

See Through Me: ***Discrimination through the eyes of ten young Somali-Australians***

The following classroom activities are designed to facilitate discussion and insight into the experiences of discrimination experienced by the ten young Somali-Australians featured in *See Through Me*.

Background Information - Discrimination

Discrimination reflects prejudice – negative or hostile attitudes and beliefs about a whole group. **Stereotyping** describes the process of generalizing about whole groups. **Racism** is the belief that members of one race are intrinsically superior or inferior to members of other races.¹ Discrimination impacts negatively on a person's life chances and is a powerful barrier to successful settlement amongst refugee youth.²

After watching *See Through Me*, consider the following activities:

Activity 1: Short Questions to reflect on *See Through Me*

Teachers may choose to use these as discussion prompts or questions for written reflection on the main themes of the documentary.

1. *How do different people see you?*
2. *How do you see yourself?*
3. *How can you see people better?*
4. *When was the last time you experienced discrimination?*
5. *What stereotypes do you hold?*
6. *What is home for you?*
7. *How can we see each other more clearly in Australia?*
8. *How can we make Australia a more welcoming place?*

Activity 2: Reflecting on how people see us (group activity)

Have the class sit in a circle and use a ball/prop to indicate whose turn it is to speak. Ask participants to share how young people like themselves are sometimes seen by others in different settings, as follows:
Each person can begin their sentence *“At school people sometimes see me as ...”* and then finish the sentence. Different sentences can be introduced: *“At the train station some people see me as...”*; *“At home my family sees me as...”*

Another version is to ask students to give two responses by giving different perceptions from different people (e.g. *“my friend sees me as funny and my teacher sees me as shy”*).

Ask how other people develop these images or perceptions of young people. (Examples might be: because they get to know them; they do things together; they live with them; they only see them in one setting or context and this may influence how they behave; they jump to conclusions without knowing them; they listen to others' opinions before finding out for themselves.)

Ask participants to share a story of how their perception of someone changed. What was their first perception or impression, and how did it change? What are the messages in this?

¹ Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (2005) *Taking Action: Human Rights and Refugee Issues Teaching Resource*. Melbourne: Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture.

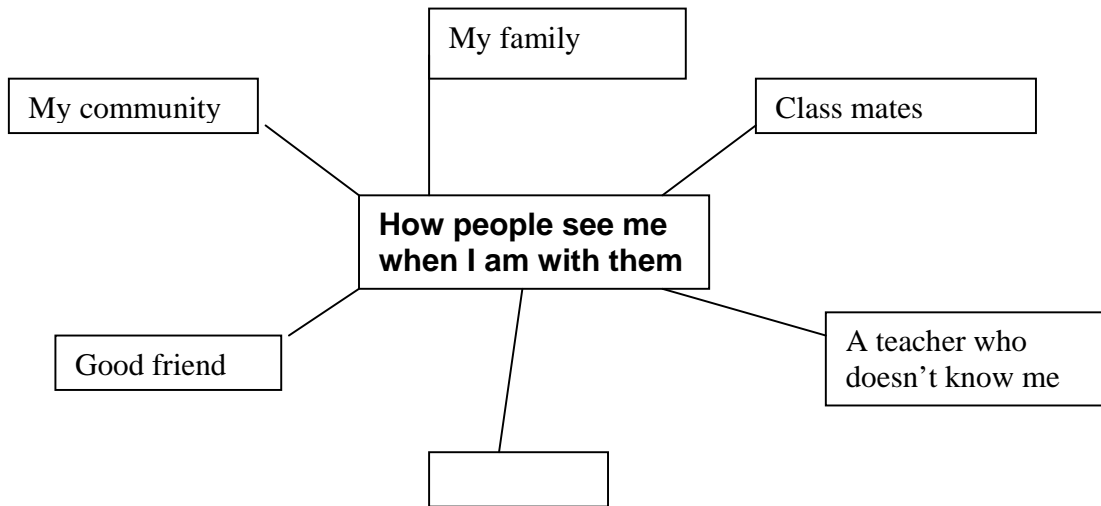
² Refugee Health Research Centre (2007) Good Starts for Refugee Youth Broadsheet 4
<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/rhrc/documents/broadsheet-4.pdf>

Activity 3: How people see me (personal reflection worksheet)

Teachers can enlarge this sheet, or have students create their own.

How people see me when I am with them

Ask students to enter their thoughts in dot point below each box

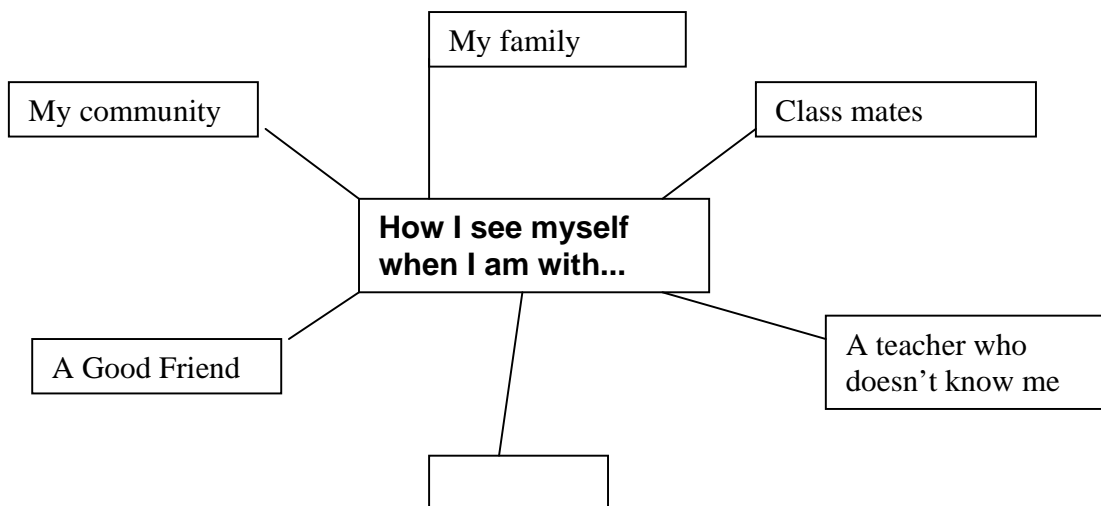


Activity 4: See through me.

Teachers can enlarge this sheet, or have students create their own.

How I see myself when I am with.....

Enter your thoughts in dot point below each box



Activity 5: Exploring Discrimination

Discuss the following definitions with students:

Stereotyping describes the process of generalizing about whole groups.

Discrimination reflects prejudice – negative or hostile attitudes and beliefs about a whole group.

Racism is the belief that members of one race are intrinsically superior or inferior to members of other races.

In small or large groups ask students to share the following:

When have you been treated unfairly because of a certain characteristic such as race, gender, political belief or disability?

Ask students to explore the experience by explaining what that experience of discrimination looked like (what happened), sounded like (what words/sounds were used) and felt like (what feelings did you have)? Creating a worksheet set out as below may facilitate this:

My experience of discrimination was.....		
It looked like... <i>E.g. I was left out of the group/ people ignored me/ I was standing alone/ I hung my head</i>	Sounded like... <i>E.g. He said "you don't belong here" /There was silence in the bus/</i>	Felt like..... <i>E.g. I was scared, I felt lonely</i>

Use a range of scenarios and have students indicate, either by raising their arm or moving to opposite ends of the room, whether or not they think the scenario is discriminatory

E.g. Only girls are allowed to join the primary school softball team.

For a more detailed version of this last activity and classroom ideas that explore Human Rights see: Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (2005) *Taking Action: Human Rights and Refugee Issues Teaching Resource*. Melbourne, Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture.

<http://www.foundationhouse.com.au/publications.php>

Activity 6: “Get on the bus” – exploring covert racism on a bus through role play



This activity is a role play and can involve some or all class members. It can be confronting and teachers are advised to ensure that there is a good level of trust amongst the group and appropriate debriefing of roles after the activity. As with all role play, teachers should only conduct this activity if they are competent and confident to do so.

Set up the chairs in the classroom to represent a bus with all students sitting in the chairs. Ask the students to sit as they do when riding on the local bus/train. Explain that they are to think about body language, facial expressions and actions when responding to each task. Ask for a volunteer to walk down the aisle of chairs. (It may be helpful for the volunteer to wear a mask or use a puppet so that the activity does not feel personal.) For the first walk, ask students to act as if they all know him/her and are happy to see him/her. Ask him/her what happened and how that felt. Ask the passengers for responses.

For the second walk, ask the students to act as if he/she is someone they don't know very well but respect a great deal. Ask him/her what happened and how that felt. Ask for passenger responses.

For the third walk, ask the students to treat him/her like any passenger that comes on that they don't know, that they have no interest in and act as though they don't know him/her and don't really care. Ask him/her what happened and how that felt. Ask for passenger responses.

For the final walk, ask the students to treat him/her as though he/she is from a cultural group with which they are not familiar and as though they think he/she is a trouble maker, that they don't trust him/her and they certainly don't want him/her to sit near them (remind students not to say anything or behave in an obvious way but use more silent, covert means of racism – stares, body language). Ask him/her what happened and how that felt. Ask for passenger responses.

Explore the different ways you can walk on to a bus to show you are frightened, looking for a fight, or strong focused and not easily distracted (teachers may need to model this behaviour)

(Concept adapted from *Walk the Gauntlet, Rock and Water*)

Activity 7: Exploring what we can do

Have students sit in a circle. Ask each student to offer an idea of how we can see each other more clearly in Australia. How we can make Australia a more welcoming, open and accepting place to live in. Using a ball as a prop and changing the questions can develop the activity. For example, students could be asked what school, governments, shopkeepers, or other people could do.

Activity 8: Anyone who – a game to recognize diversity and similarities amongst us

Ask all students to stand in a circle. Ask students to step in if the question asked relates to them. Give them about 2 seconds in the circle, ask them to step back and ask the next question. Questions can begin as fun and simple and can lead to deeper, more complex issues.

E.g.:

Who caught public transport today?

Who likes cats?

Who has family overseas?

Who plays sport on the weekend?

Who listens to music with earphones?

Who speaks two or more languages?

Who has been stared at before?

Who has felt discriminated against?

Who has stared at someone else before?

Who has felt unsafe in the street?

Who has felt unwelcome at times?

The game can become more active by asking those who step in to actually change places with others who have stepped in. Once students are comfortable with the game, they can ask questions.

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*For more information on the Good Starts Arts project, contact Amber McQueen:
a.mcqueen@latrobe.edu.au*

Refugee Health Research Centre

Faculty of Health Sciences

La Trobe University

Victoria 3083

Tel: (03) 9479 5874

Fax: (03) 9479 5791

Email: rhc@latrobe.edu.au

Website: www.latrobe.edu.au

