A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

Recognising and challenging
stereotypes of visible difference

**YOUTH
WORK GUIDE**

Suitable for
ages 11+

CHANGING
FACES

YouthLink
Scotland
The national agency for youth work

COMMUNITY
FUND

The
ROBERTSON
Trust

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GUIDE NOTES

Objectives

The aim of this resource is for young people to learn about visible differences and the effect that stereotypes in the media can have on people who look different.

Delivery notes

The content of this resource is suitable for young people ages 11 +.

These resources are designed to be delivered over two 1-hour sessions, either at the same time or over two sessions.

Acknowledgements

This guide and the accompanying slides for the workshops reproduce a number of images in order to make a specific point about the use of stereotyped depictions of characters. The copyright holder for each image, where known, is acknowledged where the images appear.

GUIDE NOTES

Youth worker support

Before you run the workshops watch our helpful 10 minute CPD film:
changingfaces.org.uk/for-professionals/youth-workers

In the film two youth workers talk about their experience of running the workshops including useful hints and tips.

Be aware of unconscious bias leading to different treatment of young people, colleagues or partners.
Unconscious attitudes towards people who look different can lead to youth workers having lower expectations or being resigned to appearance-related bullying. We need to be aware of this and challenge our unconscious bias to ensure equity and the same high expectations for everyone.

There is a helpful animation called *Youth workers & unconscious bias* available on our website: **changingfaces.org.uk/for-professionals/youth-workers**

Challenge negative stereotypes of visible difference
Negative stereotypes of visible difference reinforce the myths that people who look different can't have a happy life, require surgery to 'fix' their appearance, or are bad and scary people.

Clarify the meaning of equality
Remind colleagues/partners that 'equality' means equal expectations and respect, not compensatory special treatment because you feel sorry for someone.

Understand our responsibility for tackling bullying
Emphasise the importance of addressing appearance-related bullying and taking it seriously. So that bullying can be stopped, colleagues/partners can – and must – intervene every time someone in their youth work setting is harassed or bullied.

Support colleagues/partners to support young people
We need to equip young people with personal and social tools for the times when they feel vulnerable about the way they look. Encourage colleagues/partners to talk to young people about visible difference to raise awareness and increase their knowledge and understanding.

For further information and support visit **changingfaces.org.uk**

PREPARATION

Creating a safe learning environment

Before beginning the workshops, youth workers should be confident they have established a safe environment for discussion of what can be sensitive and difficult topics.

Before starting the workshop, do a group agreement, setting the expectations for everyone taking part in the group work activities. Within this it could include:

- zero tolerance on bullying

- fairness, equality and inclusion

- confidentiality

- listening to each other

- working together with respect

- taking a non-judgemental approach to different points of view

- considering the words used and their impact

- not sharing personal stories without permission.

The PSHE Association has helpful advice on **Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing guidance**. This includes some detailed suggestions for group agreements and the importance of establishing a safe learning environment.

If youth workers are already aware of any young people who may be particularly affected by issues raised in the sessions they should discuss these with the young person beforehand. Youth Workers should make space for young people to talk to them if they are affected by the topic before, during or after a session.

When preparing for this workshop, youth workers should take time to familiarise themselves with anti-bullying information and resources such as those highlighted by respectme, Scotland's anti-bullying service **respectme.org.uk**

When delivering any youth work session youth workers should be aware of policies within their organisation, such as child protection and anti-bullying.

LOOKING DIFFERENT

Only 3 in 10 young people would consider being friends with someone who has a visible difference.

Looking different

In the UK today there are 86,000 children of school age who have a visible difference – a mark, scar or condition that affects their appearance. Some of the most common causes of visible difference include birthmarks, burn scars, craniofacial conditions, cleft lip and/or palate, and skin conditions such as vitiligo and eczema.

Research by the charity Changing Faces has found that almost half of children with an unusual appearance have experienced bullying based on how they look.[1] A survey found that only 3 in 10 young people would consider being friends with someone who had a visible difference, which explains why many children and young people who look different have reported experiencing isolation and loneliness.[2]

Glossary of key terms

- **Craniofacial conditions** affect the growth and development of the skull and the face. Examples include Treacher-Collins syndrome and Crouzon syndrome.

- **A cleft lip and/or palate** is a gap or split in the upper lip and/or roof of the mouth, which is present from birth.

- **Vitiligo** is a condition which causes pigmentation to be lost from areas of the skin, resulting in pale, white patches.

[1] Disfigurement in the UK, 2017

[2] Looking different: The future of face equality, 2018

LOOKING DIFFERENT

An Implicit Attitudes Test found that 66% of people held negative attitudes towards people with a visible difference.

Implicit Attitudes Test

An Implicit Attitudes Test (IAT) carried out on behalf of Changing Faces in 2017 found that 66% of people held negative attitudes towards people with a visible difference.[3] There are also a number of persistent myths and assumptions, which affect how people with a visible difference are viewed by society, including the idea that people who look different have little chance of a successful, happy life.

Unconscious attitudes can lead to some teachers having significantly lower expectations of pupils with a visible difference and becoming resigned to appearance-related bullying being inevitable for pupils who look unusual. It is important that we are able to recognise and challenge our own implicit bias, as well as supporting pupils to do the same.

Changing Faces uses various expressions including the phrase 'visible difference' to describe someone who has a mark, scar or condition on their face or body that makes them look different. 'Disfigurement' is a term that is used in a legal context as it is enshrined in law in the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, which give legal protection to people with 'severe disfigurements'. It's important to note that not everyone feels comfortable with the word 'disfigurement', preferring instead 'visible difference', 'unusual appearance' or 'looks different'.

[3] Public attitudes to disfigurement in 2017, Changing Faces, 2017

SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Appropriate language

When talking about visible difference, it is important to use non-judgemental, matter-of-fact language. For example, 'Amina has a cleft lip', 'James has a large birthmark on his face' and 'Fiona is a burns survivor'. Avoid using phrases such as 'burns victim' or 'terribly scarred' as these are examples of sensationalist, judgemental language.

The slides for workshop 1 include images which may prompt questions from young people. Information to support you with this is provided in the session plan below. Please also refer to the Preparation section, on page 5, on 'group agreements' for handling questions from young people.

Advice on potential triggers

These resources contain content that may be potentially be emotionally triggering for some young people. Some photos of film characters are included in one of the slides that accompany workshop one. These images are from films with a maximum age rating of 12, although the decision to show the slide will depend on your professional judgement on whether they are appropriate for your group.

There may be young people who have a visible difference, or have a family member who does, in your group. We do not expect any young people to share their personal or family experience, although they may make the choice to do so.

If young people are affected by any of the issues raised by these resources, encourage them to share how they are feeling with a trusted adult.

Remind them that they can continue the conversation with you or another trusted adult outside of the session if they need more support.

SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Support resources

Changing Faces has produced guidance and resources for children, young people and parents, which offer advice on living confidently with a visible difference:
changingfaces.org.uk/advice-guidance/children-parents-families

One-to-one support is also available from Changing Faces:
changingfaces.org.uk/services-support

Other websites which young people and youth workers may find helpful are:
childline.org.uk
seemescotland.org
actiononprejudice.info
penumbra.org.uk
samh.org.uk

For youth work support information can be found on **youthlinkscotland.org**

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Curricular links

These resources will contribute to the delivery of rights-based approaches to learning.They also support the delivery of the Health and Wellbeing curriculum in Scotland and the development of young people's mental, emotional and social wellbeing (in particular HWB 3-08a, 3-10a).

This resource can be used/mapped against the Youth Work Outcomes. You can view these and read more about them at **youthlinkscotland.org/policy-research/outcomes-and-skills/youth-work-outcomes**

This resource should also be used in conjunction with the UNCRC. Additional information can be found at **togetherscotland.org.uk**

In England the resources can be used alongside the NYA curriculum **nya.org.uk/quality/curriculum**

Learning objectives:

- In **Workshop One**, young people will learn about visible differences and the effects that stereotypes in films and TV, which are often negative, can have on people who look different.

- In **Workshop Two**, young people will focus on thinking about other ways that a 'baddie' character can be indicated without reference to their unusual looks.

Learning outcomes for young people

After completing the activities in these workshops, young people will be able to:

1. Explain what a stereotype is and identify some examples.

2. Describe how negative stereotypes of visible difference are often used in film and on TV.

3. Explain the impact that stereotypical depictions of visible difference can have on people who look different.

4. Identify the effect that stereotypical depictions of visible difference can have on the way that society views people who look different and behaves towards them.

5. Suggest alternative ways to represent 'bad' characters without using appearance-related stereotypes.

WORKSHOP ONE

Learning objective

Young people will learn about visible differences and the effects that stereotypes in films and on TV, which are often negative, can have on people who look different.

Resources required:

- Workshop one slides
- Post-it notes/writing paper/notebooks
- YouTube access – *'I am not your villain'* film

WORKSHOP ONE

10 mins   Solo & group activity

Activity 1: What is a stereotype?

This activity is designed to assess young people's initial understanding of the word 'stereotype'. It builds towards **Learning Outcome 1**: Young people will be able to explain what a stereotype is and identify some examples.

Step 1 (baseline assessment): Display slide 2. Ask young people to draw a mind map with the word 'stereotype' at the centre. Then ask them to write what they know about stereotypes. If necessary, prompt them with further questions such as, 'how might stereotypical views make people feel?' and 'are all stereotypes negative?'.

Step 2: Display slide 3, which provides a simple definition of the word stereotype. Check their understanding of this before going on to demonstrate with the example that follows.

Step 3: Display slide 4. This shows a road sign warning drivers that there are frail pedestrians likely to cross the road ahead. Ask the group what they think this says about elderly people. If necessary, explain that there is a stereotype that older people are frail, slow at walking and unlikely to have fun like younger people.

Step 4: Display slide 5. This demonstrates that this stereotype does not represent all older people and so is untrue, or unfair. Clockwise from the top-left, the images show; an older graduate; Ed Whitlock, who ran a marathon in less than four hours, aged 85; Iris Apfel, who is 99 years old and an international fashion icon; and an older couple having fun on roller blades. You may want to expand on this with examples of different types of stereotypes for example:

- All woman are bad drivers.
- All teenagers take drugs and commit crime.
- Men are not very good at looking after children.

Step 5: Display slide 6. Ask what impact they think the stereotype of old people may have on other older people and how might they feel. Ask them to add to their mind map, in answer to this question, and share some with the group to support those in the group who may have more difficulty with vocabulary, or with empathy.

CHANGING FACES

Activity 2: Understanding visible differences

Step 1: Display slide 7 and then slide 8. Introduce everyone to the main causes of visible difference.

NB: This may be the first time that some young people have seen images of people with a visible difference and they may be unsure how to react. The images might also potentially be emotionally triggering for some young people.

Step 2: Display slide 9 and talk about the individuals who are pictured.
From left to right:

- **Marcus is one of Changing Faces' Young Champions and was born with a facial cleft and a cleft palate.**

   When a child is developing in the womb, sometimes parts of the face do not join up as they typically would. This can lead to a split in the lip and/or palate (the upper part of the mouth) when the baby is born. This is known as a cleft lip and/or palate. All babies born with this condition need surgery to join the two parts of the lip or palate together.

- **Winnie Harlow is an international model who has been in ad campaigns for famous brands such as Nike.**

   Winnie has a condition called vitiligo, where patches of skin lose pigmentation (melanin) or colour, so appear lighter than the rest of the body. Some people experience symptoms over a large proportion of their body, while others may have a small patch – the patches can increase in size and join up or stay the same size.

- **Adam Pearson is an actor, TV presenter and campaigner who has a condition called neurofibromatosis.**

   Neurofibromatosis is an inherited condition passed down from one or both parents. Sometimes parents are not aware they carry the condition until their child is diagnosed. Neurofibromins can causes a range of symptoms, including non-cancerous tumours growing along the nerves, which may be visible as lumps under the skin

- **Nikki Lilly is a YouTube influencer and winner of 2016 Junior Bake Off. She has a condition called arteriovenous malformation (AVM).**

   An arteriovenous malformation (AVM) is a specific term used to describe a tangle of blood vessels with unusual connections between arteries and veins. AVM gets progressively larger over time as the amount of blood flowing through it increases. It is thought that they arise from an error in blood vessel formation very early in pregnancy

Step 3: Reassure the group that it is natural to notice if someone looks different and that some people can find this difficult if they have not seen many people with an unusual appearance. Remind them that it is important to be respectful of others and to remember that someone who looks different is a person with feelings, just like them. Explain that one of the reasons they are doing this workshop today is because people with a visible difference can be misunderstood and aren't always treated well by others.

NB: Young people may ask questions about the people shown on slide 9. Remember to use matter-of-fact, non-judgemental language. Please refer to the *Support For Young People* pages for further guidance.

Activity 3: Stereotypes in film and TV

This activity is designed to deliver **Learning outcome 2**: Young people will be able to describe how negative stereotypes of visible difference are often used in film and on TV.

Step 1: Display slide 10. Organise the the young people into groups of 3 or 4 and ask them to write a list of film or TV characters who have a scar, mark or condition that affects their appearance.

Step 2: Ask each group to share their list with the other groups. As each character is suggested, ask them if this is a 'good' or a 'bad' character. Write the characters in two columns on the whiteboard under headings 'good' and 'bad'.

Step 3: Ask them what they notice about the list of characters (i.e. there are many more bad characters with a visible difference).

At this point, someone may bring up Harry Potter. This is not wrong, but they should be encouraged to think about the differences between Harry Potter's scar and the visible differences of notable villains. To take this further, see the *Challenge Activity* on page 15.

Step 4: Display slide 11, showing a selection of film villains who have an unusual appearance.

Activity 4: The impact of stereotypes

This activity is designed to deliver:

- **Learning outcome 3**: Young people will be able to explain the impact that stereotypical depictions of visible difference can have on people who look different.

- **Learning outcome 4**: Young people will be able to identify the effect that stereotypical depictions of visible difference can have on the way that society views and behaves towards people who look different.

10 mins   Group activity

Step 1: Display slide 12. Use the following questions as the basis for discussion of the use of visible difference in films/TV.

- Have you noticed, before now, that many villains have a visible difference?

- What impact do you think this has on how society sees people with a visible difference in real life?

- How do you think negative stereotypes might affect how people behave towards someone who looks different?

- How do you think someone who looks different might feel when they see a villain with a visible difference in a TV programme or a film?

5 mins   Video

Step 2: Display slide 13, which includes a YouTube link to a short film produced by Changing Faces for the **#Iamnotyourvillain** campaign. This film is **3 minutes** long and features young people with a visible difference discussing how they feel about the stereotype of the film villain who looks unusual. This reinforces the impact of appearance-related stereotypes in film and TV on people in real life.

5 mins   Solo activity

Step 3: Ask everyone to refer to the mind map they created at the start of the workshop. Ask them to add more information to the mind map on what they've learned in the session. Encourage them to include thoughts about how stereotypes can make people feel, if they have a visible difference. Make sure they keep their mind maps somewhere safe as they will need them for Workshop Two.

Activity 5: Harry Potter challenge

Step 1: Display slide 14.

Harry Potter's lightning bolt scar is a 'cool' shape, and it is small and neat and can easily be hidden by his hair. It is also not portrayed as the first thing somebody might notice about him, merely one of his characteristics, along with his trademark round glasses and his mother's eyes. When other characters do notice his scar, they react with curiosity and awe, rather than horror or disgust. By contrast, lots of villains are given prominent, unconcealable visible differences that are immediately noticeable and elicit negative reactions.

Step 2: Display slide 15. Ask everyone the following questions to encourage debate within their group:

- Why are small, 'cool' scars seemingly permissible in a hero, but anything else suggests villainy?

- Is there a sense that Harry Potter is 'allowed' to have a scar and still be a good guy precisely because it is discreet?

- Do other fictional villains encourage the idea that the more 'severe' or noticeable the visible difference, the more evil the character?

There are no wrong answers, and discussions may be lively!

After discussing the questions, the groups could be asked to present their discussion to the other groups.

Step 3: Display slide 16, which includes further sources of information and support for young people.

WORKSHOP TWO

Learning objective

Young people will focus on thinking about other ways that a 'baddie' or villain character can be indicated without reference to their unusual looks.

Resources required:

- A3 paper
- Post-it notes/notebooks
- Pencils and colouring pens/pencils
- Mind map completed in Workshop One
- Character design template (optional)
- Final slide from Workshop One

Activity 1: Recap on learning from Workshop one

5 mins — **Group activity**

This recap works as a **baseline assessment** to be aware of any adjustments that may be needed to this workshop. Remind everyone about the group agreement they were part of creating for these workshops.

Step 1: Ask them to share what they remember from Workshop One.

Step 2: Ask them to refer to their mind maps and write down three things they learned in the last workshop. If necessary, scaffold this with the heading 'Three things I learned about stereotypes'. Depending on the answers, summarise the key themes for young people who need more support in recalling.

Activity 2: Group discussion

10mins — **Group activity**

This activity is designed to deliver **Learning outcome 5**: Young people will be able to suggest alternative ways to represent 'bad' characters without using appearance-related stereotypes.

Step 1: Explain that it can be difficult to challenge stereotypes in film and TV, but it can be done. For example, the 2017 film Wonder Woman was a huge box-office success and challenged the idea that superheroes are men and that a superhero film with a woman as a main character would not be a success.

Step 2: Facilitate a discussion: how could TV and film directors show that a character is a baddie without using an appearance-related stereotype? This discussion supports the main learning objective in this lesson. It encourages young people to think about the tools that are at a director's/script-writer's disposal to show an audience that a character is a villain, without using a stereotype.

They might find it difficult to come up with suggestions, as the scarred villain stereotype is ingrained in film-making and seen as an easy way to show that a character is bad.

If they are having trouble thinking of ideas, suggestions include:

- Using scary music when the character is on screen.
- Including scenes that show the character making an evil plan or behaving badly towards other characters.
- Using dramatic effects such as thunder and lightning
- Directing the actor to talk in a menacing or threatening voice.

Step 3: Ask the group to write the heading 'My advice to directors' in their notebooks along with a short list of do's and don'ts for directors/script-writers, to help them avoid using appearance-related stereotypes to show who is the villain.

NB: Someone in the session might ask if a character wearing a mask is OK. If a character is robbing a bank, for example, then a mask would be a reasonable thing to wear to avoid being identified.

Activity 3 (option 1): Poster design

30 mins   **Group activity**

As with activity 2, activity 3 (options 1 and 2) are also designed to deliver **Learning outcome 5**: Young people will be able to suggest alternative ways to represent 'bad' characters without using appearance -related stereotypes.

This activity is intended to demonstrate what what the young people have learned so that youth workers can check knowledge gained from the start of Workshop One.

Ask the young people, in groups, to design a poster on A3 paper. Their aim is to raise awareness about negative stereotypes of visible difference in films and on TV.

The most successful posters will include:

- Information on how negative stereotypes are often used.

- Explanation of why this is lazy in terms of character development.

- How this can affect behaviour towards people who look different in real life.

- How this affects people who have a visible difference.

- A message to writers and directors on other ways they could represent villains/baddies, for example a list of do's and don'ts when creating their characters.

It may be helpful to share these 5 criteria when setting the task.

Share the finished posters and highlight how they have met these criteria (if time allows and the groups feel comfortable with you doing so).

Activity 3 (option 2): Character design

30 mins   **Group activity**

Depending on responses to the mind map exercise, some groups can be set an alternative, simpler activity to design their own new character. Ask them to draw a new character and outline their evil plan. They can also describe how audiences will know their character is the baddie or villain. If you have access to a printer, a character design template is available in appendix 1.

Activity 4: Time to reflect

5 mins   **Solo activity**

Step 1 (option 1): Hand out post-it notes or paper and ask everyone to write down one thing that they have learned about stereotypes and visible difference from the past two workshops.

Step 1 (option 2): Ask them to refer to their mind map and to highlight in a different colour the three most important things they've learned about stereotypes and visible difference over these two workshops. Share some of these with the whole group, to reinforce the learning.

Step 2: Display the last slide from Workshop One again, with information on how young people can find out more, or seek support, if they are affected by any of the issues they've discussed in this workshop.

CHARACTER DESIGN

A drawing of our character:

Our 'bad' character's name is: _____

Our character's evil plan:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How people will know our character is the 'baddie':

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____