

# Inclusivity



## Teacher's Guide (for Grades 4-6)

### CLASS ACTIVITIES

LOOK TO YOUTHSPEAK FOR SELF-CARE STRATEGIES, RESOURCES, INFO AND MUCH MORE!

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# Introduction

## PURPOSE

At YouthSpeak, our vision is to inspire and empower youth to live resilient and meaningful lives. Our mission is to assist youth facing challenges through leadership training and empowerment by sharing personal stories in order to promote mental health, well-being, empathy, and hope in assemblies and workshops. We aim to make sure no child or youth feels alone, and those who are struggling with mental health or challenges are connected to available support tools to improve their overall well-being.

The purpose of this teacher guide is to provide valuable and easy-to-follow awareness-building activities. This teacher's guide is a resource that teachers can use in their classrooms with their students. The activities in this teacher guide are exclusively for the junior division but may be modified for your unique classroom.

## SAFER SPACE

Please remind students that the classroom is a safer space and encourage them to have open discussions about mental health and wellness. Discussing these topics can bring up strong thoughts and feelings, and it is important to let them know that if students are experiencing any difficult feelings and need help, the teachers, administration, and other caring adults are always there to listen and support them. We also have an extensive resource list at the end of this guide that you can refer students to and use for yourself as well!

## HOW TO USE

This teacher guide has numerous activities that are designed to address anti-racism, anti-homophobia and neurodivergence awareness. They can be used in the classroom to help students understand and explore important topics on diversity and equity from a young age. Each activity has an estimated time frame, a material list at the top of the page and specific steps on how to run the activity. Teachers do not need to follow every step for each activity and can revise the steps to suit their unique classroom.

## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

In this resource package, students will:

- Develop **Social-Emotional Learning Skills** through peer discussions and activity-based learning which focuses on strengthening empathy and mental wellness.
- Apply **Language** skills to **Use Foundational Knowledge and Skills to Comprehend Texts, Analyze Cultural Elements of Texts, Produce Final Texts, and Publish and Present Texts** to a group of peers with the intention of further developing understanding.
- Create **Visual Arts** to deepen understanding of cultural and social differences that many experience due to race, ability, or class.
- Build **Healthy Relationships** through discussion and listening to understand shared stories.
- Form a positive and emotionally regulated classroom environment through class-based activities which strengthen students' emotional bonds.

## CURRICULUM SUMMARY

**Health and Physical Education:**

**A1. Social-Emotional Learning Skills:** A1.1 Identification and Management of Emotions; A1.4 Healthy Relationships; A1.5 Self-Awareness and Sense of Identity; A1.6 Critical and Creative Thinking

**B. Healthy Living:** D1.1 Supports - Injury Prevention, Emergencies, Bullying, Violence; D3.4 Stigma Awareness

**Language:** Oral Communication; Reading; Writing

**Visual Arts:** D1. Creating and Presenting; D2. Reflecting, Responding, and Analyzing; D3. Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts

# Allyship Awareness

## ORGANIZATION


TIME: 10-15 minutes

MATERIALS: Blackboard/whiteboard/chart paper, pencils, markers, pencil crayons

## OBJECTIVE

To brainstorm with students what allyship means to them. By the end of this activity, students will be able to describe what allyship means, the importance of being an ally, and provide different examples of how you can be an ally.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Show students a video explaining allyship.
  - a. Suggestion:  Kids Explain Allyship
2. Ask students to restate what allyship means. Here are some prompts:
  - a. If you could define allyship in one word, which word would you choose?
  - b. What is an example of a scenario in which someone is acting as an ally?
  - c. What were some misconceptions that you had about allyship prior to this activity?
  - d. How would you explain allyship to someone that had some of those misconceptions, to bring awareness and understanding?
3. Using a mind map on chart paper/Google slides, invite students to brainstorm the importance of being an ally.
4. Have the students get in small groups/breakout rooms and discuss different examples of how they could be an ally, whether in the community, globally or in their own classroom and school.
5. Have the students create posters that creatively list the different ways that they can be an ally.
6. Have groups present their poster to the class.
7. Afterwards, display student posters in the classroom, school hallway or Google classroom.

# Remarkable Role Models

## ORGANIZATION

TIME: 45 minutes - 1 hour

MATERIALS: Blackboard / whiteboard / projector / paper

## OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to diverse role models that have had major impacts on our society in the past and present. By the end of this activity, students will be aware of the amazing contributions that the role models have had on a national and international level. Additionally, the introduction of diverse role models has the ability to promote resilience among students of marginalized communities.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Have students choose a role model of their liking from the provided list:  
[Inspiring Role Models](#)
2. Students will research and present their role model either by creating a written description, poster, or digital slide (Powerpoint, Canva, etc.). Students will discuss why they chose this role model and why they inspire them.
3. Have students present their ideas to the class. A class discussion can also be initiated.

## MODIFIED VIRTUAL CLASSROOM INSTRUCTIONS

1. Have students choose a role model of their liking from the provided list:  
[Inspiring Role Models](#)
2. Explain to students the importance of each individual.
3. Ask students to create a Google Slide explaining what they found inspiring about the role model they have chosen. They can include pictures, and text either by typing or using the audio-to-text feature.
4. Follow up with a whole-class discussion: Encourage the students to share their role model and screen share their Google Slide creation.

Discussion prompts: What did you learn from your research?

# Walk a Mile in My Shoes

## ORGANIZATION

TIME: 20–30 minutes

MATERIALS: Blackboard / whiteboard / chart paper

## OBJECTIVE

In this activity, students will learn about empathy and consider perspectives and experiences that are different from their own. By the end of this activity, students will be able to describe empathy and understand the importance of learning about the diverse experiences and perspectives of others.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. As a class, read a poem that was written by a person from a marginalized community that describes a perspective that might be different to students. For example, a poem where the author describes feeling isolated and has had opportunities taken away from them or is treated differently due to the color of their skin, sexual orientation, ability, etc. Feel free to use poems you find, or you could use:
  - Maya Angelou: Alone <https://poets.org/poem/alone>
  - Maya Angelou: Human Family <https://allpoetry.com/Human-Family>
2. As a class, discuss the themes of the text, and the different feelings expressed by the author. Write student ideas on chart paper.
3. As a class, discuss the idea of putting themselves in someone else's shoes. Provide examples that are relatable to the students.
4. In small groups, the students can discuss the different perspectives, and compare them to their lives and experiences.

# Opposing Opportunities

## ORGANIZATION

TIME: 30–40 minutes

MATERIALS: Popsicle Sticks, Glue, Instruction Sheets

## OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to the concept of inequality with the introduction of imposed unequal barriers. This is done by students trying to assemble something, but each group is given different instructions (some more challenging than others). By the end of this activity, students will have a better understanding of the frustrations that accompany inequality.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Separate the class into groups.
2. Give each group their respective popsicle sticks, glue and instruction sheets. 3 different instruction sheets are provided in the following pages labeled: 1, 2, and 3. Start with instruction sheet 1. After students complete sheet 1, repeat with instructions 2, then 3.
3. Debrief with the class after the activity. Have them explain why this activity was fair or unfair.
4. Link the exercise to systemic inequalities that continue to persist. Additionally, discuss how skin color, neurodivergence, disabilities, or other diverse qualities can affect one's ability to equally participate in society due to systemic barriers.

## Supplies:

- Large craft sticks
- Normal sized craft sticks
- Wooden clothespins
- Cardstock
- Markers
- Glue
- Googly eyes

## Instruction Set 1

Step 1. Cut a rectangular piece of cardstock, just tall enough for 1 large and 2 normal sized craft sticks. Glue 1 large craft stick to the bottom of the cardstock lengthwise. Glue 2 normal craft sticks on top, also lengthwise.

Step 2. On the end of the large craft stick, glue a googly eye and draw a mouth.

Step 3. With the cardstock, cut a semicircle. It should be the length of the large craft stick. On the rounded edge, cut spikes and a tail for the dino. Feel free to color this any way you'd like.

Step 4. Place your cardstock spikes behind your craft stick body. Use wooden clips and clip them together from the bottom, as high as they will go. The wooden clips will be the legs.



## Instruction Set 2

Step 1. Cut a rectangular piece of \_\_\_\_\_, just tall enough for 1 large and 2 normal sized craft \_\_\_\_\_ Glue 1 \_\_\_\_\_ stick to the bottom of the cardstock lengthwise. \_\_\_\_\_ craft sticks on top, also lengthwise.

Step 2. On the end of the large \_\_\_\_\_, glue a googly eye mouth.

Step 3. With the cardstock, cut a \_\_\_\_\_. It should be the length of the large craft stick. On the rounded edge, \_\_\_\_\_ spikes and a tail for \_\_\_\_\_. Feel free to \_\_\_\_\_ this any \_\_\_\_\_ like.

Step 4. \_\_\_\_\_ your cardstock spikes \_\_\_\_\_ your craft stick body. Use clips and \_\_\_\_\_ together from the bottom, as high as \_\_\_\_\_. The wooden clips will

## Instruction Set 3

Step 1. Cut a rectangular piece of cardstock, just tall enough for 1 large and 2 normal sized craft sticks. Glue 1 large craft stick to the bottom of the cardstock lengthwise. Glue 2 normal craft sticks on top, also lengthwise.

Step 2. On the end of the large craft stick, glue a googly eye and draw a mouth.

Step 3. With the cardstock, cut a semicircle. It should be the length of the large craft stick. On the rounded edge, cut spikes and a tail for the dino. Feel free to color this any way you'd like.

Step 4. Place your cardstock spikes behind your craft stick body. Use wooden clips and clip them together from the bottom, as high as they will go. The wooden clips will be the legs.

# Powerful Paper

## ORGANIZATION

TIME: 10–15 minutes

MATERIALS: Paper, Recycling Bins

## OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to the concept of inequality vs. equity, by having students try to get a piece of paper in the recycling bin despite some being closer to the bin than others. By the end of this activity, students will better understand the concept of inequality and will be able to better visualize how inequality can severely impact those who experience it.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place a recycling bin or two at the front of the classroom.
2. Have students either stand in rows or set the desks in rows. Create at least 3 different rows of students with some closer to the recycling bin and others further behind.
3. Give each student a few sheets of paper. Have students crumple their paper into paper balls.
4. Instruct all students, despite being placed in different rows, to try and throw their paper balls in the recycling bin at the same time.
5. Have students rotate to a different row. Repeat steps 2–4.
6. Some students in the back rows should have more difficulty than students in the front rows. Debrief with students about how this is unfair and encourage them to express how they felt during the activity.
7. Relate the organization of rows to how inequalities and inequities manifest in society as well as how this impacts marginalized communities.
  - a. Link the activity with concepts of privilege, racism, homophobia and inequality.

# Gender Box

## ORGANIZATION

TIME: 30-40 minutes

MATERIALS: paper and writing utensil

## OBJECTIVE

Teach students to become aware of the gender and identity stereotypes that are implemented and taught to us from a young age. This activity will allow students to unlearn and address these gender stereotypes when they are presented to them.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask the class to draw two boxes with "girl" and "boy" written into each one.
2. Once that is completed, ask students to listen to the sorting questions/statements below and then put the number in the box they feel best suited. The purpose of this is to view how students subscribe to certain stereotypes and not others.

### Sorting Questions/Statements:

- a. A person who enjoys playing sports and being outside. Have students put the number 1 in the girl or boy box.
- b. A person who wears dresses and skirts. Have students put the number 2 in the girl or boy box.
- c. A person who takes a long time to get ready and cares a lot about looking good when going out. Have students put the number 3 in the girl or boy box.
- d. An individual who likes growing their hair out to be long instead of short. Have students put the number 4 in the girl or boy box.
- e. This person isn't good at creative activities (drawing, painting, etc.) but is really good at math & sciences. Have students put the number 5 in the girl or boy box.
- f. This person likes to play/collect trucks & legos. Have students put the number 6 in the girl or boy box.
- g. A person who likes to play video games. Have students put the number 7 in the girl or boy box.

- h. A person who likes the colors pink & purple. Have students put the number 8 in the girl or boy box.
3. Explain to students that the statements are gender stereotypes. Try this:
  - i. Stereotypes can be made about girls and boys. For example, pink is only for girls and blue is for boys. This is a gender stereotype. Stereotypes are simple ideas and thoughts that many people may believe are true about a group of people but is actually not true.
4. Ask students to think about their answers to the statements and what made them put the numbers in the box that they did.
5. Follow up with these discussion questions:
  - a. What would happen if boys and girls did not follow these stereotypes?
  - b. What would happen if a boy did something that was meant for girls? Or if a girl did something that was meant for boys?
6. Let students know that they do not have to follow these gender stereotypes and that they can make their own path. Suggestions to use:
  - a. None of us can fit perfectly inside these boxes because we're all different and have many interests.
  - b. The statements that were said are not specifically for girls or boys, but just a list of interests, preferences, and actions for everybody.

YouTube video suggestion to show: Gender roles & stereotypes

 [Gender Roles and Stereotypes](#)

# Diverse Picture Books To Check Out

## Picture Books

- *Skit-Scat Raggedy Cat* by Roxane Orgill
- *Nokum is My Teacher* by David Bouchard
- *Buzzing with Questions* by Janice Harrington
- *The Elders are Watching* by David Bouchard
- *Four Feet, Two Sandals* by Karen Lynn Williams and Khadra Mohammed
- *My Two Blankets* by Irena Kobald and Freya Blackwood
- *I Am Not a Number* by Jenny Kay Dupuis and Kathy Kacer

## Chapter Books

- *The Night Diary* by Veera Hiranandani
- *Twintuition Series* by Tia and Tamera Mowry
- *Shai & Emmie Star in Series* by Quvenzhane Wallis
- *Pet* by Akwaeke Emezi
- *Patron Saints of Nothing* by Randy Ribay
- *March Series* by John Lewis
- *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* by Erika L. Sánchez

# Book Lists to Check Out

19 Awesome Children's Books Where Black Characters Take the Lead

<https://www.healthline.com/health/parenting/best-childrens-books-with-black-characters>

Books with Black Characters for Kids 8-12

<https://www.harpercollins.com/blogs/harperkids/books-black-characters>

Diverse Books: Kids-Middle Grades to Tween

<https://www.tinybooksonline.com/diverse-books-kids-middle-grades-tween>

Diverse Books for Tweens and Teens Written by #OwnVoices Authors

<https://www.readbrightly.com/diverse-books-tweens-teens-written-voices-authors/>

50 Children's Books That Celebrate Diversity

<https://theeverymom.com/diverse-childrens-books/>

# Resources

- **Kids Help Phone:** Text “CONNECT” to 686868 (24/7 support)  
<https://kidshelpphone.ca/>
- **Suicide Crisis Helpline:** Text or call 9-8-8:  
24/7 for calls and texts, Languages: English and French Learn more
- **One Stop Talk Ontario:** Free therapy for youth age 0-17 / 1 855 416 8255
- **Therapy for Black Girls:** Find trusted, culturally competent therapists that know *your* feelings and can help navigate being a strong, black woman. <https://therapyforblackgirls.com/>
- **LGBT Youthline:** A 2SLGBTQ+ youth-led organization that affirms and supports the experiences of youth (29 and under) across Ontario. Provides anonymous peer support, referrals and resources so youth can make informed decisions.  
[www.youthline.ca](http://www.youthline.ca) / 647-694-4275
- **Black Youth Helpline:** Black youth specific service, positioned and resourced to promote access to professional, culturally appropriate support for youth, families and schools.  
<https://blackyouth.ca/> +1416-285-9944 / +1833-294-8650
- **Distress Centres of Greater Toronto:** Service agency dedicated to providing emotional support, crisis intervention, and suicide prevention to people in distress. Offered in English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Portuguese, Spanish, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu.  
[www.dcoqt.com](http://www.dcoqt.com) / 416-408-4375
- **Hong Fook:** East & Southeast Asian health agency that provides a continuum of mental health services covering the spectrum from “promoting wellness” to “managing illness” in Cambodian, Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin), Korean, Vietnamese and English.  
[www.hongfook.ca](http://www.hongfook.ca) / counselling@hongfook.ca



- **Sikh Family Centre:** Non-emergency helpline servicing the Sikh Community in Canada in Punjabi and English  
[www.sikhfamilyhelpline.com](http://www.sikhfamilyhelpline.com) / 1-800-551-9128
- **South Asian Helpline:** Provides health care and social services to South Asian and all other communities. Offers culturally and linguistically appropriate services for South Asian men, women, seniors and youth, and other communities.  
[www.sachss.ca](http://www.sachss.ca) / 647-523-6380
- **Naseeha:** Provides mental health support through a confidential helpline (Text and call open 7 days a week from 12 pm to 3 am) and counseling service for Muslim and non-Muslim Youth.  
[www.naseeha.org](http://www.naseeha.org) / 1-866-627-3342
- **Chai Lifeline Canada:** Provides support in the immediate aftermath of a sudden crisis, tragedy, or traumatic event that occurs in Toronto's Jewish Community.  
[www.chailifelinecanada.org/crisis-intervention](http://www.chailifelinecanada.org/crisis-intervention) / 1 (800) 556-6238
- **Hope for Wellness:** Helpline for all Indigenous people across Canada. Experienced and culturally competent counselors are reachable by telephone and online 'chat' 24 hours a day, 7 days a week  
[www.hopeforwellness.ca](http://www.hopeforwellness.ca) / 1-855-242-3310
- **Learning Disabilities ON:** Offers many resources, services, information, venues and products designed to help people with LDs and ADHD, as well as parents, teachers, and other professionals.  
[www.Ldao.ca](http://www.Ldao.ca) / 416-929-4311
- **310 COPE:** If you or someone you know is in crisis or requires immediate support, please contact 310-COPE at 1-855-310-COPE (2673) or visit your nearest emergency department
- **Violence Against Women:** Provides free, confidential and anonymous crisis counseling, emotional support, information and referrals via telephone in up to 200+ languages. [www.awhl.org](http://www.awhl.org) / 1-866-863-0511
- **Community Resources for Immigrant and Refugee Youth:** A website containing various community service resources for immigrant and refugee youth  
[www.kidsnewtocanada.ca/health-promotion/youth-resources](http://www.kidsnewtocanada.ca/health-promotion/youth-resources)

- **Refugee Healthline:** Refugees can connect with health care providers who deliver transitional health care and services, including primary care, specialist care and mental health supports. 1-866-286-4770
- **Autistic Self-Advocacy Network (ASAN):** to empower autistic people across the world to take control of their own lives through public policy advocacy, the development of autistic cultural activities, and leadership training for autistic self-advocates.  
<https://autisticadvocacy.org/>

# Resources for Teachers

- **Teacher mental health support:** Contains: helpful apps, articles focusing on educator mental well-being, and other resources written, created and produced by educators or mental health experts for educators and school staff.  
[teach.com/resources/mental-health-resources-teachers-school-staff/#main-body-content](https://www.teach.com/resources/mental-health-resources-teachers-school-staff/#main-body-content)
- **Ontario teacher's federation:** Created by the Ontario Teachers Federation that offers strategies and suggestions for balancing your personal and professional life, ensuring your personal wellness, and developing effective time management strategies.  
[survivethrive.on.ca/article-category/teacher-wellbeing/](https://www.survivethrive.on.ca/article-category/teacher-wellbeing/)
- **CMHO Teacher Resources:** Tips on early identification and intervention; practical suggestions on how to accommodate and respond to students with mental health problems; and information on combating stigma in the classroom. [cmho.org/teacher-resources/](https://www.cmho.org/teacher-resources/)
- **Jack.org Educator Hub:** A collection of resources, student plans, lessons, and activities to help educators bring mental health promotion education to their classrooms. <https://edhub.jack.org/>
- **Kids Help Phone:** A collection of articles, tools and tips from Kids Help Phone to help parents, caregivers, and educators support young people [kidshelpphone.ca/get-involved/programs-resources/resources-for-caring-adults/](https://www.kidshelpphone.ca/get-involved/programs-resources/resources-for-caring-adults/)
- **Gender Health & Identity:** Resources to answer questions you may have on sex, gender and sexual orientation as well as how to find support and resources when you need them.  
[teens.aboutkidshealth.ca/adolescenthealth?topic=gender](https://www.teens.aboutkidshealth.ca/adolescenthealth?topic=gender)
- **Parent Peer Support Chapters by Children's mental health ontario (CMHO):** Parent support chapters organized by CMHO provides regular meetings across Ontario where parents and caregivers can connect with others, feel heard and get help navigating the child and youth mental health system [www.family.cmho.org/peer-support-chapters/](https://www.family.cmho.org/peer-support-chapters/)

- **Connexontario:** ConnexOntario provides free and confidential health services information for people experiencing problems with alcohol and drugs, mental illness or gambling by connecting them with services in their area. [www.connexontario.ca](http://www.connexontario.ca) / 1-866-531-2600

## Apps for Students:

- **Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame:** This app teaches young students how to calm down and solve everyday challenges.
- **Calm:** This app teaches activities to help you sleep, breathe and relax.
- **Headspace:** Options customized for three age groups—under 5, 6-8, and 9-12. Plus, parents can use the adult version to practice breathing alongside their child.
- **HelloMind:** Young worriers can significantly benefit from HelloMind, an app which helps change negative thought patterns.
- **Smiling Mind:** It is designed to help youth through the stresses, and challenges of daily life. It offers programs for a variety of age groups, including 7-9, 10-12, 13-15, 16-18 and adults.
- **MindShift:** Scientifically proven strategies based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to help you learn to relax and be mindful, develop more effective ways of thinking, and use active steps to take charge of your anxiety.
- Check out <https://onemindpsyberguide.org/> for more apps and digital health resources reviewed by mental health experts



## Want to Get Involved, Help Empower Youth and Inspire Change?

Here are some ways you can support:

Join an event committee

Attend our events

Join our Board of Directors

Follow us on social media!

@YouthSpeakCan     

### Donate to Canada Helps

Visit our website [www.youthspeak.ca](http://www.youthspeak.ca) and click the "Donate" Button on the homepage

### Volunteer with Us!

Share your special skills with our team of youth to help and perform administrative tasks that are important behind-the-scenes work.

Contact us at: [www.youthspeak.ca](http://www.youthspeak.ca) / 905-967-0604 /  
email: [una@youthspeak.ca](mailto:una@youthspeak.ca)