



KS3 Lesson Plan

#ImWithSam:
raising awareness of learning
disabilities and autism

PSHE Association
Quality Assured
Resource



Context

Before teaching this lesson, you should read and consider the teacher guidance that accompanies it. The lesson plan is not designed to be taught in isolation, but should always form part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme.

This lesson should be taught within the context of a planned series of lessons looking at issues around diversity, equality, celebrating difference, and bullying. It looks at raising awareness and challenging perceptions of people with learning disabilities and autism as part of a diverse society, asks pupils to reflect on the impact of ways in which people with learning disabilities and autism are perceived, judged, described and treated, and explores how to question, challenge and change these behaviours.

The teaching should be set within the context of teaching about other types of bullying and discrimination, such as racism, sexism or homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying, and should encourage pupils to view bullying of or discriminatory behaviour towards people with learning disabilities and autism as equally unacceptable.

Please note that timings given are approximate.

Links to the PSHE Association Programme of Study

Core Theme 1: Health and Wellbeing

Pupils should be taught:

H2: to recognise that the way in which personal qualities, attitudes, skills and achievements are evaluated by others, affects confidence and self-esteem

Core Theme 2: Relationships

Pupils should be taught:

R27: about the unacceptability of sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, racist and disablist language and behaviour, the need to challenge it and how to do so

R28: to recognise bullying and abuse in all its forms (including prejudice-based bullying both in person and online/via text, abuse, exploitation and trafficking) and to have the skills and strategies to manage being targeted or witnessing others being targeted

R29: the support services available should they feel, or believe others feel, they are being abused or in an unhealthy relationship and how to access them

Core Theme 3: Living in the Wider World

Pupils should be taught:

L3: the similarities, differences and diversity among people of different race, culture, ability, disability, sex, gender identity, age and sexual orientation and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice, bigotry, bullying and discrimination on individuals and communities

L4: strategies for safely challenging stereotyping, prejudice, bigotry, bullying and discrimination when they witness or experience it in their daily lives

Learning objectives	<p>We are learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about the place of people with learning disabilities and autism within a diverse society; • about the challenges faced by people with learning disabilities and autism, including others' preconceptions, lack of awareness and understanding, discrimination and disablist bullying; • the potential physical and emotional effects of discrimination and disablist bullying on people with learning disabilities and autism; • ways to challenge disablist bullying, prejudice and discrimination as individuals, as a community and within society
Learning objectives	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate an increased understanding and awareness of people with learning disabilities and autism within a diverse society; • recognise disablist language and bullying: how, where and why it happens and the potential physical and emotional impacts of these behaviours on people with learning disabilities and autism and the communities to which they belong; • describe or demonstrate ways of challenging disablist language, bullying, discrimination and prejudice; • identify and evaluate steps that have been taken or could be taken in law and in the community, to change attitudes towards and support people with learning disabilities and autism
Resources required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Box for anonymous questions • Resource 1: Fact or Myth? Cards • Resource 2: Fact or Myth? answers and further information (for teacher use) • Resource 3: A Day in Sam's Life • Resource 4: Challenging Stereotypes information sheet • Resource 5: Challenging disablist words and behaviours sheet
Climate for learning	<p>Please read the accompanying teacher guidance before teaching this lesson. In particular, consider the guidance on dealing with sensitive issues, ground rules and safeguarding, including what to do in case of a disclosure.</p>
Key words	<p>diversity, inclusion, equality, learning disability, autism, neurodiversity disablist; stereotype</p>

Baseline assessment/reconnecting activity

Introduction

5 min

Revisit ground rules and remind pupils of the importance of keeping personal stories private. For more on establishing ground rules, see the accompanying teacher guidance. Draw attention to the anonymous question box and remind them that they can submit questions at any time during or after the lesson.

Explain that today the class will be thinking about what we mean when we talk about a diverse society: who is included, and the treatment of a particular group who often get excluded. The class will also be learning ways to challenge and change particular types of behaviours towards this group.

Baseline activity

5 min

In groups, pairs or as a whole class, ask pupils to create a mindmap for the words 'Diverse society'. Limit your prompts for this to: What does the phrase mean? Who is included? What examples can they give?

Take feedback and draw out any consistent themes, words or phrases. In particular, note whether they have included people with disabilities in their descriptions of who is included. If people with disabilities are included, are these physical disabilities?

You should use this assessment of the group's starting point to inform your approach to the lesson, correct misconceptions and so on. You can also return to it later on as a way to measure progression of learning.

Draw the group's attention to the fact that there are people within society living with different abilities, learning needs or disabilities that others might not be able to see or notice, just by looking at them. These people can tend to be excluded and their needs may be not understood, or remain unmet. They can also often be at the receiving end of discriminatory behaviours or bullying.

Core activities

Activity: Fact or myth?

10 min

Share the definitions of 'learning disability' and 'autism' found in the accompanying teacher guidance with the pupils, and give some commonly-known examples of learning disabilities using the definitions and further information given.

In small groups or pairs, ask pupils to sort the Fact or Myth? cards into three piles: 'Myth', 'Fact' and 'Not sure'. When they have completed the activity, take answers as a whole class, and elaborate on them where necessary. Are pupils surprised by any of the answers? Discuss any cards that raise questions for pupils.

Activity: A Day in Sam's Life

15 min

In small groups, ask pupils to read the story of Sam, an adult with an unspecified learning disability. Explain that Sam is someone they might see every day in their street, on a bus, in a shop. After they have read the story of Sam's day, ask them to consider some or all of the points below. You could divide these up between each group, or ask each group to look at all of them, whichever suits your organisation best. Take feedback from the groups at the end.

1. Make a list of the feelings Sam might be experiencing at the different times in the day, and what might have made Sam feel this way.
2. Why do people speak to and treat Sam in the way they do?
3. What effects could the words 'weirdo' and 'retard' have on Sam?
4. Why do people use these sorts of words to describe Sam?
5. On what do people base their opinion of Sam?
6. Who showed Sam understanding and acceptance? How might these people have made Sam feel?
7. What stereotypes of people with learning disabilities are shown in the story?
8. Is there anything about Sam's day which surprises you, or that you didn't expect? Why?

For pupils who may need support:

Using someone to work alongside them if possible, ask pupils who need more support to make a list of the things which happened to Sam during the day which made Sam feel good, and the things which made Sam feel not so good. Can they say why each thing they have identified made Sam feel that way?

Extension

To challenge pupils further, ask them to think of other words or phrases which people use more generally (i.e. not in direct reference to someone with learning disabilities or autism)

which could be disablist (e.g. ‘mental’; ‘retard’). In what other ways might people behave towards someone with a learning disability which is disablist or discriminatory?

Why do people use the words or behave in the ways they have identified? Ask pupils to think beyond basic reasons such as ‘they’re just not very nice’ to deeper emotions such as fear, or wider issues such as society’s perceptions and treatment of people with learning disabilities and autism.

Activity: Challenging stereotypes

10 min

Explain to pupils that it is said that if you know one person with autism then you know one person with autism – just like anyone else, people with autism are individuals with their own likes, dislikes and aspirations.

Ask pupils to reflect on why we give people labels such as autism. When is it useful to give someone a label (e.g. helps them access support)? When is it unhelpful? Help them understand that labels become unhelpful when someone is only seen for the stereotype behind the label, or not seen to have characteristics and attributes beyond that label.

Ask pupils if they can think of, or name, any celebrities or someone in the public eye who has learning disabilities or autism. Ask them to think of reasons that people with learning disabilities are less visible in our society and media. Are any of the reasons down to discrimination or unhelpful labelling?

Share the Challenging Stereotypes sheet with pupils and discuss ways in which the people featured challenges or have challenged the stereotype of people with learning disabilities and autism. It might also be interesting to extend the discussion into ways that these people were or are perceived and treated by the media and society as a whole, and why this could be.

Activity: Disablist words and behaviour

10 min

Discuss the meaning of the words ‘disablist’ and ‘discrimination’ with pupils. List the feedback of words and/or actions in the story of Sam’s day that could be described as disablist, and why. Are there other words or phrases which they have heard generally which could be interpreted as disablist?

Talk to pupils about disablist language being as offensive as racist, HBT or sexist language, and why this is so.

Using the Challenging disablist words and behaviours resource, or another way of recording, ask pupils to think of ways in which they or others could have challenged the words and behaviours if they had heard them being used, or said or done something differently to demonstrate understanding.

Plenary / Assessment for and of learning

Assessing progress

10 min

As way to assess learning and demonstrate progress, ask pupils to write an email to the teenagers in Sam's story. Pupils should explain why the teenagers' behaviour was disablist, challenge any stereotypes or labelling, and offer suggestions for what the teenagers could do instead in a similar situation. Ask pupils to include persuasive techniques to convince the teenagers to change their ways, such as statistics, rhetorical questions etc.

The emails could be used to check understanding and address misconceptions through a series of lessons. In addition, you could revisit the baseline mindmap activity from the start of the lesson to evaluate any progression in pupils' learning and understanding.

Reflecting on today's learning

5 min

Remind pupils to consider language they might use and whether it is disablist. Ask them to reflect on how they could respond if they hear or experience this kind of language or behaviour.

They could create a set of phrases or sentence starters (using the fact and myths activity) for use when challenging disablist language in their daily lives.

Signposting further support

Information about further support can be found in the accompanying teacher's guidance. Highlight any of these which you think pupils may find helpful in learning more about or challenging discriminatory language and behaviours.

The support includes links to the Dimensions #ImWithSam campaign. If you want to draw pupils' attention to this, please be aware that they may find some of the personal descriptions of hate crime upsetting.

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