Shaping Identity

In this unit you will …

▶ analyse self-identity and how this may impact our health, safety and wellbeing
▶ challenge the norms, stereotypes and expectations represented in the media and reflect on how this influences identity
▶ investigate the influence of cultural beliefs and personal values on health
▶ analyse the impact of friends, family and community in developing a sense of identity and contributing to positive wellbeing
▶ reflect on life challenges, personal strengths and areas for growth
▶ express opinions and beliefs with respect to the feelings of others.
What are you curious to learn about in this unit?

Links

Attributions
Writer: Ashlea Bruton
Reviewer: Associate Professor Reuben Bolt, UNSW


Australian Health Ministers’ Advisory Council: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework 2017 Report, AHMAC, Canberra.

The Conversation: Susan J Paxton Professor, School of Psychology and Public Health, La Trobe University, and Siân McLean, Research fellow, La Trobe University, ‘Social media can damage body image – here’s how to counteract it,’ The Conversation, 26 September 2016.


Shutterstock: arfa adam (‘My strengths’ notes); Best Vector Elements (pen); Chaay_Tee (teenagers on smartphones); Dean Drobot (girl frowning at phone); Fon Hodes (Indigenous Australian children); Ibreakstock (‘Who Am I?’ on whiteboard); LightField Studios (two boys at computers); Markus Mainka (Australia made up of faces); Mike_shots (boy taking selfie); Mita Stock Images (girl with face in hands); Moloko88 (illustration of Australia); M-SUR (adulthood/childhood signs); Ollyy (portraits of teenagers of different ethnicities); one line man (drawing of man with chin on hand); Riccardo Piccinini (group holding workbooks); Rawpixel.com (fingers making star), (thumbs up), (friends on couch), (teenagers leaving school); Luna Vandoorne (meditating).
# Unit glossary

Read the definition then write each word in a sentence to show its meaning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>acceptance</td>
<td>giving and receiving welcome, approval, acknowledgement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>campaign</td>
<td>any planned series of actions with a particular purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discrimination</td>
<td>the action of treating someone unfairly because of some characteristic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diversity</td>
<td>the state or fact of being different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>empathy</td>
<td>ability to see into another person’s mind and heart; showing understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>expectation</td>
<td>anything which is expected</td>
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<tr>
<td>interpersonal</td>
<td>concerning relations between people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prejudice</td>
<td>an unfair opinion formed in advance without thought and knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resilience</td>
<td>the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sexualisation</td>
<td>to make sexual in character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stereotype</td>
<td>simplified image or idea of a particular person or thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tolerance</td>
<td>the practice of accepting or being fair towards beliefs, customs and opinions that are different from one’s own</td>
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</table>
As a person moves through the period of adolescence, there are many factors that contribute to the way they see themselves—their sense of self. This is reflective of an individual’s perceptions, beliefs and judgements about who they are as a person. Self-concept and identity can be determined by how a person feels about their strengths, weaknesses and abilities in different areas of their life. The qualities and attributes valued by individuals may be adopted in response to peers, family, culture, religion, experiences of success and failure, and even images portrayed in the media.

Throughout a person’s lifetime they are introduced to new people, concepts, attitudes and experiences, and as a result their understanding of who they are as an individual may change and develop. Adolescence is a time of maturation and self-discovery, and it is generally the first time that identity becomes independent of parents and family. Throughout this unit you will explore the development and influences of a sense of self, and how you can support the identity of others by being the best version of yourselves.
What makes me, me?

There are many factors that contribute to the way people see themselves and their perception of who they are. One of the major developments throughout adolescence is an individual’s sense of self. It is during this stage that a young person’s self-concept moves away from being heavily based on their parents and family to being more self-constructed. While family continues to influence a person’s sense of self, people recognise the prominence of other influences in determining who they are. In addition to family, a young person may consider the influence of friends, culture, experiences of success and failure and even the media as important contributions in defining their individual identity.

ANALYSE

Reflection

1 In the space below, brainstorm the different factors that can influence an individual’s identity.

2 Circle the factors that have positively contributed to your sense of self.
3 Complete a PWI reflecting on the contexts that influence you—who you are, how you behave and what is important to you (example of contexts include home, school, sport clubs, and so on).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P</th>
<th>(positive aspects of your sense of self)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>(areas of your sense of self you would like to work on)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>(interesting facts about your sense of self)</td>
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</table>

Discuss your PWI with a partner.

4 Describe the influence some contexts have on healthy habits, such as participating in physical activity.

5 Explain how they contribute either positively or negatively to your health and wellbeing.

6 Together, develop a strategy to improve an area of your sense of self.
People tend to behave in ways that are reflective of the way they think about themselves and the relationships they value and grow up with. For example, a person with a positive sense of self is more likely to try new experiences, have confidence in their ability and be more comfortable in social situations. In contrast, a person who has a negative sense of self may be withdrawn, shy and less likely to put themselves in unfamiliar situations. It is clear that there is a strong connection between a person’s sense of self and their overall health, safety and wellbeing.

Reflect on the following scenario.

Elijah is in Year 10 and he’s a nerd. Well, he’s not the typical nerd you might picture, but he is smart so he’s always been friends with the ‘nerds’. He still hangs out with them but he has also started spending time with the group you might call the ‘cool kids’. And then there’s the guys he plays football with on the weekend. Elijah has piercings, plays sport and has so far maintained his good grades, but he’s still discovering who he is.

1 As a class, identify the attributes and qualities commonly associated with people in the social groups identified in the scenario.

This is referred to as stereotyping and will be addressed in more detail later on in this unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Nerds’</th>
<th>‘Cool kids’</th>
<th>‘Sporty’</th>
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</table>
2 With a partner, discuss three positive and three negative outcomes that may arise from identifying with these groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>3</td>
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</table>

3 Select one positive outcome and one negative outcome, and describe how this may influence Elijah's overall health, safety and wellbeing.

**Positive outcome**

........................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................

**Negative outcome**

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4 Predict how one of Elijah's friendship groups may influence his sense of self as an adult.

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5 After considering Elijah's situation, analyse the impact a person may have on the development of another individual's identity.

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In the form of a journal entry, reflect on your life at high school, your qualities and attributes—what makes you, you? How do these contribute to your overall health and wellbeing? Respond by answering the following question:

Dear 30-year-old me,

What were you like as a teenager? (cool, nerdy, awkward, sporty, etc.?)
CULTURAL IDENTITY

Culture refers to a way of life, encompassing the ideas, values and customs that are practised by a group of people. Culture is passed down from generation to generation and while some traditions are passed on unconsciously, others carry the importance of an entire people’s identity.

The multicultural nature of Australia means that there are many influences on our identity as a nation, an identity that has continued to change and develop with time.

What does it mean to be Australian?

Evaluate

Discussion

In a small group discuss the following questions.

1. Is there a ‘typical’ Australian? Why or why not?

2. Describe what you believe it means to be an ‘Australian’.

3. In your opinion, are we one nation or many nations? Explain your thoughts.

Celebration of diversity

There are many cultural beliefs practised in Australia that all contribute to diverse and unique experiences of life. We have the privilege of being surrounded by so many different expressions of culture and religion, and with over 250,000 people migrating to Australia in 2016–17 (ABS, 2018), we can only expect an increasingly diverse society. It is crucial we recognise, accept and celebrate the diversity of our nation.

Create

Infographic

In a small group, you will be investigating the diverse experiences of a specific culture.

Example groups you may select include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- Chinese
- Sudanese
- Muslim
- South African
- Vietnamese
- Iranian
- Italian
- Japanese
- British
1 Select one group to research, and provide general information on the following topics. If you would like to research an alternative, please ask your teacher.

**Research findings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious belief/s</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional clothes worn for special occasions (do they have traditional dress?)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Common food/s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health issues (e.g. life expectancy, high risk of cardiovascular disease etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sports that they play</td>
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<tr>
<td>A common dance, song or practical activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>An important ceremony that occurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>How the culture enriches others (e.g. philosophies, food, specific expertise)</td>
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</table>
2 Using this information, create an infographic that informs people of the traditions and practices of this culture with the aim of promoting and celebrating diverse expressions of culture. Once completed, print a copy and create a ‘Celebration of Diversity’ display. You can use the space below to mock-up your design.

3 Propose two strategies we can use to promote the acceptance of diverse cultures and religions in Australia.

Cultural rites of passage

Initiation, sometimes referred to as coming of age ceremonies or rites of passage, is typically an expression of culture and demonstrates a connection between a person and their community. It is a display of the diverse human experience and emphasises the different values and ideals held. These ceremonies can be a powerful tool in creating and affirming identity, building strong bonds between individuals and their community. However, not all cultures place such deep value on the transition to adulthood. Regardless of their significance, they nonetheless contribute to our overall health and wellbeing through supporting our sense of self.
1 Describe three experiences you would consider ‘rites of passage’ that will occur in your life as you move towards adulthood.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rite of passage</th>
<th>Age it occurs</th>
<th>Culture represented</th>
<th>Describe what occurs</th>
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2 Explain how one of these rites relates to or enhances your identity, health and wellbeing.

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3 With a partner, plan a storyboard for a movie scene that demonstrates a character celebrating these rites of passage. Reflect on what happens and how it impacts an individual’s sense of cultural identity.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Scene:</th>
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Different cultures celebrate an individual’s progression from adolescence into adulthood in different ways. To promote cultural diversity, we must learn to understand different traditions and ceremonies, and show respect towards different practices.

Reflect on some different initiation ceremonies from around the world. Read through the article by Global Citizen by accessing the relevant link in the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (2018 Syllabus) area at www.pearsonplaces.com.au.

1. Summarise two ceremonies of your choice in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiation ceremony 1</th>
<th>Initiation ceremony 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of the ceremony</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Where is it practised?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Who practises it?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Summarise what happens.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does the ceremony represent?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2 Complete the table below to compare the similarities and differences between these two initiation ceremonies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ceremony 1 only</th>
<th>Similarities</th>
<th>Ceremony 2 only</th>
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<tbody>
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PERSONAL STRENGTHS

By reflecting on personal identity and sense of self, it is obvious that we are all uniquely individual. There are many factors that influence who a person is and how they perceive themselves, including family, friends and the broader communities people are involved with, as previously explored. It is through these influences that people come to develop their values and recognise personal strengths. When a person knows their strengths, it gives them a means to achieve goals, to develop a positive outlook and to overcome setbacks.

A personal strength refers to elements that help or enable an individual to deal with challenges and situations in life. By recognising and using their strengths, people can work towards achieving desired outcomes.

1 In the following activity, privately reflect on the strengths listed and give yourself a rating out of 4.

1—Always
2—Mostly
3—Sometimes
4—Rarely/Needs improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Honest</td>
<td></td>
<td>Loyal</td>
<td></td>
<td>Generous</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td></td>
<td>Organised</td>
<td></td>
<td>Righteous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reliable</td>
<td></td>
<td>Persistent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Enthusiastic</td>
<td></td>
<td>Take initiative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept personal differences</td>
<td></td>
<td>Environmentally aware</td>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoy new experiences</td>
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</table>

Sample Pages
Shaping Identity

Select one strength you identified as something you rarely or sometimes display.

2 Examine this attribute. What does it mean and why is it considered a positive quality?

3 Explain why you feel this requires improvement.

4 In your opinion, how do these attributes contribute to a positive sense of self?
EVALUATE
Ranking activity

Refer to the personal attributes from the previous activity.

1. Working in a small group, randomly select a context to consider.
   Our context is: ..........................................................................................................................................................

2. Rank all of the strengths as to how useful they are in your specific context.

   Most important

   Least important
As an individual moves through life there are different challenges and trials they may have to face. If there is a lack of personal strengths to draw on, then unfortunately a person’s health and wellbeing can take a hit at times. By setting goals to change thought patterns, develop personal strengths and adopt problem-solving techniques, it is possible to learn strategies to cope with tough and stressful times.

**Resilience**

When things go wrong, what helps a person cope and get through the tough times? Resilience is a great personal strength and it is something individuals can learn at any stage of their life. Someone who is resilient is effective at coping and adapting even when times are tough. They are not necessarily blind to the potential negative outcomes, but they choose to focus on positive aspects of the situation and therefore overcome the adversity quicker than those with a negative outlook.

**LANGUAGE TIP**

*Adversity:* an unfortunate event or circumstance, generally marked by distress.

**ANALYSE**

Asha Philip experienced a tough situation at 16 years of age, but it was through her resilience and determination that she made it out the other side.


1. Summarise the difficult circumstance Asha found herself in.

2. Identify who encouraged her to be resilient.

3. Describe additional challenges she faced during her journey.

4. Who could you turn to for support during tough times? Explain how they encourage you to be resilient.
A person can develop resilience through consciously changing thinking patterns and participating in mindful practices where the focus is on the present.

As a class, discuss strategies people could use to develop their resilience.

1. Describe two strategies you believe would help you develop a resilient mentality.

2. Participate in a progressive relaxation or mindfulness session run by your teacher. Explain how this session made you feel. How did you find the experience?

3. Reflect on how mindfulness may build an individual’s resilience.

4. In your opinion, does resilience contribute to a positive sense of self and better health and wellbeing? Why or why not?
Tolerance

Tolerance is the act of respecting people’s differences. At its best, someone who practises tolerance is non-judgemental and accepts others, irrelevant of their beliefs, sexuality, values, physical appearance and so on. They seek to understand more about the world and themselves by embracing diversity and difference. Diversity teaches us valuable lessons about humanity, and through respectful engagement we learn to understand people for their different thoughts, feelings and opinions even though we may not agree with their views.

Role-play

Read the following scenario.

Jason has recently started at a new school in a completely new state, and while his old school was great and he misses some of his old friends, this school has been a refreshing change so far. It’s so multicultural! There is always something going on, and Jason has had more cultural experiences in the past month than in his whole life. When he first arrived, the Deputy Principal had Jack show him around the school and they seemed to get along pretty well from the beginning, so Jason just slotted straight into their group.

Jason has spoken to another student, Yasin, a few times and they also get along really well, maybe even better than he gets along with Jack. The problem is Jack and the other boys all dislike Yasin, and they don’t try to hide it either. When Yasin walked past the group earlier that day they all snickered and were cruel, everyone but Jason. And it’s just because Yasin is different from them. He’s from Malaysia and a practising Muslim whereas every member of the group is Caucasian. When it happened, Jason didn’t know what to do, so he just sat there—he didn’t join in, but he also didn’t help.
In a small group, write a script for the end of the scene and prepare to deliver it to the class.

‘Compassion and tolerance are not a sign of weakness, but a sign of strength’
—Dalai Lama

Reflect on this comment from the Dalai Lama. Interpret what it means and examine the implications of the message it is sending.

**LANGUAGE TIP**

Implications means the conclusions that can be drawn.
Empathy

Have you ever heard the phrase ‘you can’t understand someone until you have walked a mile in their shoes’? This encompasses the notion of empathy—the ability to understand and share feelings. When we put ourselves in someone else’s position, we become more sensitive to what they are experiencing and become more conscious of their feelings. By being empathetic we can create a more accepting and respectful environment.

1 Are you empathetic? Circle Yes or No for each comment to reflect on your qualities.

- I often think about other people’s feelings. Yes  No
- I don’t make fun of other people because I can imagine what it feels like to be in their shoes. Yes  No
- I listen to others talk about what they’re going through. Yes  No
- I try to understand other people’s point of view. Yes  No
- I am aware that not everyone reacts to situations the same way I do. Yes  No

2 In a small group, develop strategies you could implement to show empathy towards other people.


3 Reflect on a recent situation where a friend was having a tough time. Use one of the strategies above to demonstrate how you could be empathetic to their situation.


4 Create a social media post to demonstrate the importance of empathy for the positive health and wellbeing of others.

Don’t forget your caption!
Acceptance

A sense of belonging is a basic human need—it gives us a purpose, builds a positive sense of self and influences our identity, all factors that contribute to our overall health and wellbeing. There are always going to be aspects about others (and ourselves) that we do not necessarily like, but through acceptance of these differences we can develop a sense of connection and belonging for everyone.

ANALYSE

Reflection

1 On a scale of 1–5, indicate how accepting you feel you are of diversity, 1 being never, 5 being always.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Always</td>
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</table>

2 Reflect on a time where you felt like you did not belong. What was the situation and how did it make you feel?

3 Explain what action you could take to be more accepting of people’s differences.

4 Assess the importance of acceptance to the health and wellbeing of individuals.

5 Reflect on some of the opportunities Australians have with such a diverse cultural population.
DISCRIMINATION

No one should feel as though they have to change who they are in order to be accepted. Diverse cultures, religious expressions and identities should be able to coexist harmoniously. Yet there are still numerous instances of discrimination every day that inevitably have tremendous impacts for not only individuals, but also entire cultural communities.

Discrimination is defined as the action of treating someone unfairly because of some characteristic. Individuals can be discriminated against because of their culture, religion, abilities, gender, sexual orientation and even their age. It is not a new practice, and people have been dealing with the effects of discrimination for centuries.

ANALYSE

1 Working with a partner, you have one minute to identify how discrimination affects an individual. List as many impacts of discrimination as possible, both positive and negative.
2 Describe any positive impacts of discrimination that you identified.

3 With all the negative outcomes you identified, what impact do you think discrimination has on an individual’s sense of self?

**Discrimination and cultural identity**

Despite the rich, cultural tapestry that makes up Australia, there is still an overwhelming amount of racial discrimination that occurs.

With such a hugely diverse culture, it is disturbing to note that one in every five Australians have experienced race-hate talk.
These statistics were released in 2016, when the population of Australia was roughly 24.13 million. Using this information, calculate the following.

1. How many Australians were born overseas at the time?

2. Therefore, how many people were born in Australia?

3. How many Australians identified as having a parent born overseas?

4. Predict what issues may hinder a ‘united Australia’.

In your opinion, why is discrimination so prominent when Australia is such a culturally diverse nation?

**LANGUAGE TIP**

*Prominent* means something that is noticeable and obvious.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have a strong sense of identity that is reflective of their way of life. The land is crucial to the cultural identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as it is the basis of their Dreamtime stories, dictating the laws, values and beliefs held by their communities.

When British colonisation occurred in 1788, the effects were devastating and widespread for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The policies approved by the Australian Government in the early 1900s had dramatic implications for land use, laws, spiritual beliefs and ways of life, with children being removed from their families and their land. This in turn had detrimental impacts on the development, understanding and communication of cultural identity as Indigenous peoples.

**ANALYSE**

In 1915, the NSW government passed the amended Aborigines Protection Act 1909. Research the policy and answer the following questions.

1. Summarise the objective of the policy.

2. Explain how the Aborigines Protection Board justified their actions.

3. Given the importance of land and community for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, discuss the impact of this policy on the development of identity.

**LANGUAGE TIP**

To **discuss** something means to identify issues and provide reasons for and/or against.
Watch the scene from the movie *Rabbit Proof Fence* that your teacher will show you.

1. Describe what is happening in this scene.

2. When the three girls, Mollie, Daisy and Gracie, were taken, they had no idea where they were going. Adopt the persona of one of the girls and write a journal entry to reflect on losing your mother and aunt, and the impact of being taken from the land of your people.
STEREOTYPING OF CULTURES AND RELIGIONS

Culture and religion have long been identified as the markers of ‘difference’ when considering different stereotypes. Ever since European settlement in 1788, there has been evidence of both covert and overt stereotyping of many cultures and religions in Australia, and worldwide. While some stereotypes are not intended for malicious or damaging purposes, they still influence a person’s sense of self and influence their identity. There have been many links established between stereotyping and discrimination and an individual’s experiences with mental health issues.

EVALUATE

Reflection

1. Identify two cultures or religions you have experienced in your life.

2. Describe two stereotypical assumptions often made about the cultures or religions you have identified.

3. Propose two reasons why these assumptions are sometimes made.

4. In your opinion, how would an Australian be stereotyped?

5. Compare your stereotypes about Australians with a partner. Were there any differences? Why/Why not?
A local director has decided to make a small promotional video about stereotyping in your community. He wants young people to be involved in the development of the scene through writing the script.

With a partner, prepare a script for a short one-minute scene that demonstrates stereotyping and its impact on the person or people involved. Deliver this script to the class.
Stereotyping a nation

In 2018, former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull announced that there was a ‘real concern about Sudanese gangs’ in the suburbs of Melbourne. There was no specific mention of the extent of this issue, and there was debate at the time whether it was a strategic political statement. When this issue appeared in the media, it immediately created a hostile environment for all African Australians—they had been stereotyped as violent and as a threat to the safety of Melbourne residents. In response to this uproar, Australian Rules footballer Majak Daw released a statement and provided an opposing voice to this apparent issue. This statement was written in association with other prominent members of the sporting community, highlighting the impact this news story had on an entire population.


EVALUATE

Discuss the implications of former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull’s comments regarding ‘Sudanese gangs’. Consider the stereotypes that may have developed as a result and the negative impacts on identity and culture.

Stereotyping Australia’s first peoples

The impacts of stereotyping and discrimination are long-lasting and can impact a person in many different ways. They can create feelings of shame and isolation, and this affects an individual’s ability to cope with stress. It is important to recognise the implications of discrimination and stereotyping on the health, safety and wellbeing of people from all expressions of identity.

Non-profit organisation beyondblue’s ‘Stop. Think. Respect.’ campaign has brought attention to the implications of discrimination on the health, safety and wellbeing of people. The Invisible Discriminator video demonstrates common situations of discrimination occurring against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
Watch *The Invisible Discriminator* video by accessing the relevant link in the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (2018 Syllabus) area at [www.pearsonplaces.com.au](http://www.pearsonplaces.com.au) and answer the following questions.

1. Identify the message that is being delivered in this clip.

2. Describe two stereotypes often made about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

3. ‘In the 2014–15 Social Survey, 35% of Indigenous Australians aged 15 years and over reported that they were treated unfairly in the previous 12 months because they are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.’


3. Reflect on this finding and on how stereotyping and discrimination affects an individual’s health, safety and wellbeing.

4. Propose a strategy you could apply in your class, school or community to eliminate stereotyping and support the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Present your idea as a visual representation of your choice.

Planning space

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The Media

The media has long been seen as a means of perpetuating stories—whether they are true or not. They can give unrealistic messages about how people should look, behave and interact with others to be popular or attractive, and to ‘fit in’. Marketers know that adolescents are frequent consumers of social media and they spend millions of dollars targeting you. Advertisements and articles are strategically placed in front of your face to convince you to buy products they claim will improve your social status and sense of wellbeing. The question often posed by advertisers is not ‘Who are you?’ but, ‘Who should you be?’ And sadly, many of us either do not fit into that ideal or succumb to the ideals they are selling.

Gender stereotypes and expectations

Families, friends, schools, sporting groups and community leaders all play a role in defining what it means to be a man or a woman. The media can also have an influence on what it means to be a ‘real man’ and ‘lady’ in our society.

1 Read the statements below about the expectations placed on young people and discuss in small groups whether or not you agree there is pressure to meet such expectations. Record your opinion in the table below and provide reasons to support your answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectation</th>
<th>Agree or disagree</th>
<th>Alternative view</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A strong muscular physique is what girls look for.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only girls should have long hair.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males don’t care about their image as much as females.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Norms and stereotypes such as these may contribute to unrealistic ideals of what we should look like and who we should be. Create a slogan that challenges these images as stereotypical norms and encourages young people to be themselves.

Slogan

Sample Pages
The realm of social media

Social media is accessible in an instant and has the potential to reach millions of people within minutes. The content young people see and hear in the media helps them to figure out how the world works and also strongly influences their attitudes, values and even their self-esteem, all by their mid-teens. The media has great potential to endorse norms, stereotypes and expectations for cultural and religious expression, and reinforce images and gender ideations.

Read the following article.

Social media can damage body image—here’s how to counteract it.

Social media is a wonderful way to connect with others, share experiences and opinions and express ideas. But it can have a dark side for body image, which requires a critical and thoughtful approach to counteract. People who have body image concerns feel worried, distressed and unhappy about their appearance, weight or shape. They may be concerned about being too large, too small, not curvy enough, or not muscular enough.

Body dissatisfaction of this kind causes a great deal of distress and can lead to severe psychological and physical problems. Consequently, body dissatisfaction has been identified as a serious public health problem.

Viewing pictures in magazines and on TV that show thin, attractive women or muscular, lean men has been shown to lead to body dissatisfaction. New research is looking at effects of use of social media such as Instagram, Facebook and Pinterest. This shows people who frequently use social media are also likely to have problems with body image.

Social media can be a dangerous body image environment

Social media can be toxic for body image. It is highly visual and interactive, and appearance is central to success. Collecting ‘likes’ and followers provides an immediate marker of achievement and popularity. These feed directly into users’ sense of self-worth. The interactive and sometimes anonymous nature of social media means feedback is instant and unfiltered. Negative feedback and criticism abound. This creates greater pressure on appearance and competition to outdo one’s peers. Using social media often revolves around appearance. People spend a great deal of time checking out how they look compared with others—friends, peers, and celebrities—and spend a lot of time talking about appearance. This might be chat and interactions about trying to lose weight or bulk up muscle. But more subtle interactions happen too, including things like receiving compliments about appearance that reinforce the importance of body image in how you are judged as a person.
These ‘appearance conversations’ and ‘appearance comparisons’ play an important role in the development of body image concerns. The way people present themselves on social media can also contribute to problems for body image. People often strive to present themselves in the best light, especially in relation to how they look. It is not unusual for people to spend a great deal of time thinking about their next ‘selfie’ opportunity and planning the right pose to capture their best and most attractive self. People often edit or add filters to their selfies, take many selfies before choosing one to post, and worry about the reactions of others. The greater the effort and concern around creating and posting the most attractive selfies, the greater the body image concerns. People can become trapped in a vicious world. They anxiously await ‘likes’ and feedback from others, then feel wounded and disappointed if the desired response is not forthcoming. They then feel even more distressed and anxious about their appearance.

**The importance of (social) media literacy**

Although the social media environment can cause difficulties for body image concerns, not all people are affected in this way. It is not entirely clear why this is the case, but research with traditional media offers some clues. Recent research shows teenage girls who take a critical approach to viewing idealised appearance images in traditional media are protected against a negative effect on body image. This critical approach to understanding media is called media literacy. This includes questioning the truthfulness of a media image, questioning whether an image has been manipulated to obtain a particular effect, and assessing what the motives are behind the way an image has been presented. When girls take this critical approach, their body image is less affected by viewing traditional media. Gains made in traditional media literacy prevention programs may be applied to social media arenas too. ‘Social media literacy’ not only includes an understanding of the messages behind commercial media advertising seen on social media sites but also focuses on the way people interact on social media. This includes an understanding about how friends, peers and celebrities use social media. It is also about understanding the fact that people carefully select or modify images of themselves to present the best picture of themselves and their world. It might be anticipated that the more people understand the social media world, the less likely they are to make comparisons with the images they see on social media, which they then interpret in a negative way. If this proves to be the case, enhancing social media literacy through school programs or social marketing campaigns is likely to have a protective effect in relation to body image.

Source: Susan J Paxton, Professor, School of Psychology and Public Health, La Trobe University, and Siân McLean, Research fellow, La Trobe University, ‘Social media can damage body image – here’s how to counteract it,’ *The Conversation*, 26 September 2016
When we engage with social media we need to be critical consumers—that is, we need to assess and evaluate everything we read and see. This skill is crucial in determining the truth behind what is being portrayed. By taking steps to analyse images we may protect ourselves from the negative impacts social media may have on our identity.

1. Describe how social media contributes to issues regarding body image.

2. Explain why we need to be careful when observing images shared on social media.

3. Explain how you think social media has more of an influence on young people today than traditional media had in the past.

4. Explain the different strategies used to adjust images on social media.

5. With a partner, create an action plan titled ‘Ten Steps to Become a Positive Person’. The goal of this action plan is to use social media platforms to build positive body image and identity. Design a poster to present your action plan.

Some things to think about: When people use social media, what strategies can they use to assess and evaluate posts? How can they promote honest posting? What can they do to show acceptance of diversity?

Planning space
Health and our identity

Adolescence is a tumultuous time in our lives where we are still figuring out who we are and who we want to be seen as. The truth is that there are so many different contexts that influence what we perceive as desired characteristics that it can be a very confusing and awkward time in our lives.

Quite often young people with a poor sense of self and a feeling of limited personal strengths can be negatively influenced by unattainable and unrealistic media images. It is during this time that a variety of health concerns may become apparent in a young person’s life.

Select one of the following health concerns common among young people and explore how it can both affect, and be the result of, a poor or negative sense of identity. Furthermore, assess its impact on a person’s overall health, safety and wellbeing.

- depression
- anxiety
- anorexia
- bulimia
- overweight
- obesity
- body dysmorphia
- excessive exercise.

1. Research information to complete the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name the health condition.</th>
<th>Characteristics of the condition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify who this may affect.</td>
<td>Describe the impact it has on the body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predict some reasons why it starts.</td>
<td>Identify a public figure who has acknowledged having this condition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many young people experience this condition?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2 Using the information you have collected, examine what contributes to this being a prominent health concern for young people.

3 How could you support a young person in this situation to seek help and build a more positive identity?
COMMUNICATION OF POSITIVE IDENTITY

We live in a world where billions of people exist together, and we have the advantage of technology, which allows us to be connected and learn anything we want at the click of a button. We can easily access information on culture, religion, gender and identity, and how it all contributes to how we see ourselves.

We form our identity based on many contributing factors so it is easy to see why no one person is exactly the same. So, if we are all different, why are there so many problems surrounding the diverse expressions of identity?

**APPLY**
Affirmation statements

Communicate five affirmations about the presence of cultural diversity.

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

**LANGUAGE TIP**
Affirmation: a positive comment
Initiative

How can I promote and support the positive identity of others?

The above question is the starting point for this assessment. You will work in small groups to devise a strategy to support diversity of identity and culture. This strategy should demonstrate a promotion and acceptance of differences and create ways of encouraging inclusion.

Complete the following tasks to develop your promotion:

1. Conduct a survey of your class to analyse their experiences with diverse expressions of culture and religion.
2. Reflect on the presence of cultural diversity. Write a paragraph to summarise the findings from your survey.
3. Design a product or event that aims to positively promote diversity and acceptance of differences in your community.
4. Present this product or event to your class, explaining its objective, who it will involve and how it will promote and support diverse identity.
5. Evaluate how you feel this product will enhance the health and wellbeing of people.

Due date

Planning space

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### Marking criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marking criteria</th>
<th>The student...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advanced</strong></td>
<td>• creates an exceptional survey with well-structured and critical questions that provides excellent insight into experiences with diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• provides an excellent reflection of the survey findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• designs an exceptional product or event that successfully and appropriately promotes diversity in the school or community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• clearly and effectively communicates the product or event in their presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• gives an exceptional evaluation on the quality of the product, with excellent evidence of how the health and wellbeing of individuals should improve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accomplished</strong></td>
<td>• creates a high-quality survey with well-structured questions that provides strong insight into experiences with diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• provides an in-depth reflection of the survey findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• designs a high-quality product or event that successfully and appropriately promotes diversity in the school or community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• effectively communicates the product or event in their presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• gives a thorough evaluation on the quality of the product, with strong evidence of how the health and wellbeing of individuals should improve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Developing</strong></td>
<td>• creates a sound survey regarding diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• provides an adequate reflection of the survey findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• designs and presents a sound product or event that promotes diversity in the school or community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• effectively communicates the product or event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• gives a sound evaluation on the quality of the product, with adequate evidence of how the health and wellbeing of individuals should improve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beginning</strong></td>
<td>• creates a basic survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• provides a basic reflection of the survey findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• designs a product or event that promotes diversity in the school or community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• shows minimal effort to communicate the product or event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• gives a basic evaluation on the quality of the product or impacts on the health and wellbeing of individuals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REVISION

1 Define the following terms:
   - culture
   - sense of self
   - identity

2 Identify five factors that may contribute to an individual's perception of who they are.

3 Explain how family influences our identity.

4 Define the term empathy and provide an example of how it helps in a situation of discrimination.

5 Explain the detrimental impact European settlement has had on the cultural identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
6 Propose a simple strategy which will help to eliminate stereotypes associated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

7 Reflect on the presence of media in your own life. How does it propagate stereotypes?

8 In your opinion, should diversity in Australia be celebrated? Why/Why not?

**LANGUAGE TIP**

To **propagate** means to spread or promote an idea.
Personal evaluation

The most important thing I learnt in this unit was...

The things I liked best in this unit were...

Improvements that I could suggest for this unit include...
TEACHER FEEDBACK

Teacher’s comments

Student strengths

Improvement areas

Teacher’s comments
(1 = beginning, 2 = developing, 3 = accomplished, 4 = advanced)  

| Effort and application in class – contribution of ideas, listening to others, participation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Quality of responses in workbook – thoughtful and thorough responses demonstrating understanding |   |   |   |   |

Recommendations