

# Chapter 9: Personal identity and relationships

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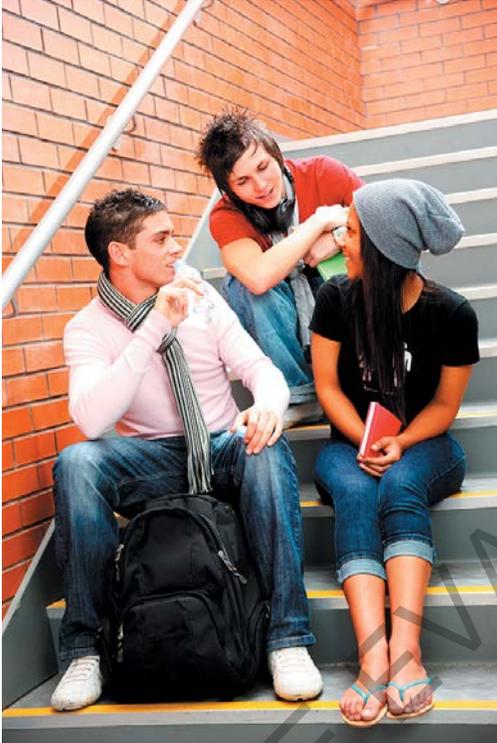
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SAMPLE EVALUATION ONLY

# Chapter 9: Personal identity and relationships

## Introduction

As you grow up, your personal identity will shape who you are, how you see others and how they see you. Your identity will be formed through everyday experiences and through your relationships. The relationships you have now are bound to change, as will the types of relationships you have. How you deal with the ups and downs of life is part of growing up; it is up to you to learn from your experiences and shape the person you want to become.



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Watch this video

Personal identity and relationships

Searchlight ID: eles-2340

How do your relationships and communication style shape your identity?

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Through the ups and downs of teenage life, how do you cope and come out in control?

## STARTER QUESTIONS

1. What is personal identity?

2. How do your family and friends influence your identity?
3. How do societal expectations and stereotypes influence you?
4. What are the characteristics of positive, respectful relationships?
5. What role do emotions play in your relationships?

## INQUIRY SEQUENCE

- 9.1 Values, beliefs and independence
  - 9.2 Stereotypes
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- Review

### 9.1 Values, beliefs and independence

Who are you? Why are you important and unique? Where do your values come from and who has the most influence on developing these personality characteristics? In this section you will explore the traits of an individual that help to define their identity, beliefs and personal values.

#### ENGAGE

Each of us has many unique characteristics. Every person is different, and we all have our own personal identity. This individualism makes interactions with other people exciting and interesting, but also challenging. Our identity is shaped by our values, beliefs, life experience and relationships.

Do you know how you are perceived by others? Try this activity to find out. Take a blank piece of paper and trace your hand print. Clearly print your name so this handprint can be identified as yours. Everyone in the class passes their handprints around. As you receive each classmate's handprint, use positive words to write down one strength or characteristic of that classmate. For example, you might write 'easy to talk to' or 'good listener'.

When your handprint is returned to you, reflect on your classmates' responses. Circle the three you think best represent you. Why have you chosen those three characteristics? Are

there any characteristics listed that you do not agree with? Reflect on why you disagree with them and why you think your classmates see those characteristics in you.



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What is your personality?

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## EXPLORE

### Personal identity

Our **personal identity** is made up of physical characteristics, skills and attributes, but, more importantly, it is related to the way we feel about ourselves. How we value ourselves, our achievements and our personal goals all affect our future success and happiness in life.

As you get older and your life experience increases, your personal identity is bound to change as a result. The way your identity changes could be influenced by:

- your relationships
- personal experiences
- culture
- gender
- the media
- your sexual identity.

## Factors that shape identity

Friends, family, the community, social, and cultural influences, body image and self-esteem are all factors that help to shape who we are. Complete the **My identity** worksheet in your Resources section and evaluate the factors that shape and influence your identity.

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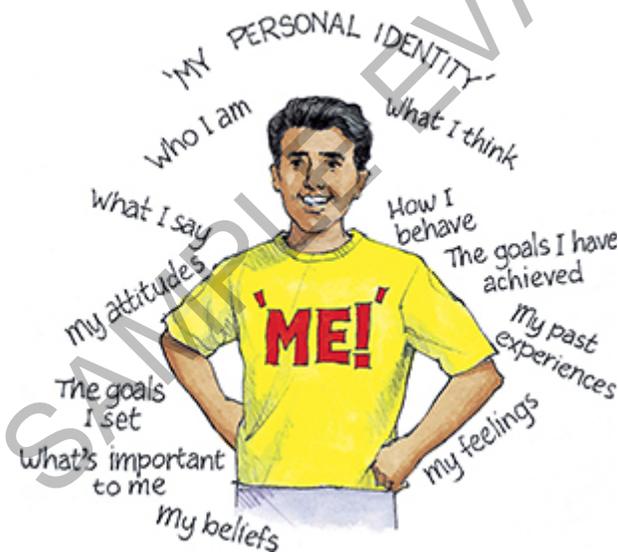
### Worksheet

My identity

Searchlight ID: doc-14802



Everyone is different. Each of us has a unique personal identity and life experiences.



Personal identity is who you are.

## Societal values

People's common beliefs bind them together as a group and influence their actions. This is true of parents, coaches, teachers, sporting associations, church groups and environmental groups.

**Table 9.1: How the values of groups in society may influence you**

Groups within society	May influence your beliefs about (but not limited to):
Peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clothes</li> <li>• where you go and your use of leisure time</li> <li>• the language you use</li> <li>• your body</li> <li>• types/amount of food you eat.</li> </ul>
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where you can go</li> <li>• what time to be home</li> <li>• family responsibilities</li> <li>• behaviour.</li> </ul>
Coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fitness</li> <li>• teamwork</li> <li>• commitment</li> <li>• body image.</li> </ul>
School teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learning</li> <li>• work ethic</li> <li>• behaviour</li> <li>• uniform and appearance</li> <li>• punctuality.</li> </ul>
Community laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• road rules</li> <li>• vandalism</li> <li>• stealing</li> <li>• trespassing</li> </ul>

Groups within society	May influence your beliefs about (but not limited to):
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• littering</li> <li>• smoking and drinking in public places.</li> </ul>
Activist groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• issues such as the environment or politics.</li> </ul>
Religious groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the way you treat others</li> <li>• social conscience</li> <li>• the role of gender in society</li> <li>• the acceptance of same-sex attraction</li> <li>• pre-marital sex</li> <li>• the meaning of marriage.</li> </ul>

## DID YOU KNOW?

Sarah Burge, a 49-year-old British woman, holds the world record for cosmetic procedures in an effort to turn herself into a living doll. She has had more than 100 procedures.

## Who shapes our identity?

What happens in everyday life can affect our sense of self. This is because identity is created and continued in social relationships. Even seemingly unimportant day-to-day contacts have important effects on a person's sense of who they are. So who shapes our identity and what impacts do they have on you?

Complete the **Who affects your identity?** worksheet in your Resources section to explore the influences on your identity.

### Family

Family is one of the biggest influences on your identity. How does your family support your individual identity? Families teach you about challenging stereotypes; they role model certain behaviours; they teach you about tolerance and respect; they expose you to diversity and different experiences; families encourage friendships; they teach you to have pride in your own cultural identity and they help you to cope with prejudice. Our families are very influential when we are younger and are more dependent on them. Our parents may provide more traditional **values** about

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### Worksheet

Who affects your identity?

Searchlight ID: doc-14803

manners, morals and behaviour. They may teach us tolerance, awareness and respect for different beliefs.

## Friends/peers

Our peers have a greater influence on us as we mature and become more independent. Your choice of fashion, music and language are likely to have been influenced by your friends. Our peers can also influence how we behave and the decisions we make.

## What shapes our identity?

### Body image/self-esteem

We live in a world that sends us all sorts of messages about the 'perfect' body. It is not surprising then, that instead of embracing and celebrating diversity in all body types, we often concentrate on what can be physically unattainable perfection. The reality is that both males and females come in different shapes and sizes, so it is unrealistic to represent only one body type as beautiful. With so many physical and emotional changes occurring during puberty, it is normal throughout this time for youth to be more self-aware. How does your body image shape who you are?

### Culture and community

The culture a young person grows up in affects the way they see themselves, including how they grow and move into adulthood. Some cultures have formal celebrations to mark the beginning of adulthood, such as the Jewish celebration of Bar Mitzvah, when a boy turns 13 years old. Complete the **Cultural differences** worksheet in your Resources section to investigate how and when other cultures celebrate the transition into adulthood.

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#### Worksheet

Cultural differences

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A person's understanding of their own and others' cultural identity develops from birth and is shaped by the values and attitudes found at home and in the surrounding community. This identity becomes more complex over time as people develop allegiances to different groups within the broader society. Cultures develop and change as the belief systems and ways of life of different groups adapt under other cultural influences, including mass media and popular culture, to create new identities.

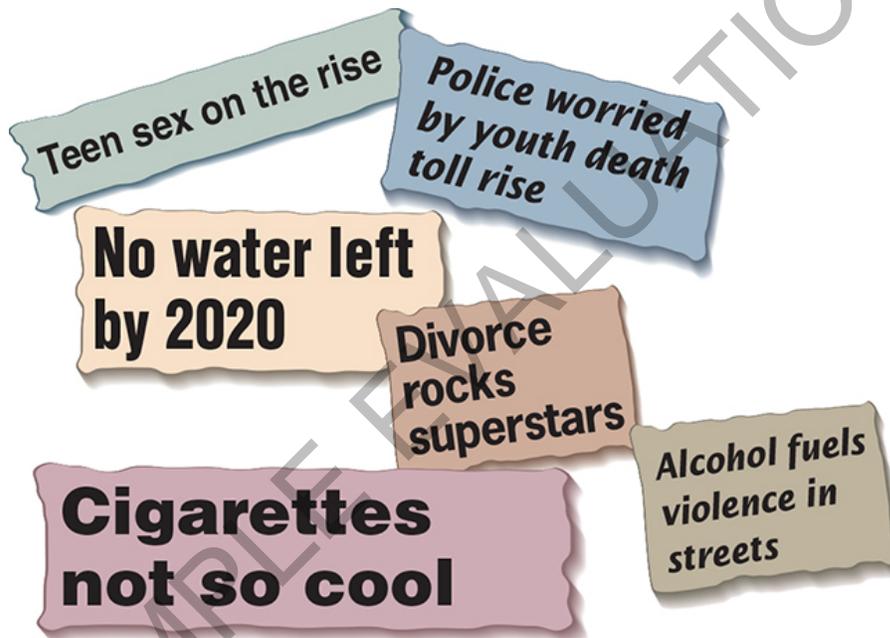
In a culturally diverse society like Australia, individuals may have multiple identities through identification with several different sub-cultures. These identities may include identity based on cultural heritage, family or birthplace; religious or social identity; gender identity; and identity as members of Australian society. It is not uncommon to be a part of several communities at the one time. You might be part of a sporting community and at the same time part of a multicultural community, a school community and a rural community. So how might these different communities affect our sense of identity? Being part of these groups means being a part of the culture of the group. This culture could influence factors such as how you act and behave, how you speak or dress, the types of people you associate with, and people you are influenced by. How you fit into these groups decides whether or not you will be accepted. These factors shape and support the creation of each individual's identity within that community.

Think of a sporting community you are associated with. How could this group influence your identity? Take into account factors such as:

- the types of role models in the group
- the expectations on you as a member of the group
- how you are expected to act
- what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
- what types of people are part of the group
- what happens when you don't comply to the 'rules' of that community.

## Media influences

As part of our society, the media holds a key role in influencing ideas, behaviours and social norms. It is important to keep in mind that the media's job is to sell something — a story, **attitude** or product. Can you think of a situation when the media has influenced you?



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Personal identity is influenced by the media. How are we influenced by headlines such as these?

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Very often, the pressures to look or behave like somebody else are very strong. These pressures could be harmful to our physical and emotional health. In contrast, making minor changes to our image — for example, changing our hair style or colour, buying new clothes or starting a fitness regime — can make us feel better about ourselves without being harmful to our health.

Advertising and media representation of sexual behaviour and **gender stereotypes** can have a strong influence on our attitudes towards our own personal identity. Images that are inappropriate or unachievable for most people are portrayed as normal and can make us feel inadequate or unhappy with ourselves.

How do you feel gender is represented in the media? What messages do the media give out about what it means to have a good time and be fun to be around? How can these images be interpreted in respect to personal identity?

It is also important to examine how **diversity** is represented in the media and the influence these representations have on individuals' identities. Is enough being done to portray minorities accurately and fairly on television or within the media? While there has been some improvement, minorities are still not fully represented in the Australian media and as a result are often **stereotyped**. A truly diverse media allows for the voices of minorities — women, seniors, people with disabilities, cultural groups — and all Australians to be heard and accurately depicted.

Investigate how young people are portrayed in the media using the **Media messages** worksheet in your Resources section.

Messages the media send can influence attitudes within the community. Often opinions and stereotypes are formed and communities adopt certain rules and guidelines that we are all expected to abide by. Have you ever considered whether girls should be allowed to play rugby, or is it a game intended only for strong men? Have you ever thought that older Australians should act in a particular way? Is it acceptable to be a stay-at-home dad while the mother is the breadwinner? Can a male be a make-up artist, or is that a job reserved for women?

What happens when someone challenges the community's ideas of gender and diversity? Discuss with your class some ways the communities you are a part of expect you to act, based on factors such as your age, gender and position in the group. How are diversity and gender catered for in the communities you are a part of?

## Socialisation

From a young age, we are dressed, spoken to and expected to behave in ways that identify us as girls or boys. This is part of **socialisation**. Traditionally, these boundaries of being feminine or masculine have been well-defined and socially accepted. For example:

- young girls wore dresses, played with dolls, didn't become dirty, and behaved in a gentle and quiet manner
- young boys behaved boisterously, were more adventurous and active, took more physical risks, got dirty and played with toys such as trucks, trains and cars
- adult females were nurturing, were interested in friends and family, liked pretty things and were concerned with domestic duties
- adult males were competitive, were expected to provide for their families, did outdoor chores and did not show emotion in public.



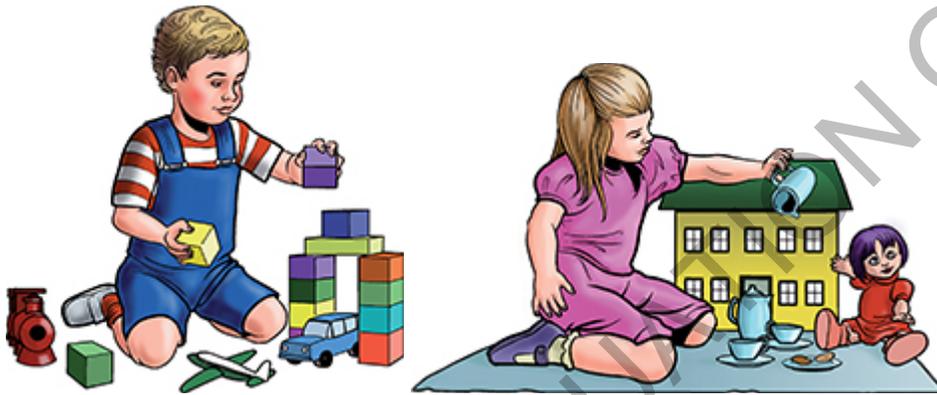
Although such rigid expectations of masculine or feminine behaviour are no longer as common, there are still people who adhere to the traditional stereotypes and expect males and females to behave in particular ways. This can be very confusing for some young people who just want to be 'normal'.

Have you ever considered how children's toys reinforce gender stereotypes? Use the **Not happy about gendered toys** and **Toys and gender** weblinks in your Resources section to analyse how advertising and toys can affect a child's perception of male and female behaviour.

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### Weblinks

- Not happy about gendered toys
- Toys and gender



Children are often socialised into stereotypical behaviours as either 'boys' or 'girls'.

## Personal views, beliefs and values

What we feel and believe about a range of issues is part of our personal identity. These issues are diverse and include fashion, music, drugs and alcohol, diet, sexuality, leisure pursuits and politics. Opinions about such issues affect the decisions we make and the way we behave.

Our values, beliefs and attitudes are the products of our own individual circumstances and experiences. They are influenced by a range of people and groups, and reflect our views on morality, respect, loyalty and honesty. As we gain independence and establish an individual identity, we may develop stronger or different values. These may be similar to our peers, because we often choose to be friends with people who have values that complement our own. This allows us to work together to establish common interests. However, as we develop our **independence**, we should also become more open to understanding the values of others.

**Conflict** can arise when there is disagreement between an individual's personal values and those of society. This happens when different individuals do not place the same level of importance on certain values. For example, conflict occurs at school when an individual student does not value the school's code of behaviour. It may be that the student values socialising more than learning. However, to function effectively in the school community, the student needs to respect the codes of the school. Sometimes when there is conflict, it is important not to give in and accept something with which you do not agree.



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Compromise and acceptance of others' opinions is important for building strong relationships.

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At times, our personal values can be in conflict. For example, if a person values his or her family's trust but he or she also values having fun with friends, difficulties may arise. Imagine having to make a decision to leave a great party so you are home in time for your curfew. In cases such as this, you need to weigh up the possible consequences of your actions and decide the best approach so that you do not compromise your most deeply held values.

## Shaping our personal identity

Personal identity is made up of a number of elements:

- *Past achievements.* The things we have achieved and the success we have had in the past help to form our current view of ourselves. Our perceived abilities affect what we think we can achieve and cope with in the future. These are influenced by our history, heritage and upbringing.
- *Present views.* How we feel about ourselves now is important. We have views, beliefs, attitudes and feelings about all aspects of our lives. This includes how we feel about religion, education and government, as well as how we feel about ourselves and others. These affect our **behaviour patterns** and the decisions we make.
- *Goals for the future.* The goals we set for our future are a way of defining ourselves and who we want to be. These goals may relate to relationships, career pathways, health, sport, education and travel. They affect our present view of ourselves and reflect our values, beliefs and attitudes.

Making your goals SMARTER can help you achieve success.



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Many steps towards independence involve more responsibilities.

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- **S** – Make your goals *specific*; keep them short and to the point.
- **M** – Goals should be *measured* to allow you to assess how successful you have been.
- **A** – *Achievable* goals make it easier to be *accountable* for improvement.
- **R** – A *realistic* goal is something you can achieve and *reduces* the chance of disappointment.
- **T** – Place a *time frame* on your goals so you have a target to aim for.
- **E** – Goals that are *exciting* will lead to greater motivation to achieve.
- **R** – *Record* your goals so they are a permanent reminder of something to work towards.

Goals are personal expectations, so think carefully and choose positive influences to help.



Alana Boyd's belief in herself helped her overcome two failed attempts to take out the gold medal in the women's pole vault at the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. She claimed the gold medal on her third and final jump.

## ACTIVITIES

### 1 Goal setting

1. When setting goals, it is a good idea to first consider your past achievements before deciding how you wish to build on them or what new directions you wish to pursue. List some of your past achievements, ensuring you include things that have made you feel good about yourself. Consider the things that you have done for your family, friends, in sport, at school and in the local community.

2. Goal setting gives you control of your future. Complete the **Set your goals** worksheet in your Resources section to set some goals. Make sure they follow the SMARTER guidelines outlined in this lesson.

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## Worksheet

Set your goals

Searchlight ID: doc-14808

## 2 Communicating personal values

1. In small groups, choose a controversial issue about which you all have the same opinion. You may choose a specific issue from one of the following general topics or choose one of your own (check with your teacher first).
  - Underage smoking
  - Literacy levels
  - Dress codes
  - Unemployment
  - Abortion
  - Video games
  - Teenage pregnancy
  - Pornography
  - Stereotypes
  - DVD or CD piracy
2. Write down your group's opinion on this issue.
3. What values underpin your group's chosen point of view? Does gender, culture or your community's values affect your views?
4. Write your issue up on a large sheet of paper and place it on the wall.
5. Walk around the room and add your own opinions and comments to each group's graffiti sheet. You are assisting the other groups to include all points of view and opinions on their chosen issue, and the other groups are helping you in the same way. Consider this your 'local' community view on the issue.
6. Using newspapers, magazines and internet articles, collect public comment and debate about the issue. Describe the types of language the writers use to get their point across. Collect this information before your next lesson. Consider this your 'global' community view on the issue.
7. Think of ways of clearly organising your findings, such as using a mind map or analytical report. Compare your own group view with the local and global community

views you have gathered. Discuss whether all the global community views were raised in the graffiti sheets. Why or why not?

8. Present your findings to the class.

### 3 Responsible or irresponsible?

The following decisions have been made. Discuss whether they are responsible or irresponsible. If you need more information to decide, identify what factors might affect whether the decision was a responsible one or not.

1. To have sexual intercourse
2. To drink alcohol at a party
3. To complete all schoolwork by the due dates
4. To ignore the curfew time set by my parents
5. To never get into a car with a drunk driver
6. To respect my parents' right to expect cooperative behaviour from me
7. To get a part-time job
8. To break up a long-term, intimate relationship via text message

Discuss your justification with a partner and then choose your best response to share with the class.

### 4 Expectations of teenagers

Design a survey to investigate family and community expectations of teenagers. You could investigate levels and issues of independence, values and attitudes of young people, or specific influences on young people.

1. Record your own answers to the questions you have developed.
2. Choose a range of people to survey, including at least three community members and three family members. To perform the survey, you may use photocopies of a prepared survey form, send the survey by email or record survey responses using a video camera.
3. Using the information gathered from your survey, comment in writing on the following statement: 'Our families and the community have a strong influence on us as we develop personal identity and independence'. Alternatively, you could present your findings to the class in the form of a class debate.

### 5 Conflict

Identify the personal values that are in conflict in the following scenarios.

1. I have homework due tomorrow but my favourite shows are on television tonight.
2. I know that smoking harms my health but I smoke when I am with my friends.
3. I want to do well at school but I want to be with my friends when they skip classes.
4. I believe in each person's right to be an individual but I do not stop my friends when they are bullying another student.
5. My parents have told me not to drink alcohol when I go out but my friends always expect me to have a drink.

## 6 Your style at school

Have you ever done a personality or learning style test? Did you agree with the evaluation? Did you find it useful? Use the **Learning styles** weblink in your Resources section to complete a learning style test and then, in groups, discuss why you think it is important to be treated like an individual.

## 7 Express your opinions

You have views about a lot of things. Choose three issues that you feel strongly about and then complete the **Express yourself** worksheet in your Resources section. Use the list of ideas below to help you choose your topic.

- Children
- Community laws
- Consumer rights and responsibilities
- Drugs
- Families
- Food
- Gender roles
- Money
- Music
- Pets
- Racism
- Relationships

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### Weblink

Learning styles

### Worksheets

- Express yourself  
Searchlight ID: doc-14806
- Mapping independence  
Searchlight ID: doc-14807

- Right and wrong
- School
- Sex
- Sports
- STIs
- Work
- Your rights and responsibilities

## 8 Mapping independence

In a small group, your task is to analyse some of the positive and negative health outcomes of becoming independent and having to make decisions. Use the **Mapping independence** worksheet in your Resources section to create a mind map of a 'choose your own ending' story.

## CHECK & CHALLENGE

### Explain

1. What do you think drives or motivates a person to have more than 100 cosmetic surgery procedures to look like a doll?
2. Who or what has the most influence on your life? How and why do they have this influence?

### Evaluate

3. With increasing independence comes change. Identify three things that, because of increasing independence, may bring about a change in:
  - a. a friendship
  - b. a family relationship
  - c. an intimate relationship
  - d. your sense of self or personal identity.
4. Why is it important to set short-term and long-term goals?

### Elaborate

5. When you reflect on a decision you made, do you often congratulate yourself on making a 'wise' decision or chastise yourself when you regret the decision? Why?
6. Have you ever been influenced by negative peer group pressure? What were the consequences?
7. Explain why some cultures celebrate the transition to adulthood with a formal event.

## 9.2 Stereotypes

A stereotype is a commonly held belief about a specific group or type of individual. Stereotypes are often based on assumptions rather than facts and can be directly influenced by the values, beliefs and attitudes of a community.

### ENGAGE

Social behaviour, employment expectations, notions about child rearing and family responsibilities are all closely related to gender stereotypes in traditionalist societies. Today, all young people in Australia have choices to make regarding their future, such as their career, study, marriage and having children. Although limits are placed on these choices (for example, financial, cultural and religious expectations, and family pressure), the range of possibilities for both men and women has widened considerably since our parents and grandparents were young.

What are the stereotypes of young people presented in the media? Collect catalogue ads and newspaper reports, or research some blogs, and then classify them under different stereotyped headings (for example, cool jock, digital native or out of control delinquent). What do your categories show about stereotypes? Are young people often shown in the media as carefree, having fun, acting dangerously, lucky or lazy?



Do all teenagers spend their spare time playing video games?

## EXPLORE

### Gender roles

Certain personal characteristics have been strongly associated with gender. Historically, females have been expected to behave in a gentle, nurturing and subordinate manner; their main role in life was to be a good wife and mother. Women who strayed outside these expectations to pursue a career or live a single life were regarded as eccentric or lacking in femininity. Conversely, males have traditionally been expected to be strong, domineering, physical and lacking in emotions. Their main role in life was to be the money earner for the family and to provide stability and status. Men who chose to be nurses, dancers or other professions generally considered to be 'feminine' were regarded as undesirable by people who adhered to the traditional model of behaviour.

Gender roles and stereotypes can sometimes cause problems in relationships because there is an imbalance in power. In a healthy relationship, all people involved should have a say in decision making. This includes everything from where to go on a date to whether to start or continue a sexual relationship. As we develop independence and make important decisions, we should think carefully about our role in a relationship.



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Gender identity can be influenced by society's views and stereotypes.

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## Gender and sport

In recent years there have been signs that the traditional gender stereotypes and the boundaries they created are breaking down. In sport, there have been changes in the traditional sporting activities pursued by men and women; for example, female weightlifters are now recognised as athletes in their own right.



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The barrier between traditional 'male' and 'female' sporting activities is being broken down, as demonstrated by this female Chinese weightlifter.

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However, there continues to be a significant difference in the media coverage of male and female sports. Male-dominated sports, such as Australian Rules football, cricket and V8 supercars, are more frequently broadcast on television. Females can participate in these sports if they are willing

to search for them, but often not at the same professional level. Have sporting stereotypes limited the opportunities for women to have careers in sport?

## DID YOU KNOW?

'Sexploitation' is a word used to describe the marketing or promotion of an athlete by using their sexual attributes, such as their physical appearance. At times, the value of an athlete is judged in terms of their body type and appearance, rather than their sporting ability and skill.

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Weblink

Sexploitation

## Gender and our bodies

Males and females often have different perceptions of their bodies and how they want to look. Females often want to lose weight and be thinner, whereas males want to be taller, stronger and have more muscles. As a result specific genders are often marketed in response to these body image perceptions. One such way gender is stereotyped and marketed is through food. Are there specific foods you eat that the opposite sex wouldn't? Complete the **Food gendering** worksheet in your Resources section to explore typically masculine and feminine foods, and how food gendering came about.

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Worksheet

Food gendering

Searchlight ID: doc-14809

## Teenage stereotypes

Teenagers are not all hormone driven, rude, moody and sullen. Yet, some believe that the typical teenager going through their developmental years demonstrates each of these characteristics regularly. Is this a fair judgement? Are all teenagers the same? The answer is a resounding 'no'. Each individual will develop through the values, beliefs and attitudes they consider most important. However, this is greatly influenced by society's stereotypes. Use the **Teenager stereotypes** weblink in your Resources section to watch a video that debunks common myths about teenagers.

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Weblink

Teenager stereotypes



What does it mean to be a teenager?

## ACTIVITIES

### 1 Stereotypical behaviours

#### Tips to look after your husband (1950)

- *Have dinner ready:* Plan ahead, even the night before, to have a delicious meal on time. This is a way of letting him know that you have been thinking about him and are concerned about his needs. Most men are hungry when they come home and the prospects of a good meal are part of the warm welcome needed.
- *Prepare yourself:* Take 15 minutes to rest so that you will be refreshed when he arrives. Touch up your make-up, put a ribbon in your hair and be fresh looking. He has just been with a lot of work-weary people. Be a little gay and a little more interesting. His boring day may need a lift.
- *Clear away the clutter:* Make one last trip through the main part of the house just before your husband arrives, gathering up school books, toys, papers, etc. Then run a dust cloth over the tables. Your husband will feel he has reached a haven of rest and order, and it will give you a lift too.
- *Prepare the children:* Take a few minutes to wash the children's hands and faces (if they are small) and comb their hair and, if necessary, change their clothes. They are little treasures and he would like to see them playing the part.

- *Minimise all noise:* At the time of arrival, eliminate all noise of washer, dryer, dishwasher or vacuum. Try to encourage the children to be quiet. Be happy to see him. Greet him with a warm smile and be glad to see him.
- *Some don'ts:* Don't greet him with problems or complaints. Don't complain if he's late for dinner. Count this as minor compared with what he might have gone through that day.
- *Make him comfortable:* Have him lean back in a comfortable chair or suggest he lie down in the bedroom. Have a cool or warm drink ready for him. Arrange his pillows and offer to take off his shoes. Speak in a low, soft, soothing and pleasant voice. Allow him to relax — unwind.
- *Listen to him:* You may have a dozen things to tell him but the moment of his arrival is not the time. Let him talk first.
- *Make the evening his:* Never complain if he does not take you out to dinner or to other places of entertainment. Instead, try to understand his world of strain and pressure, his need to be home and relax.
- *The goal:* Try to make your home a place of peace and order where your husband can renew himself in body and spirit.

1. How have things changed in homes since 1950?
2. What has influenced a change in attitudes and expectations within the home?
3. Do you think some people still live by these values and expectations? Why?
4. Develop three tips for looking after your relationship with your partner that are relevant to today's values.



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In the 1950s, women were expected to perform only domestic duties.

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Women now have the opportunity to pursue careers. However, because of stereotyped gender roles, they are often still expected to take responsibility for raising a family.

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## 2 Famous faces

1. List two famous men and two famous women whom you admire (they may be contemporary or historical figures) from each of the following categories.
  - a. Sports person
  - b. Actor or musician
  - c. Inventor, artist or explorer
  - d. Politician or statesperson

2. Which categories did you struggle with?
3. Why do you think some categories were more difficult to choose from than others?
4. Why do you admire the people you have listed?

### 3 Choosing a birthday present

1. Choose a birthday present for:
  - a. a newborn girl and boy
  - b. a girl and boy turning five
  - c. a girl and boy turning 15
  - d. a girl and boy turning 21.
2. Do your choices tend to be gender-specific or gender-neutral?
3. Look at a toy catalogue from a major department store or a large toy retailer. Alternatively, you can use the **Toy shop** weblinks in your Resources section to refer to some catalogues online.
4. Is the catalogue helpful in providing a wide range of gifts for boys and girls?
5. Are there many gender-neutral choices?
6. Do the advertised toys reinforce stereotypes about boys and girls?

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Weblinks

Toy shop

### 4 Teen movies

1. List five stereotypes popular in teen movies (for example, geek or jock).
2. Describe what characteristics are common to the stereotypes.
3. As a class, share your descriptions and compare the similarities between the stereotypes.

### 5 Occupations

1. Compare three occupations you think are dominated by men and three you think are dominated by women. In your comparison, discuss why you think men and women choose to follow these different career paths. Consider some of the following aspects of work.
  - Peer acceptance
  - Nature of the occupation (for example, physical work or highly social)
  - Salaries and status

2. Where do these opinions on careers come from?
3. What effects do these opinions have on a young person's goal setting and career choice?

## 6 Articles

1. Use the **Teen myths** weblink in your Resources section to read a newspaper article about stereotypes.
2. Write your own article discussing the inaccuracy or truthfulness of stereotypes. Why have you developed these opinions?

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Weblink

Teen myths

## CHECK & CHALLENGE

### Explain

1. Describe the effects stereotypes can have on people's sense of identity.
2. How can stereotypes influence people's expectations?

### Evaluate

3. In what situations can stereotypes be useful or positive?

### Elaborate

4. Why do stereotypes exist?
5. Where do stereotypes come from and who do you think has the most influence over them?

## 9.3 Relationships

Relationships are associations or attachments formed either by choice (school friends, neighbours, teammates) or because you are part of a family (siblings, parents, and other relatives). Relationships exist between all sorts of people, such as mother and child, brother and sister, and girlfriend and boyfriend. As we mature, we place different importance on interactions with some people and our relationships change.

## ENGAGE

Relationships serve many purposes and may fulfil one or more of our social, intellectual, spiritual, emotional or physical needs. Depending on whether the relationship is with a family member, a partner, a teacher, a neighbour or someone else, these needs will vary. They may include the need for:

- a positive self-image
- safety and security
- trust in a relationship
- respect
- knowledge and learning
- independence
- **commitment**
- hope
- intimacy
- food and shelter.

Are you a good friend? Use the **What kind of friend are you?** and **Making friends** weblinks in your Resources section to take two quizzes and assess what type of friend you are. How accurate do you believe these kinds of quizzes are? What might be a better indication of your friendship skills? Think of ten characteristics you believe a good friend should have.

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### Weblinks

- What kind of friend are you?
- Making friends

## EXPLORE

### Relationship expectations

People can have different expectations and needs in a relationship, and can show their feelings in different ways. These expectations may affect their interactions. We need to recognise our different needs, reactions and expectations when in a relationship. **Communication** is essential. Communicating our expectations and feelings allows the relationship to be an effective and supportive one.

How we behave in certain relationships can determine whether we have a healthy, balanced relationship or not. Complete the **Behavioural expectations in relationships** worksheet in your Resources section to explore the behaviours expected by individuals in different relationships.



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## Worksheet

Behavioural expectations in relationships

Searchlight ID: doc-14810

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Everyone needs people they can trust and communicate with.

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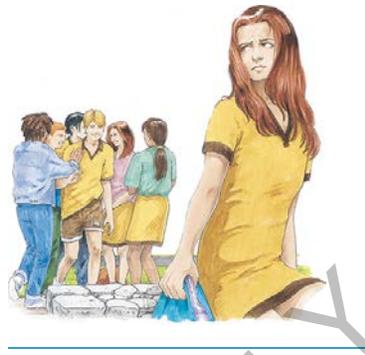
## Family

When you are young, getting on with your parents can sometimes be a challenge. As you form your own personal identity, you may think differently from your parents, and have different values and beliefs, which can lead to conflict at home or breakdowns in communication. As a teenager you want to be more independent and think and speak for yourself. This can be hard for parents to get used to. Parents can continue to be protective of you, and want to influence what you do and how you do it. Ultimately this is because they want what is best for you, but this can feel overbearing.

## Friendships

Friendships we establish are usually based on common interests, such as hobbies and sports. Similarly, friends may drift apart because their interests and situations change and there is less to talk about or they have less in common. This situation is not necessarily negative; it shows that individuals are maturing and reassessing their interests.

We gain much support and confidence from friendships that are positive, enduring and meaningful. Loyalty, trust, respect, confidentiality, equity, tolerance, empathy and understanding are components of sound and ongoing friendships. We share fun, experiences, humour and memories with our friends. Even when situations occur that challenge the strength of a friendship, there is sufficient depth and support to enable it to survive. We find it easy to defend our friends when the bond of friendship is strong and intact. However, friendships are dynamic, and things change over time or as a result of circumstances. Friendships don't just happen; they must be worked on.



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A lack of communication may cause a breakdown in a friendship.

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Just as a friendship can be a rewarding part of life, life can also be stressful when the friendship starts to falter. We may feel anxious, guilty, hurt or even jealous at these times. Not all friendships are healthy. Some friendships can be destructive, especially if people have different values or become too dependent on their friends. Negative peer pressure can influence decision making and impact on the lives of all involved.

Anger and resentment are common negative feelings we encounter when friendships unexpectedly fall apart. It is difficult to remain objective and separate the problem from the person in these situations. We need to think carefully about the *reasons* behind the breakdown and work out ways to restore the friendship or, as painlessly as possible, to continue without that person in our life. Often, a lack of communication — the inability to listen to and be honest with friends — causes breakdowns in a friendship.

## Peer groups

A **peer group** is a group of people who are roughly the same age as you and are from a similar background. We tend to relate well to our peers because of these two factors and we value their comments and attitudes. A peer group can be an influential and powerful aspect of our lives.

### The power of peer groups

Belonging to a peer group has many benefits. We can feel secure and confident in the knowledge that our peers will assist us, tolerate us and support us through thick and thin. We trust the members of the group and receive enjoyment from the activities we have in common and the personal qualities we appreciate in each other.

Sometimes there is a leader who directs the group, perhaps subtly, into 'acceptable' activities and behaviours. If this leader is well-respected or asserts power in certain ways, then it is likely that the rest of the group will follow their actions. If members of the group are doubtful about becoming involved in any activity, then tension or conflict may develop within the group. This can become a very difficult and stressful situation, where group members need to make decisions regarding the appropriateness of the activity. Pressure from the leader or other group members may add to the dilemma of individuals trying to make sound decisions.

There are times when you may feel pressured by the peer group into doing something with which you are uncomfortable, but you may also feel the desire to still be accepted and part of the group.

The decision about what to do will depend upon the strength of your own convictions, personal confidence and assertiveness. Some of it has to do with the expectations of family and/or culture and some has to do with a moral obligation you feel you must obey. The combination of these factors will lead you to make a decision.



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Peer groups exert pressure because belonging is an important human need.

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## Decision making

How do we make responsible decisions? These can be difficult to make because we often feel we have to sacrifice or compromise things we enjoy in order to be responsible. When facing a difficult decision, ask yourself the following questions.

- What do I need to make a decision about?
- What are the options?
- What other information do I need to help me make the right decision?
- What things are influencing my decision? Are my family, friends, school, culture or religion expecting a particular decision from me?
- What effect will my decision have on me and on other people?
- Who can help me with this decision? Do I have a support network made up of parents/ guardians, friends, GPs, school counsellors and teachers who can give me advice or guidance?

## Intimate relationships

Your relationship with a very close friend is an **intimate relationship**. There is a high level of sharing, trust, affection, understanding and personal disclosure of information in such a relationship. Sexual attraction may also be a feature. **Sexual activity** or intercourse may form part of an intimate relationship, but you can have intimacy without being physically intimate.



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Affection can be shown in many ways.

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## Characteristics of positive and respectful relationships

Everyone has the right to feel safe, to be treated with fairness, to be valued and to feel accepted for who they are. Respectful relationships are important because they contribute to your growth and sense of self-confidence; they promote healthy self-expression and awareness of yourself and others, and they enable you to feel accepted and free to be yourself. Some characteristics of positive and respectful relationships are respect, trust, honesty, equality, safety, consistency and empathy.

Can you think of someone who you have a healthy, respectful relationship with? How is this person important in your life and how do you feel about yourself when you are with them? What characteristics are essential for you in a respectful relationship?

Being in a respectful relationship doesn't mean that you won't have differences of opinion or disagreements. However, in respectful relationships when differences occur they are dealt with in ways that lead to a resolution or understanding. Conflict or differences occurring in respectful relationships can be worked out and do not have to damage the relationship.

Can you think of a time you sorted out a difference with someone close to you. How did you go about it and how has working things out changed your relationship for the better? What conflict resolution skills did you use?

## Communication

Communication involves both talking (clearly conveying a message) and listening (understanding the message). Positive communication shows interest in and respect for others, and is important for positive relationships. Chatting about general events and greeting acquaintances (for example, teachers, friends' parents or classmates) develops positive relationships or goodwill with people in your wider social network.

Effective communication allows you to:

- maintain friendships
- be part of valuable family relationships
- limit the misunderstandings that you have with people
- solve problems.

It is a skill that requires practice. We need to be sure that the words we use convey the messages we intend and express our feelings. Some people find it easier to write down what they would like to say, as this may be less threatening than face-to-face contact. It allows them to make sure that their intended message is conveyed effectively. When you need to talk to someone in person about a difficult topic, it helps to be prepared before you speak to the person.

When communicating, your **body language** conveys non-verbal messages about what you are saying. The way you stand, your gestures, the placement of your arms, the look on your face and the eye contact you make all reinforce the words you use to communicate. Verbal cues such as tone, volume and pitch also contribute meaning to the words you use. Sometimes, your body language can work against you. For example, when you are trying to be open with someone but have your arms crossed, it may give the impression that you are closing yourself off. Body language is also dependent on culture, so what may be okay in your culture may be offensive in another.



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Eye contact is an important aspect of communication. Communication involves both talking and listening.

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## Conflict resolution in relationships

Conflict sometimes occurs when people hold different views. Conflict is an inevitable part of life. People grow, adapt, and clarify their beliefs and values by learning to resolve conflict.

Conflict can make people feel uncomfortable, guilty, frustrated, bitter and frightened. These feelings occur when people believe there is a right and wrong way of looking at things. We need to recognise that we all have different thoughts, feelings and experiences and, therefore, perceive things differently. It is normal for people to hold widely differing points of view. Usually, they simply 'agree to disagree'.

Many differences of opinion can be accepted to avoid unnecessary conflict. For example, if you do not agree with skateboarding, you may avoid conflict by staying away from designated skateboarding areas. If you find that you are constantly in conflict with a person in your class, you may choose to accept your differences and sit on different sides of the room.

Conflict can be resolved through negotiation that aims to satisfy everyone. Some misunderstandings may be solved through effective communication, that is, by talking and listening to one another. Other conflicts may require some compromise to solve the problem. This may involve adjusting an opinion. Conflict resolution is a learned skill and, like any skill, improves with practice.

When you experience conflict, try to use the following conflict resolution skills:

- Focus on solving the problem, not attacking the people involved.
- Recognise that other people may perceive the problem differently.
- When expressing your view, use only 'I' statements, such as 'I think ...', 'I feel ...' and 'I want ...', rather than 'you said ...' or 'you did ...'.
- Listen to what each person is saying and check that you have understood their point of view.
- Look for a solution that will satisfy everyone — often, compromise is needed.

Practise solving a small conflict in groups of three. One person takes on the role of the observer and can then inform the other two how well they used conflict-resolution skills. For more practice, complete the **Refusal skills** worksheet in your Resources section.



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## Worksheet

Refusal skills

Searchlight ID: doc-14813

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Conflict is inevitable in human relationships so we need to develop strategies to deal with it.

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## DID YOU KNOW?

Research shows hanging out with friends and family can increase your life expectancy. The more positive relationships a person has, the more likely he or she will enjoy a healthy lifestyle.

## Empathy

Empathy is the ability to relate or identify with another person's feelings or situation, or to be able to put yourself 'in someone else's shoes'. Empathy helps strengthen relationships and creates openness between people. When empathy is present, people feel listened to and understood. When empathy is absent, people are less likely to be considerate of others' needs and feelings. Therefore, it is a key tool in relationships.

## Negotiating needs in respectful relationships

We all have different needs at different times and, in relationships, it helps to give and take in terms of each other's needs. This is the case in all relationships, including friendships, family relationships and partner relationships. So, how are these needs and differences negotiated in a respectful relationship? Respectful relationships acknowledge and consider everyone's needs, are flexible about individual choice, and acknowledge differences and strive to accommodate them.

When you are in a respectful relationship, one person doesn't need to put their needs aside for the other. It may mean communicating how you feel and being flexible at times, but it also means being true to yourself. It is not about trying to change someone, but rather striving to understand things from their perspective, even if your perspective is different.

## Assertiveness

Assertiveness is the ability to state your case without making someone else feel attacked. Generally, this is determined by the way something is said. As discussed previously, using 'I' statements is recommended to show your feelings about an issue. Such statements are not a resolution or the only opinion of a situation. For example, state your opinion in this manner:

'When *(a particular event happens)*, I feel *(a certain feeling)*.  
What I'd like is *(possible solution)*.'

Complete the **Being assertive** worksheet in your Resources section to look at situations where assertiveness is important, and to explore the difference between being assertive, passive or aggressive in relationships.

This skill takes practice and, with practice, we can focus on:

- allowing both sides to be heard
- not being judgemental

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### Worksheet

Being assertive

Searchlight ID: doc-14811

- keeping confidentiality
- moving forward in a positive way
- not taking sides or laying blame
- attempting to achieve an outcome that is acceptable to both parties.

Sometimes it may seem easier to be passive in a conflict; however, if you find yourself being manipulated, bullied or forced into certain behaviour, it may affect your self-esteem and leave you feeling as if you have no control in the situation.

Being aggressive, or having no respect for the feelings of others, can build resentment, and you may find that no-one respects you or your decisions. You may also find that people are frightened of you.




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Having a strong sense of self-worth is important for resilience. Keep working on your strengths.

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## Resilience

Resilience is a flexibility that allows us to bounce back from difficult situations. Generally, the more resilient someone is, the more easily this occurs. Factors that influence our resilience include our ability to:

- feel connected to family, friends, peers, school, spirituality
- maintain a daily routine which provides stability when there is chaos.

## Rights and responsibilities in relationships

Positive and respectful relationships are built on equality, respect and accountability. Each individual in a relationship has both rights and responsibilities. In any relationship you have the right to express your feelings and opinions, make decisions about yourself and have equal decision-making power, and feel safe and supported. In any relationship you have the responsibility to

respect the other person's values, feelings, and beliefs, communicate clearly and honestly, compromise and be considerate.

Another aspect of being in a respectful relationship is acknowledging individual differences. You might make a decision about something, yet the other person in the relationship makes the decision to act differently. Similarly, you might have someone in a relationship change their mind after they have made a particular decision. Have you had this happen before? How did it make you feel? Have you made a decision and then changed your mind?

Complete the **Relationships – rights and responsibilities** worksheet in your Resources section to explore what rights you have in certain relationships, and the responsibilities you need to deliver to others in those relationships.

## Negative or disrespectful relationships

Sometimes people can treat us disrespectfully no matter what we do. At times, it is not possible to influence how others behave towards us, despite our best efforts. If you feel you are being treated disrespectfully, where possible let the person know how you are feeling, in case they aren't aware of their impact on you. If this doesn't help you can try to remove yourself from them. If you cannot move away from someone who is hurting or disrespecting you, seek help or talk to someone you trust. When you seek help, you are showing respect for yourself.

To practise how to deal with challenging or unsafe situations, complete the **Challenging or unsafe situations** worksheet in your Resources section.

## Balance of power

Balance of power means a relationship that is not one-sided: one person does not have more control or power than the other. Communication is the key to staying in balance. Both parties need to talk about what the other person wants, and listen to what the other person has to say. Both of you will have your own opinions, and that means you have to work together to balance what you both want.

You and your friends probably have similar interests, but you are not completely the same. Likewise, you may share common interests with family or your partner, but that doesn't make you the same person. You can certainly do things together, but remember that you can have different interests, too. Make sure you and your partner/friend have time to pursue your own interests as well. If you change in a relationship and adopt all of the other person's favourite things, hobbies and lifestyles, the relationship becomes unbalanced.

## Bystander behaviour

We all need help sometimes and part of being in a respectful relationship is to help others when they need it. In particular, when considering **cyber safety** it is important to demonstrate appropriate **bystander** behaviour if you see someone being treated negatively. A bystander is someone who sees or knows about bullying or other forms of violence that is happening to someone else.

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### Worksheets

- Relationships – rights and responsibilities  
Searchlight ID: doc-14812
- Challenging or unsafe situations  
Searchlight ID: doc-14814

Bystanders can be either part of the bullying problem or an important part of the solution to stop bullying.

Sometimes people who witness **cyberbullying** choose not to intervene for a number of reasons, including the fear of becoming the next target or not wanting to make the situation worse; this person is called a passive bystander. In situations where cyberbullies face no opposition, they may interpret silence as encouragement to continue behaving badly. It is important for bystanders to judge how they can safely intervene to support a target; this is called being an active bystander or an upstander.

Bystanders can play an important role in influencing the outcome of a cyberbullying situation. Their decision to step in and help someone has a greater chance of stopping the cyberbullying than if they were to do nothing. Not all cyberbullying incidents are the same, and sometimes it can be difficult for bystanders to know how to intervene safely without making the situation worse for themselves and the target.

## What can you do?

If you know cyberbullying is occurring, take the following steps to ensure you are being an active bystander/upstander.

- Don't take part or join in — that means not commenting on posts, photos or videos about other people if it will be hurtful.
- Don't share information online, unless the person gives you permission — no forwarding of images, videos or posts.
- Leave groups or conversations that are negative.
- Tell someone who can help/do something about the situation.
- Support the person being bullied — let them know it is not ok and you are there for them.
- Tell the bullies to stop (if you have the confidence!).

Remember, bystanders have an important role to play in situations of cyberbullying. Their actions can help to stop the behaviour. If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem, so let's put cyberbullying to an end.

## Responsible use of social media

Social networking sites are a big part of a teenager's social life. Social media is used to interact with peers, form communities and build connections with others who share common interests. Research shows that when teenagers get positive feedback on social networking sites their self-esteem is boosted, but when they get negative feedback, it lowers their self-esteem. So, it is essential to ensure we use social media in positive ways so we are not affecting others negatively. Does your school or sporting club have a social media policy? Why is it important that everyone abides by the guidelines? Discuss with your class the reasons for having policies around the use of social media. What would you include on your policy and why?

## ACTIVITIES

### 1 Friendship strengths

Choose one of your friendships. Use the following questions to describe this relationship and to illustrate its unique nature.

1. What makes the relationship special?
2. What qualities or common interests do you and/or your friend have that make your friendship valuable?
3. What happens when an incident arises that challenges the friendship, such as accusations, jealousies, misinformation or gossip?

### 2 Group pressure

Describe how you would feel and how you would act if the peer group to which you belong decided to:

1. skip school for the day and meet at the local shopping centre
2. boycott an exam which they think is unfair or unnecessary
3. make up an alibi for a friend who has been accused of shoplifting
4. graffiti a train carriage using spray cans
5. apply some 'pressure' on a group member who refuses to hold similar views to the rest of the group
6. wear swimming goggles to a party, just for fun
7. start running every morning
8. give the silent treatment to one of your group members.

### 3 Role-playing relationships

In pairs, role-play each of the following scenarios, making sure you use open body language and effective communication skills. Practise choosing the right words so you convey the message that you want the other person to receive.

*Mother and daughter.* The daughter is considering becoming sexually active and would like to use the pill but feels that she needs to discuss this with her mother and seek her advice.

*Girlfriend and boyfriend.* The time seems to be right to consider sexual activity. You need to talk about the way you are feeling and discuss contraception options with each other.

*Teenager and parent.* You feel that you have no independence or freedom and are not appreciated at home. You seem always to be in trouble for doing the wrong thing and feel that you can do nothing right. You need to discuss the way you are feeling with your parent.

*Two good friends.* You have been friends for a long time. You are beginning to feel intimate feelings for the other person, but are not sure what your friend feels. You need to talk to each other about how things have changed and the way you now feel about each other.

*Couple in a relationship.* You have been going out for a long time but your relationship has deteriorated. You are both unhappy and are unintentionally hurting each other. You need to talk about how you are feeling and find a solution that is best for everyone involved.

*Girlfriends or mates.* You have been friends for a long time and know each other very well. However, you feel that you are drifting apart as you begin to mix with different peer groups and reassess your values. You are feeling isolated and guilty. You need to tell your friend how you are feeling.

*Same-sex partners.* You have been going out for a short time but you are happy about your relationship and want to talk to your friends about it. Your partner, however, does not want others to know about the relationship, for various reasons. You need to talk to your partner about what you are going to do.

#### 4 Friendship breakdowns

1. Discuss some reasons why you think some friendships break down.

2. What strategies have you employed to try to maintain a friendship after a crisis?
3. Which strategies worked for you and which did not? Why?
4. Create guidelines on how to end a friendship with which you do not feel comfortable. Ensure your guidelines show respect for everyone involved.

## 5 Relationship networks

1. Try listing all the relationships in your life. It may help to categorise them using a tree diagram or mind map.
2. Analyse how your personality, behaviour and role changes in each of these relationships.

## 6 Cyberbullying

Think about a time when you may have seen instances of cyberbullying online. What is something positive you could do, or the option that you would feel safest in doing, if you witness:

- someone repeatedly sending abusive text messages to another person
- an inappropriately tagged photo of someone in your year group — the photo is humiliating and has attracted many hurtful comments
- a friend excluding a member of your friendship group from a party posted online.

List any of the tips you have used yourself in a cyberbullying situation. If you haven't been involved in a cyberbullying situation, what do you think you would do? What steps would you take?

Have you ever been a passive bystander — you knew cyberbullying was occurring but you did nothing about it? If so, what were your reasons for keeping it to yourself?

Who would you talk to in the following situations?

- You tagged a photo of someone else without permission and now you regret it.
- You received a 'sext message' from someone at another school.
- You hear a group discussing some explicit content they shared on Facebook about another class mate.
- Someone tagged you in a photo and you did not give permission, and you know who it was.
- Two students in your year level have been sexting each other.

## 7 Healthy relationships

1. With a partner, discuss how you create and maintain healthy relationships, then answer the following questions.
  - a. Which of your current relationships would you say are the healthiest?
  - b. Why is this?
  - c. What characteristics make these relationships healthy?
2. Refer to the **Healthy relationships** weblink in your Resources section and read the ABCs of healthy relationships, then answer the following questions.
  - a. What does A stand for? What does this mean?
  - b. What does B stand for? What does this mean?
  - c. What does C stand for? What does this mean?
3. In order to be aware, balanced and make healthy choices, you need the building blocks of the ABCs: communication, trust and respect. These are the keys to a healthy relationship and are at the base of the ABCs. What can you do if a relationship you are in is not respectful?



## CHECK & CHALLENGE

### Explain

1. List five ways you can express your feelings in a relationship without words.
2. What personal characteristics do you think are important for both people to possess in an intimate relationship? Why?
3. What elements are important in fostering positive and respectful relationships?
4. What is the difference between rights and responsibilities in relationships? Give an example of each.
5. Explain the difference between a passive bystander and an active bystander.

### Evaluate

6. What skills do you need to possess to maintain a friendship?

7. How can you tell if you have outgrown a friendship?
8. What should the balance of power be in relationships? What should you do if there is an uneven balance of power?
9. In what circumstances might you need to enlist refusal skills?

### Elaborate

10. Why is communication so important in a relationship?
11. Provide examples of key features in a rewarding, meaningful and positive relationship.
12. Why is it important to be an active bystander?
13. In what ways do negative emotions help us?

## 9.4 Mental health and emotional wellbeing

Mental health affects our thinking processes, the way we behave and the way we feel. Good mental health means we are generally confident, positive, rational, decisive and calm. We are able to cope with general day-to-day events and challenges, work toward personal goals and function as effective members of the community.

### ENGAGE

When we experience difficulties with our mental health, it can affect the way that we normally behave, think, feel, deal with stress, make decisions and interact with others. Everyone sometimes feels sad, anxious, guilty, stressed, down, paranoid or worried; however, when these feelings are constant, strong, and affecting your daily life and your perception of your ability to cope, it is possible you have a mental health disorder.

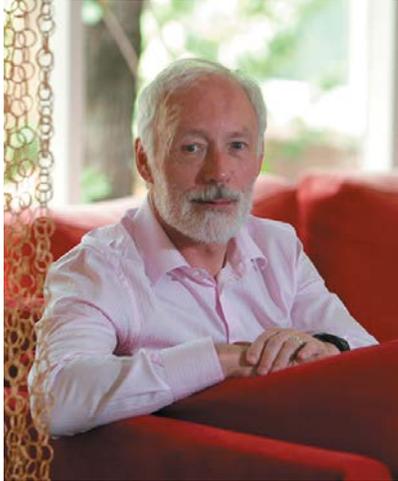
There are many types of mental health disorders. Some of these predominantly affect emotions (such as depression), thoughts (such as obsessive–compulsive disorder) or behaviour (such as self-harm). Mental health disorders can include depression, anxiety, insomnia, eating disorders, addictions, substance abuse, paranoia and schizophrenia.

Use the **Professor Patrick McGorry** weblink in your Resources section to learn more about the Australian of the Year in 2010. How has he changed the way people think about mental illness and its treatment?

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Weblink

Professor Patrick McGorry



Australian of the Year in 2010, Professor Patrick McGorry has dedicated his career to the mental health issues in youth.

## EXPLORE

### Dealing with mental illness

Just as physical illnesses can be diagnosed and healed, so too can mental illnesses be treated. Early prevention and support can assist most people to fully recover. Some people may only have one episode of mental illness in their lifetime; others are affected occasionally, with long periods of good mental health in between. For those with a more severe illness, periods of illness may occur regularly; however, with effective management of medications and other treatments, many can have a full recovery and live full and productive lives. Not all forms of mental illness are curable, however, and some people experience significant disability as a result of a mental illness.

### Young people and mental health

The most recent National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing found that:

- approximately half the total population experience a mental health disorder at some point in their lifetime
- one in five, or 20 per cent, of the Australian population aged 16–85 years experienced mental disorders in the 12 months prior to the survey
- seventy-five per cent of mental illnesses first occur in people aged 15 to 24; however, only one in four young people with mental health problems receives professional help
- the prevalence of mental disorders declines with age: from 1 in 4 young people (aged 16–24) to 1 in 20 in older people (75–85 years)
- only one-third of people with a mental health disorder used health services for their mental health problem

- among young Australians aged 12–25 years, depression is the most common mental health problem
- anyone can experience mental illness, regardless of their exposure to risk factors. While social stresses are key risk factors to depression, increasingly we know more about the genetic, biochemical, physical health and medical factors that increase the chances of developing mental illness.

## Types of mental illness

Mental health is important throughout our lives, but especially during adolescence. This is because adolescence is a developmental stage where many changes take place and a lot of skills and habits are being learned. These include the biological changes of puberty and sexual maturation, the social changes, the psychological changes of self-esteem and dealing with the independence that comes with emotional maturity.

Mental illness is more common in adolescence and this can have a big impact on an adolescent's life. Mental illness is most likely to present between the ages of 15 and 24 — the time when young people are practising and developing their relationship skills. For someone managing a mental illness, this task becomes even more daunting, and his or her mental health issues may take precedence over other important issues.



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Mental illness can disrupt school work and social life.

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Mental illness can have a very disruptive influence on school and family life. Sometimes the ignorance surrounding mental disorders leads to intolerance or misunderstanding in friends and family, and the person can feel isolated. Support and understanding is important, and there are a number of services available for friends and family.

## Anxiety disorders

**Anxiety disorders** involve feelings of excessive nervousness, tension or distress and include the following conditions.

- Obsessive–compulsive disorder
- Panic disorder
- Agoraphobia (fear of open spaces)
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Social phobia (fear of social interaction, including talking on the phone, going to parties etc.)

## Affective disorders

**Affective disorders** are typified by mood changes and mood swings, and include depression and mania. Most people with affective disorder suffer from **depression**, which is typified by a loss of enjoyment of life, lack of energy and concentration, sleep disturbance and a change in eating habits. Depression is a common mental health concern affecting many teenagers.

## Substance-use disorders

**Substance-use disorders** involve harmful use of and **addiction** to drugs, including alcohol and illegal or prescription drugs. Alcohol-use disorders are about three times as common as drug-use disorders.

## Getting help

Unfortunately, not all people with mental illness seek help. However, people with more than one mental disorder are more likely to seek medical assistance. There is a need to increase community awareness of mental health. Even though the number of people suffering with a mental illness is large, there is still a stigma or feeling of shame attached. This may be the reason that some people don't get help when they need it. This stigma can make people feel embarrassed about what is happening to them, or feel like they are alone and no-one else would understand how they are feeling. It is important to get help before things escalate. Being able to talk to someone you trust can be a relief.

Talking to someone else about your feelings and problems can help you release the tension you feel, because it's no longer just you knowing how you feel. It can help in putting your thoughts together so that you can see the issues more clearly for yourself, and that can make you feel as if you have some control again. Sometimes our thoughts and feelings can almost overwhelm us and the situation can become bigger than it needs to be. Talking to someone else can put things into perspective for us.

## Supporting a friend or family member

You may find yourself in a position where you are supporting someone with mental health needs. Consider the following ways you can help.

- Be conscious of the embarrassment or shame they may feel and respect your friend or family member's right to privacy.
- Let them talk about their problems to make them feel heard.
- Try not to judge them. Understand that having a mental illness is like having a physical illness — it has created a chemical imbalance in their body. Let them know that you don't think any less of them because of it.
- Have faith in them. They are probably trying to get better even though they may be feeling as if it's never going to happen.




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Just spending time with a friend can help them to not feel isolated.

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- Compliment them when they do the things that will help them get better. To know what those things are, research as much as you can about their illness. This will also show them you care about them.
- Encourage them to stay on any medication that they have been prescribed.
- Look after yourself. Ensure you don't get so involved in their illness that you stop doing all the things you enjoy — that will make them feel worse.
- Without belittling their concerns (which are important to them), help them get some perspective by putting the problem into context.
- Remember to keep the lines of communication open, because it is helpful for them to know they have someone who is willing to talk and to listen.
- It could be a good idea to have the telephone numbers of their doctor, psychologist or other health professional, so that you can contact them if a situation seems to get out of control.
- Often, just spending time with a person suffering a mental illness is the most helpful thing you can do, so they don't feel socially isolated.

## Centre for Adolescent Health

The Centre for Adolescent Health is a national centre for excellence. Based at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne, it aims to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Victoria aged 10–24.

The centre undertakes:

- research into health risk behaviours
- education and training
- provision of clinical services for young people
- community peer support programs for parents, young people and their peers
- health promotion programs relevant to young people.

The centre actively works toward influencing the development of policy at the local, state, national and international levels, as they relate to young people's health.

Services offered by the Centre for Adolescent Health include:

- clinical services, such as medical, psychiatric and counselling services
- peer support programs for young people
- peer support programs for parents.

## Support services

There are people and services available within the community that can provide support to young people in a range of areas, including assistance with emotional, physical and mental health issues. Support may be accessed through the student services area at your school. Most schools offer a wide range of support people and programs, and are able to provide access to community support services.

Community support services may include, but are not limited to:

- your local GP
- your local community health centre
- the Centre for Adolescent Health (discussed above)
- support groups that are funded by a range of organisations, such as not-for-profit, local government or religious centres
- local government programs
- maternal and child health centres
- Lifeline
- Kids Helpline.



You can obtain information about health services from various sources.

There are many great websites out there that can help you to deal with mental illness. For example, ReachOut is an organisation designed to improve young people's mental health, and they supply information and referral services that young people can access. Use the weblinks in your Resources section to check out this and other useful websites.

### Some tips for positive mental health

There are many things you can do to keep yourself mentally fit, healthy and happy. It is important to remember that all aspects of your health — physical, mental and emotional — are connected, so changes in one area can affect others. Below are some suggestions that may assist you to feel good and stay in control of your life. Can you think of any others?

- Eat well.
- Sleep well.
- Exercise.
- Find a hobby.
- Spend time with friends and family.
- Talk about your feelings.
- Take time to chill out and relax.

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#### Weblinks

- beyondblue
- depressionNet
- Headspace
- It's all right
- ReachOut
- Sane

- Set goals.
- Reward yourself.
- Ask for help if you feel like you need it.



Problems are different from mental illness, but you can take positive steps to improve your wellbeing.

## DID YOU KNOW?

To build and maintain your mental health there are three things you can do:

**Act** Strive to keep yourself as active as possible, physically, socially and mentally — walk, swim, read ...

**Belong** Connect to your community — join a group, chat to a neighbour, meet a friend ...

**Commit** Look to the future and have a go — take a challenge, get involved, volunteer ...

Source: Mental Health Council of Australia.

## Emotions

Every human being feels emotion and experiences both positive and negative emotions. How we manage our responses to emotions can determine the impact those emotions have on our relationships. If we didn't experience negative emotions, we would not be able to recognise or value positive emotions. What we need to ensure, however, is that the number of positive emotions outweigh the negative ones.

## How emotions help us

What are you feeling right now? Are you curious? Are you happy you are in Health class discussing your emotions? Perhaps you had a fight with your best friend at recess and you are nervous to see them at lunchtime? Emotions give us information about our experiences and help us know how to react. As we get older, we learn how to deal with our emotions better and learn how to keep control of them. We also become more knowledgeable about understanding emotions and why people react the way they do to certain experiences, and what we are feeling and why.

To build better relationships we need to be able to determine what we need and want. Being aware of our emotions can help us talk about our feelings more clearly, avoid or resolve conflicts better, and move past difficult feelings more easily. For more information, use the **Managing emotional reactions** and **HALT and THINK** weblinks in your Resources section.

Can you identify a time where you reacted a certain way, but in hindsight you let your emotions get the better of you and so could have reacted differently? Now identify a time where you kept your emotions in check, but things could have turned out very differently if you had reacted in a different way (and with different emotions). How do the outcomes differ and which one was more positive in building better relationships?

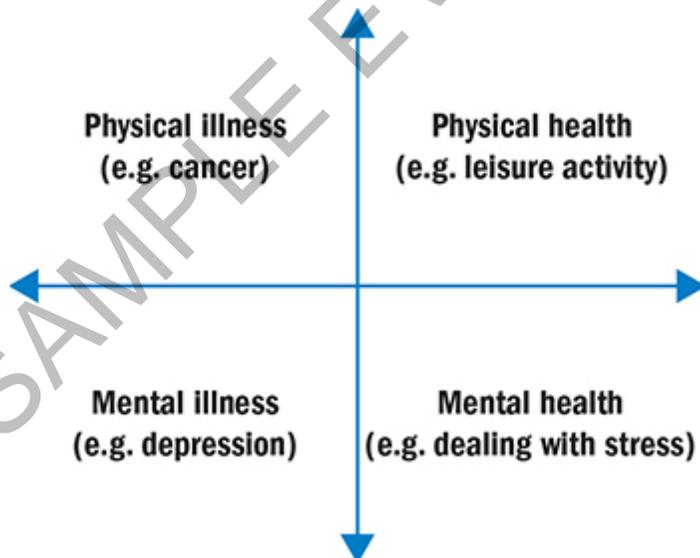
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### Weblinks

- Managing emotional reactions
- HALT and THINK

## ACTIVITIES

### 1 Physical and mental health awareness



1. Copy the figure above.

2. In each quadrant, describe the category and list as many examples as you can.
3. Was there a particular topic you found difficult to describe? Why?
4. Share your results with your peers in a class discussion.

## 2 Mental health considerations

In small groups, discuss the following questions. Note that it is important to consider confidentiality where necessary. You should use an alias or avoid naming specific people.

1. What is the general community's attitude toward people with mental illnesses?
2. List some of the stereotypes associated with people with mental illnesses. Are these stereotypes accurate?
3. Do you know anyone with a mental illness? If so, how has it affected his or her life, and how does he or she deal with it?
4. Research and list three key strategies the Centre for Adolescent Health uses to assist in the area of mental health.
5. How important is community education for the promotion of mental health? Explain your answer.

## 3 Information poster

Create a poster informing the students of your school where they can get help or advice about mental and emotional issues, including mental illness. Remember, you are trying to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness, so choose your words carefully.

## 4 How would you help?

Write a paragraph describing how you would help a close friend who told you they were suffering from depression.

## 5 Myths and stereotypes

Use the **Mental health myths** weblink in your Resources section to watch a clip about mental illness. As a class, discuss the myths and stereotypes surrounding mental health and associated illnesses.

## 6 Help!

1. Use the **headspace videos**, **beyondblue** and **Youth support** weblinks in your Resources section to watch some advertisements about mental health.

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### Weblinks

- Mental health myths
- headspace videos
- beyondblue
- Youth support

2. Have you seen any of these advertisements before?
3. Discuss the effectiveness of these advertisements in highlighting support services for young people.
4. Would you recommend the Headspace website to a friend in need? Why or why not?

## 7 Researching mental illnesses

Using the internet and other resources, undertake an in-depth study of one form of mental illness (for example, depression, anxiety, social phobia, mania or addiction) and then present your findings to the class. Include information such as:

- characteristics of the illness
- prevalence of the illness in the community
- age group most affected
- treatment
- contact details for support groups and agencies
- websites that are helpful and user-friendly.

## 8 Emotions

Complete the **Emotional responses** worksheet in your Resources section to explore a range of situations and how your emotional responses might affect your interactions with others in those situations.

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### Worksheet

Emotional responses

Searchlight ID: doc-14815

## CHECK & CHALLENGE

### Explain

1. Describe and give an example for each of the following types of mental disorder.
  - a. Anxiety disorder
  - b. Affective disorder
  - c. Substance abuse disorder
2. Explain how sense of self, health and wellbeing are related.
3. Explain how emotions can positively or negatively affect relationships.

## Evaluate

4. How would you rate your mental health? What things could you do to improve your mental health?
5. If you were struggling with depression, what strategies or resources could you use? In what ways would you like your friends to support you?
6. Why is mental health just as important as physical health?
7. Are negative emotions important? What do you think would happen if you experienced more negative emotions than positive ones?
8. How can awareness for all health problems be increased?

## Elaborate

9. Do you believe there is a stigma attached to mental disorders? Why? How can you influence community attitudes to address this?
10. How do you distinguish between a mental health problem and a mental illness?
11. Reflect on a situation where you reacted with negative emotion. How could you have changed your response to the situation to ensure a positive outcome?

## Review

### What have I learned?

- Every person is different; each of us has our own personal identity.
- Our personal identity is made up of our past achievements, our present views and our goals for the future.
- Our identity is shaped by our family, friends, culture and community.
- Cultural influences have a major impact on shaping personal identity.
- Stereotypes can limit a person's ability to express themselves comfortably in society.
- Gender stereotypes can cause an imbalance of power in some relationships.
- Communicating our expectations and feelings allows a relationship to be positive and respectful.
- Relationships serve many purposes and may fulfil our social, intellectual, spiritual, physical or emotional needs.
- Relationships have rights and responsibilities.
- Everyone in a relationship has the right to feel safe, valued and respected.

- Balance of power in relationships means that a relationship is not one-sided.
- Friendships we establish are usually initially based on common interests; however, they are dynamic and constantly changing, are crucial to our wellbeing and essential for forming our identity.
- A peer group is a group of people of similar age and background, and can be influential in our lives.
- Intimate relationships involve strong emotions and may involve sexual intercourse.
- With increased independence comes more responsibility; making your own decisions requires you to be responsible for the choices you make.
- Conflict resolution involves successful negotiation to solve a problem and, like any skill, benefits from practice.
- Communication and cooperation skills are necessary to cope effectively with changes in relationships.
- Communication involves talking (clearly conveying a message) and listening (understanding the message that is intended).
- Being an active bystander/upstander in bullying situations helps stop the behaviour.
- It is important for everyone to practise responsible use of social media.
- Mental illness affects many Australians, including young people. Mental disorders include anxiety disorders, affective disorders and substance-use disorders.
- There are many print, web-based, telephone and face-to-face support services available for young people.

## CHECK

1. Describe how taking responsibility can make others respect you more.
2. Who do you think has the most influence on your values and attitude? Why?
3. Think of a stereotype you have heard of regarding teenagers. Is this stereotype typical of all teenagers? If not, how did it come about?
4. How can positive peer pressure be beneficial in an adolescent's life?
5. How do people deal with conflict? Which strategies are most effective in leading to a mutual understanding?

6. What makes a relationship positive and respectful?
7. On average, how many adolescents are affected by mental illness?
8. Where could you find help dealing with a mental illness?
9. Define the key words and terms of the topic using the **In my words** worksheet in your Resources section.

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### Worksheet

In my words

Searchlight ID: doc-14816

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### Interactivity

Multiple choice quiz

Searchlight ID: int-5407

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### Interactivity

True/false quiz

Searchlight ID: int-5408

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### Interactivity

Crossword

Searchlight ID: int-5409

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION REVIEWED

Through the ups and downs of teenage life, how do you cope and come out in control?

Evaluate your initial response to the essential question now that you have studied the topic.