercise young people completed their own iceberg – aspects of who they are that are visible (e.g. physical characteristics, skin colour, accent) and aspects of who we are that are not immediately obvious (e.g. culture, heritage, likes and dislikes, family background etc). The icebergs show that while there are lots of things we have in common, we are all unique and we should get to know someone rather than make assumptions about who they are.

This exercise will build on this idea, by further exploring prejudice, stereotypes and appearance-related bullying.

This exercise has been developed in partnership with Changing Faces, and adapted from their education packs. For more information visit: <https://changingfaces.org.uk>

INTRODUCTION AND SAFE SPACE (5 MINUTES)

Explain that this is a safe space, nobody will be judged on their answers or opinions. It is okay to make mistakes, but it is important to recognise and learn from those. Introduce some ground rules for the session, or remind your group of existing ground rules you have and how they show respect to each other in a learning environment.

ICEBREAKER (2 MINUTES)

Ask everyone to stand up if they can. In turn ask those to sit down with particular physical characteristics, until everyone is seated, illustrating the point that everyone has unique characteristics – everyone is different. For example –

- Sit down if you have a birthmark
 - Sit down if you have a scar
 - Sit down if you have freckles
 - Sit down if you have blonde hair
 - Sit down if you have red hair
-

WHAT MAKES YOU, YOU? (15 MINUTES)

With a balloon (or paper) and craft materials ask your group to create an image of themselves – what do they look like and what words would they use to describe themselves? Ask the group to represent any visible difference they have, not just a facial difference – this could be as simple as ‘brown hair, glasses, tall’. Ask each to present their balloon/image to their group, table or class and share something about it.

Afterwards, remind the group that each image is completely unique, because while we all have things in common we are each unique individuals. A series of description labels could also be created and chosen by the participants to describe themselves, if this is preferable to drawing.

PRESSURES ON APPEARANCE (5 MINUTES)

Give the group a minute to think individually about what is their best feature. Was that difficult? There is a lot of pressure to look a particular way, and those pressures can lead to us thinking negatively about how we look instead of celebrating the strengths of our body or what is interesting about it. Maybe your best feature is your legs because they enable you to run fast, your hands because you are good at drawing, your nose because it is exactly like the rest of your family’s etc.

We aren’t the only ones who experience this pressure. Some of the most seemingly beautiful or “perfect” people feel this pressure too. For example, Perrie Edwards recently spoke out about learning to accept her freckles, for more information and images:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/45194261>

Nobody fits this seemingly “perfect” mould and embracing who we are is important – we all have equal value, worth, and rights. We all deserve respect.

UNDERSTANDING VISIBLE DIFFERENCE AND APPEARANCE-RELATED BULLYING (15 MINUTES)

What is a visible difference? It is any sort of mark, scar or condition that affects someone's appearance. There are a whole range of causes and some of these are listed on slide 2, however this list is certainly not exhaustive. The main message here is that it is fine to be curious but often we do not need an answer to the cause of someone's appearance in order to accept someone for who they are.

Play the age appropriate video to explore what is life like for young people with diverse types of visible differences.

Primary aged young people: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXePugDJShA> (slide 3)

Watch the video and have a group discussion

- How did the young feel about their visible difference?
- The young people said their appearance was just one part of who they were - how else did they describe themselves?

Secondary aged young people: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWD12X0FfvU> (slide 4)

Note this video contains some strong language

Watch the video and have discussion in pairs.

- What were some of the reactions people had to their visible difference and how did this make them feel?
- Have you ever seen this kind of bullying behaviour happen?
- Have you ever felt similar if someone has criticised your appearance?
- How did the young people in the film feel about having a visible difference?

Round-up this part of the session by discussing what we CAN do when interacting with people who have a visible difference **slide 5**.

BULLYING BEHAVIOUR (20 MINUTES)

Use **slides 6 - 8** to set the scene in relation to appearance related bullying. Are any of these statistics surprising to the group?

Break the group into smaller groups of 3 or 4 to explore the case studies using **slides 9 - 13**. The case studies and accompanying notes to assist discussion are included at the end of this document.

ROUND UP: TREATING OTHERS WITH RESPECT (5 MINUTES)

Remind the group of the importance of acting with respect towards others, often that means treating others the way you would like to be treated yourself.

Whilst we now know that it can be harmful to draw attention to someone's appearance in a negative way, we should also remember that being 'over-nice' can be harmful too. It is easy to make assumptions that someone who looks different faces difficulties, yet how do we know this until we get to know the person themselves?

We all want to be treated fairly and we all have the power to do so for each other.

ONE THING I WILL DO TODAY TO CELEBRATE DIFFERENCE (5 MINUTES)

Ask your group to each commit to celebrating difference by filling out the 'one thing I will do today to celebrate difference' template. Take a photo and share on social media to join the #ChooseRespect conversation! (slide 14)

EXPERIENCES AND OUTCOMES

For delivering Curriculum for Excellence, this activity can be used to explore experiences and outcomes such as:

I know that friendship, caring, sharing, fairness, equality and love are important in building positive relationships. As I develop and value relationships, I care and show respect for myself and others.	HWB 0-05a / HWB 1-05a / HWB 2-05a / HWB 3-05a / HWB 4-05a
I understand that people can feel alone and can be misunderstood and left out by others. I am learning how to give appropriate support.	HWB 0-08a / HWB 1-08a / HWB 2-08a / HWB 3-08a / HWB 4-08a
As I explore the rights to which I and others are entitled, I am able to exercise these rights appropriately and accept the responsibilities that go with them. I show respect for the rights of others.	HWB 0-09a / HWB 1-09a / HWB 2-09a / HWB 3-09a / HWB 4-09a
I recognise that each individual has a unique blend of abilities and needs. I contribute to making my school community one which values individuals equally and is a welcoming place for all.	HWB 0-10a / HWB 1-10a / HWB 2-10a / HWB 3-10a / HWB 4-10a
I am aware of how friendships are formed and that likes, dislikes, special qualities and needs can influence relationships.	HWB 0-44a / HWB 1-44a
I am aware that positive friendships and relationships can promote health and the health and wellbeing of others.	HWB 2-44b
I recognise that we have similarities and differences but are all unique.	HWB 0-47a / HWB 1-47a

CASE STUDY

Gemma is 15 years old, loves going on holiday, shopping and spending time with friends. When she was young an accident resulted in a hot cup of tea being spilt down her back and leaving burn scars. She has since endured numerous operations and has always coped very well.

Recently however, Gemma's family have noticed that she has started to cover up her arms and getting upset at the thought of swimming with friends or going on holiday in fear of others seeing her difference.

Gemma talked to a counsellor about feeling that the older she has become, the more she is aware of looking different and wishing that her scars would go away. She talked about lacking in confidence and not fitting in with what is thought to be beautiful in our society.

Gemma has never experienced any negative comments but has noticed people stare a lot when her scars are exposed. She assumes people see her and think 'disgusting' and whispering about her ugliness. It leaves her feeling very upset and embarrassed, and thinks it would be easier to just hide away.

NOTES TO ASSIST DISCUSSION

A Changing Faces Practitioner spent time with Gemma thinking about what beauty means and the importance of beauty both to Gemma as an individual and in our society. Gemma became aware of how important she had assumed beauty to be, discounting and minimising the other qualities she has. Time was spent mapping Gemma's qualities and interests, noticing there was so much more to Gemma than just her appearance.

When thinking about staring, Gemma noticed how she had assumed that people were staring in a negative manner. Gemma explored with the Changing Faces Practitioner reasons for staring and how it can be no more than natural curiosity and noticing something different rather than something negative. Gemma thought to times when she has stared at others and how this is part of human nature, to notice when something is different. It also made Gemma aware of the impact of this kind of behaviour on others, even if nothing was intentional about it. She thought that if she experienced this kind of staring at school it is something she would speak to her teachers about.

Gemma considered how she might respond to staring and she considered making attempts to catch people's eyes and smiling as a sign of friendliness and also in the hope that they would stop staring.

As a result of engaging with the Changing Faces counselling team, Gemma overall felt she had more control and felt less anxious about her scars being visible. Her confidence improved greatly the more she gained evidence that she was valued and loved for who she was and all the values she possessed. Gemma felt able to join in with friends trips to the swimming pool once more. What Gemma noticed when on holiday was that she was far less preoccupied by her appearance than she thought as she was having far too much fun.

CASE STUDY

Alan is 9 years old, loves football, playing video games and has a skin condition called eczema. He has always had lots of friends at school however one day someone started giving him the nickname 'flaky' because of the way his skin looked. He told them he did not like this name, but he was ignored and other children started to call him this too.

Things got worse for Alan as these children who he thought were his friends stopped letting him join in football games. This upset Alan deeply as it was his favourite sport. Eventually going to school at all became a very difficult thing to cope with.

Alan also stopped using the cream the doctor gave him to care for his skin so he became even more uncomfortable and his parents became worried too. His thought 'there is no point using the cream because I am ugly anyway'. He did not speak to anyone about how he felt as he didn't want to be seen as a 'grass'.

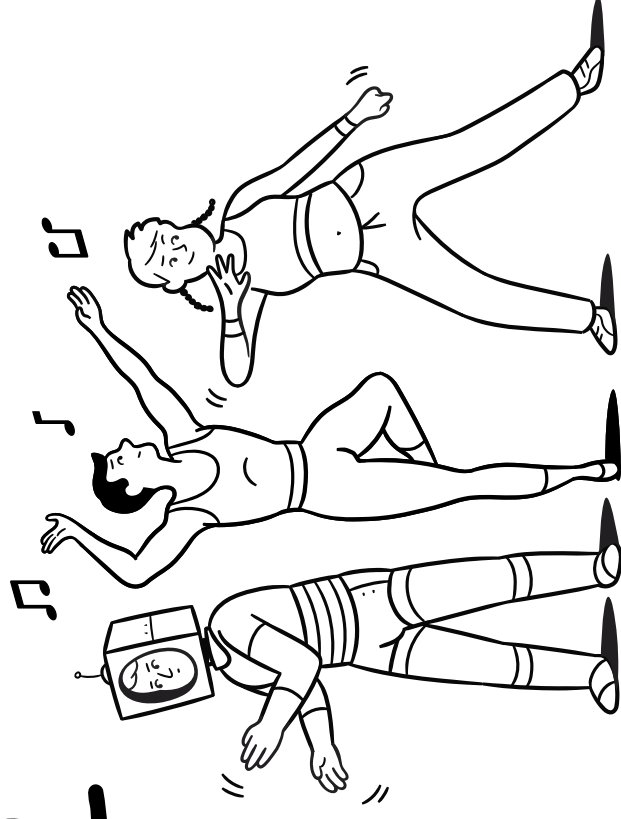
NOTES TO ASSIST DISCUSSION

The Changing Faces Practitioner spoke with Alan about what bullying meant and what makes a good friend. Alan was able to tell me about the good friends he had and who did not make fun of his appearance. When thinking about those who did make unkind comments about his appearance we thought about how he might respond to such name calling. Alan thought it would be a good idea to walk away from peers who he felt were unkind and in time asked the Changing Faces Practitioner to talk with the school about the bullying.

Alan began to feel more confident and started to use creams to help his skin once more. He decided that he wanted his friends to understand more about his condition and how it affects him daily. He was very brave and decided to do a talk to his class about eczema.

Alan feels happier than ever since this talk as he feels that people understand him better and he feels more able to talk about times when people are unkind towards him. Alan now feels confident to explain his condition to others as well as respond appropriately to unkind comments which he feels hardly ever happen anymore.

**ONE THING I WILL
DO TODAY TO
CELEBRATE
DIFFERENCE**

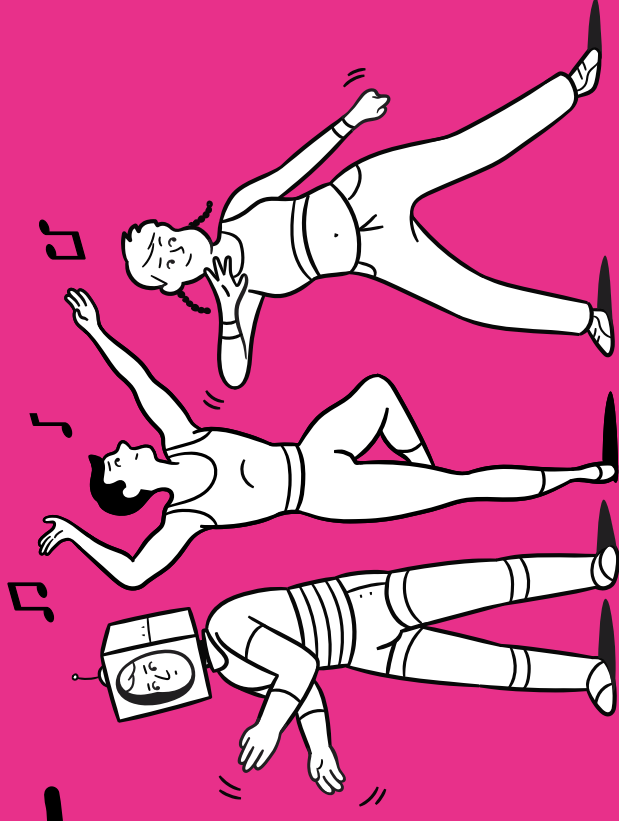


**RESPECT STARTS WITH YOU
#CHOOSERESPECT**

chooserespect.scot



**ONE THING I WILL
DO TODAY TO
CELEBRATE
DIFFERENCE**



**RESPECT STARTS WITH YOU
#CHOOSERESPECT**

chooserespect.scot



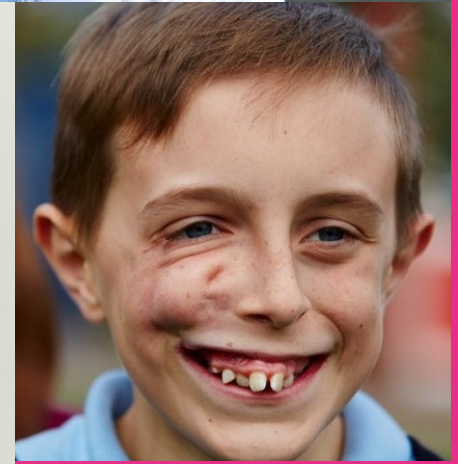
CELEBRATING DIFFERENCE

Welcome to stage 2 of the
#ChooseRespect campaign



SOME OF THE MAIN CAUSES OF VISIBLE DIFFERENCE

- Skin conditions like eczema or acne
- Surgery
- Burns
- Craniofacial conditions
- Cleft lip/palate
- Birthmarks

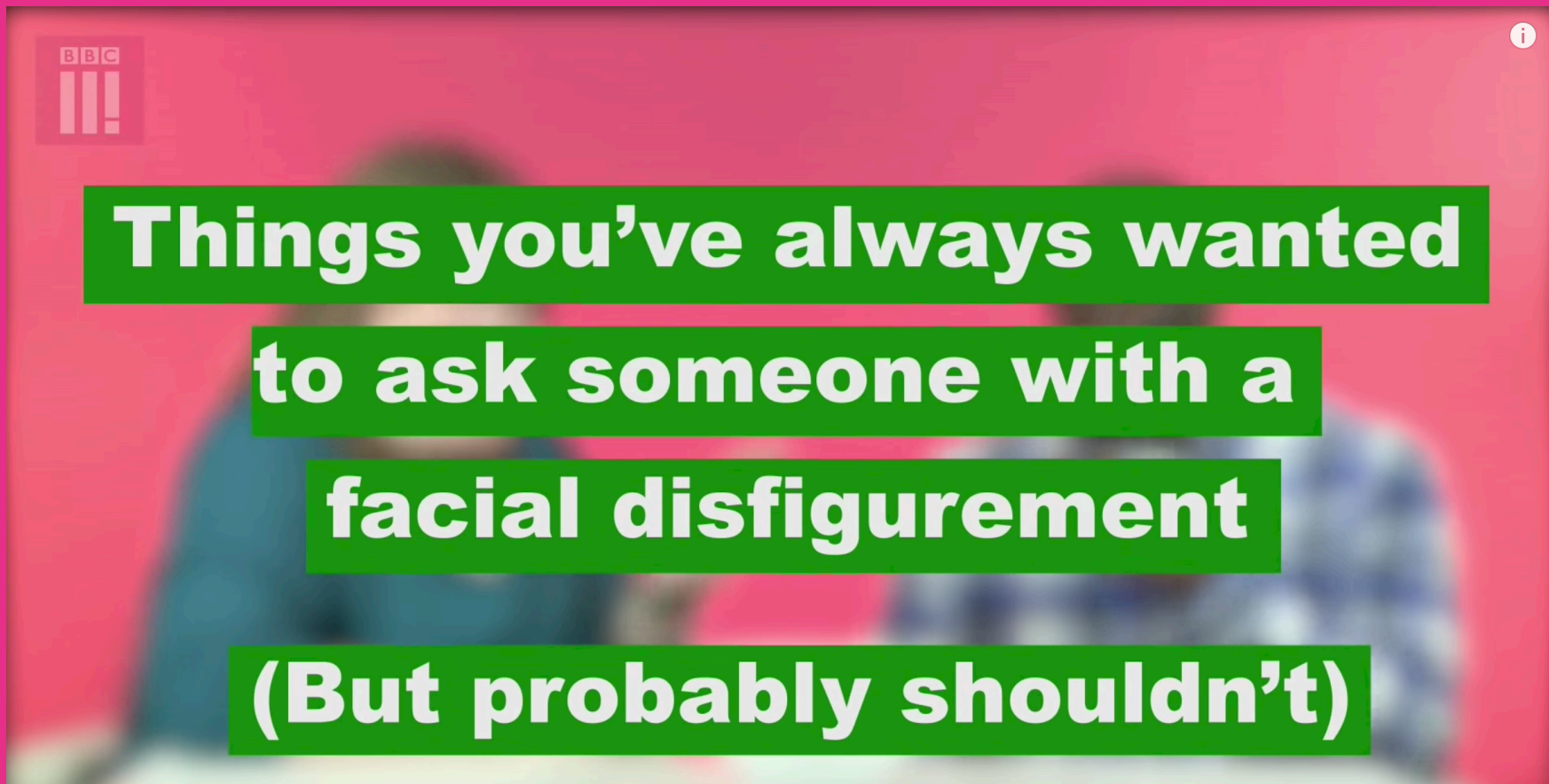




And I'm proud to be me.



Proud To Be Me - Video



[What not to say to someone with a disfigurement - Video](#)

**DON'T KNOW WHAT
TO DO OR SAY?**

- ✓ Smile!
- ✓ Say “hi” – sometimes it’s as simple as that!
- ✓ Talk about everyday things: music, football, what you are doing at the weekend.

**LESS THAN 1 IN 3 YOUNG
PEOPLE SAID THEY
WOULD BE FRIENDS
WITH SOMEONE WITH A
DISFIGUREMENT**

**96% HAVE SEEN A
PHOTO OR COMMENT
ON SOCIAL MEDIA THAT
MOCKED SOMEONE'S
APPEARANCE.**

**OVER HALF OF ALL SCHOOL
CHILDREN WHO HAVE A
VISIBLE DIFFERENCE
EXPERIENCE BULLYING
BECAUSE OF IT.**

**NOW LET'S LOOK AT SOME
REAL-LIFE EXAMPLES.**

**THESE ARE THE STORIES OF
REAL SCOTTISH YOUNG
PEOPLE TODAY.**

Gemma is 15 years old, loves going on holiday, shopping and spending time with friends. When she was young an accident resulted in a hot cup of tea being spilt down her back and leaving burns scars. She has since endured numerous operations and has always coped very well.

Recently however, Gemma's family have noticed that she has started to cover up her arms and getting upset at the thought of swimming with friends or going on holiday in fear of others seeing her difference.

Gemma talked to a counsellor about feeling that the older she has become, the more she is aware of looking different and wishing that her scars would go away. She talked about lacking in confidence and not fitting in with what is thought to be beautiful in our society.

Gemma has never experienced any negative comments but has noticed people stare a lot when her scars are exposed. She assumes people see her and think 'disgusting' and whispering about her ugliness. It leaves her feeling very upset and embarrassed, and thinks it would be easier to just hide away.



QUESTIONS:

- Is there any bullying behaviour in this situation?
- How does Gemma feel?
- What could her friends do to be supportive?

Alan is 9 years old, loves football, playing video games and has a skin condition called eczema. He has always had lots of friends at school however one day someone started giving him the nickname 'flaky' because of the way his skin looked. He told them he did not like this name, but he was ignored and other children started to call him this too.

Things got worse for Alan as these children who he thought were his friends stopped letting him join in football games. This upset Alan deeply as it was his favourite sport. Eventually going to school at all became a very difficult thing to cope with.

Alan also stopped using the cream the doctor gave him to care for his skin so he became even more uncomfortable and his parents became worried too. His thought 'there is no point using the cream because I am ugly anyway'. He did not speak to anyone about how he felt as he didn't want to be seen as a 'grass'.

QUESTIONS:

- What is the bullying behaviour?
- What impact do you think it has on Peter?
- What could his friends do to be supportive?

ONE THING I WILL
DO TODAY TO
CELEBRATE
DIFFERENCE



RESPECT STARTS WITH YOU
#CHOOSE RESPECT

chooserespect.scot

