

Lesson 3

Exploring stereotypes

Resources

Short film: Dean's story

Available from the DVD

PowerPoint presentation: Exploring stereotypes

Available from the DVD to support content delivery

Leaflets:

Available from the National Self-harm Network, www.nshn.co.uk

Download and print. Consider making this information easily accessible to all pupils, inside and outside of the classroom

PDF:

Digital copy of Lesson 3 teaching notes

Available from the DVD for print and sharing purposes

Teaching point 1:

Pupil learning intentions

(1 minute)

- I understand the meaning of the term 'stereotype'
- I am able to identify who's at risk from self-harm
- I recognise that everyone differs in their ability to cope with different situations
- I understand that we all use different coping mechanisms to deal with difficult feelings or situations

Teaching point 2:

Keep Safe

(1 minute)

Set the ground rules for the discussion to create a safe and open environment.

Suggested script:

Over the next couple of weeks we will be discussing the topic of self-harm. This can be a very sensitive issue for some people. During these lessons you are expected to be supportive and respectful of others.

If the content of these lessons gives rise to any concerns, anxieties or worries you should feel free to approach a teacher, school nurse or any member of staff you feel comfortable talking to if you need help or advice.

In the final lesson we will be looking at organisations that can offer treatment and advice in this area. However, information will be made available after each lesson for you if you feel you wish to talk to someone in private. You will also be able to find this information online and in the library.

Teaching point 3:

Quick recap

(2 minutes)

Before beginning the first activity, ask pupils to recall what they remember from Lessons 1 and 2

This exercise will allow you to assess if the learning intentions from the previous lessons have been achieved. Use the following prompts if necessary:

- What is the definition of self-harm?
- What different types of behaviour are associated with self-harm?
- What types of life events can lead to self-harm?
- What feelings do we find easy to deal with and which ones are more difficult?
- How and why was Millie self-harming?

Teaching notes:

Coping mechanisms

Read prior to commencing Activity 1 with pupils

Lesson 3 explains the concept of coping mechanisms—strategies people use to forget, distract or overcome a difficult feeling.

Everyone differs in their ability to cope with different situations. We also adopt different coping strategies to deal with a variety of pressures we face in our lives. Some people use self harming behaviour to do this whilst other people use other coping mechanisms such as playing sport or talking to friends.

Once pupils have understood the concept of coping mechanisms it will be easier to challenge pupils' views on stereotypes. Pupils need to accept that all types of stereotyping are wrong even if they feel what they are saying about a group might be positive.

See the additional teaching notes on p18–19.

Activity 1:

Stereotypes discussion **(10 minutes)**

The aim of this activity is to help pupils to understand the meaning of what a stereotype is. You will need a number of images of different people. A selection of eight images has been provided in the accompanying PowerPoint. Refer to at least four to stimulate a meaningful discussion.

Using one image at a time, ask pupils to state their spontaneous reaction to the person on display. After you have completed this, ask the class to identify who they think would self-harm out of all the images and why.

Explain to the class that a person who has self harmed in the past is double gold Olympic medallist, Dame Kelly Holmes. Ask the class if anyone is surprised by this.

In print and broadcast interviews she has spoken publicly about how she used to cut herself to cope with the feeling of disappointment.¹

Ask the class what they think the word stereotype means.

Read or display (PowerPoint presentation) the following definition from the Equality and Human Rights Commission:

“Thinking all people who belong to a certain group are the same and labelling them. Stereotypes are often based on old fashioned ideas or are deliberately untrue and designed to hurt people.”

Stereotypes are often confused with prejudices, because, like prejudices, a stereotype is based on a prior assumption. Prejudice is to ‘pre judge’ someone without knowing them, on the basis of what they look like or what group they belong to.

Stress that, regardless of appearance or background, anyone at any time might turn to self-harm to cope with a difficult situation.

Explain that judging someone from only a picture is stereotyping.

1. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2204005/Double-gold-Olympic-medallist-Dame-Kelly-Holmes-reveals-long-battle-self-harming-admits-thought-taking-life.html>

Dame Kelly Holmes

Dame Kelly Holmes set up the DKH Legacy Trust to benefit young people and inspire them through sport. From her own experience she understands that sometimes, through no fault of their own, young people don't always have a role model to look up to or access to the help they really need to be the best they can be. As the founder of the charity you can read about the life events that have had an impact on Dame Kelly's path to sporting success.

Activity 2:

Watch Dean's story (30 minutes)

This 20 minute film looks at the impact various life events have had on a fictional character's mental health and wellbeing. The film looks at how a young boy called Dean is dealing with a number of difficult feelings.

Before playing the DVD ask or display the following questions (shown here with answers) for pupils to think about during the film. After the film has finished spend 10 minutes discussing the answers as a group.

Q What is happening to Dean?

A Mum has left, dad is unemployed, dad appears to have a drink problem, Dean has to look after his younger brother, Dean is getting into trouble at school, Dean has lost interest in his football team.

Q What or how was he feeling?

A Frustrated, angry, helpless, lost, powerless, upset.

Q What were the physical things happening to Dean?

A Lost interest in football, became physical with friends, became abusive towards girlfriend.

Q Who tried to help Dean? How did they do this?

A Friend, girlfriend. They tried to help by asking him what was the matter with him.

Discuss with the class what are the similarities and differences between Dean and Millie's stories. End the session thinking about the support received by both teenagers as this is the focus of Lesson 4.

Before dismissing the class remind pupils of the Keep Safe rules.

Resource: Additional teaching notes

Common stereotypes

What is a stereotype?

A stereotype is a commonly held belief about a certain social group or a type of individual. Stereotypes are often confused with prejudices, because, like prejudices, a stereotype is based on a prior assumption. Stereotypes are often created about people of specific cultures or races.

Almost every culture or race has a stereotype. Gender and sexual orientation stereotypes are also common.

Example: If you say that men are better than women, you're stereotyping all men and all women. If you say that all women like to cook, you are stereotyping all women.

Why is it bad to stereotype?

Stereotyping is not only hurtful, it is also wrong. Even if the stereotype is correct in some cases, constantly labelling someone based on your preconceived perceptions will not encourage them to succeed.

Stereotypes can become ingrained meaning they are passed on from generation to generation. This can result in bullying, segregation, rivalry or conflict from an early age.

Stereotyping causes perpetrators to live lives driven by hate, and its victims to live in fear. For example, many gay people are afraid to admit their sexuality for fear of being judged, ostracised, or worse, becoming a victim of homophobic hate crime.

Equally distressing however is not conforming to a stereotype. For example females may feel pressure to diet or undertake treatments to achieve the commonly held view of beauty.

Examples of gender stereotyping:

- Men are strong and go out to work
- Women are weak and should be in the home
- Women aren't as clever as men
- Girls are not good at sports
- Guys are messy and unclean
- Men who spend too much time on the computer or read are geeks
- Females are only concerned about physical appearance
- Feminine men are gay and butch woman are lesbians

Examples of cultural and regional stereotypes:

- Americans are obese, lazy, and dim-witted like Homer Simpson
- Arabs and Muslims are terrorists
- People who live in England have bad teeth
- People from Edinburgh are affluent
- Irish people are drunks and eat potatoes
- Scots have ginger hair, drink whiskey and play the bagpipes
- Young people from Glasgow are NEDs

Stereotypes based on appearance, age or professional grouping:

- Goths wear black clothes, black makeup, are depressed and hated by society
- Punks wear Mohawks, spikes, chains and are a menace to society
- Politicians are corrupt and think only of personal gain
- Blondes are dumb
- Librarians are old women who wear glasses, tie a high bun and frown
- Teenagers are rebels
- Children don't enjoy healthy food
- Only anorexic women can become models

Source: www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/EqualChoiceChances/ecec_pupil_glossary.pdf