# Identity and belonging: lesson plan

**Learning objectives**

By the end of these activities children and young people will be able to:

* Think critically about what makes us who we are
* Embrace multiple perspectives and explore how they perceive, and might be perceived by, others
* Understand the harmful effects of stigma
* Reflect on their own assumptions about migration
* Recognise interconnections and shared humanity

**Starter: what makes me who I am?**

1. Give learners (individually) an outline of a person on a sheet of A4 (they can draw their own if modelled). Ask them to use the inside of their outline and show with pictures or words, all of the things that make up their identity – what makes them who they are? *[Identity is very personal and there are no right or wrong answers. It is the things (events, experiences, relationships, preferences, abilities, likes etc that make us who we are). Ensure learners understand the term identity, but be careful not to give them answers.]*
2. When they have completed their individual identities, allocate learners into pairs. In their pair learner A asks learner B “*what do you think makes me who I am?” and records their responses around the edge* of their outline. They then swap roles. *[Learners should be reminded to be respectful, but honest with their ideas. The learner asking should not respond at this stage, but simply record the ideas from their peers. You may wish to model this for learners, by completing your own identity sheet and then asking the question to them about how they see you.]*

**Knowledge building: how I see others; how they see me**

1. Staying in their pairs, ask learners to reflect together on the results of the first activity. These prompts might be useful (you could display them):
* *How did the way my partner saw me differ from how I saw myself?*
* *How did the way I saw my partner differ from how they see themselves?*
* *Why might there be differences?*
1. Lead a short whole-group debrief. What have they learned? The key learning to try and draw out here is that we often see other people differently to how they see themselves. Some of what we see may be the same, but we also make judgements about people (sometimes without even knowing). These judgements can be useful – to keep us safe for example, but they can sometimes be unfair, hurtful, or even harmful to others.
2. At their worst, judgements can lead to ‘stigma’. Ask learners if they know what this means and invite responses. Display the following definition of stigma

***Stigma:*** *treating individuals or groups differently due to negative and often unfair beliefs and attitudes about them.*

Building on their responses and the definition above, ask learners if they can identify examples or types of stigma. *[This could be sensitive for some learners due to direct experience so care should be taken.]*

If support is needed, then the following could be given as examples of stigma:

**Stigma because of how people look:** race, weight, body markings (i.e. burns or scars), disability etc;

**Stigma because of how people act:** mental illness, speech disorder, addictions etc;

**Stigma because of people’s origins or beliefs:** nationality, ethnicity, language, religion etc.

1. Once you are happy that learners have understood stigma and its possible forms, bring them together to focus on the question *“why do people stigmatise others?”* Allow them to discuss this for a few moments and then invite responses. Well established reasons given for stigma include:
* Fear of the unknown
* Misinformation or misunderstanding about a particular issue
* Prejudices from peers and/or family (i.e. negative, pre-conceived opinions about someone or a group of people)
* Uncertainty about how to communicate (i.e. language or cultural barriers)
* Difference (perhaps from the dominant norm)

**Raising awareness: why stigma matters – the case of migrant communities**

1. If it has not come up in 5 and 6 above then prompt the discussion to move forwards by asking *“why does stigma matter?”* and support their responses. If they have addressed this then draw on that learning. Key reasons include:
* can lead to people discriminating against (treating differently) certain individuals/groups;
* can hurt people’s emotional wellbeing (their confidence, happiness, peace of mind etc);
* can damage a sense of community and shared humanity (that we are all humans no matter our differences);
* can develop into more serious tensions.
1. Explain that the **harmful effects of stigma** can be looked at through an example. In this case the stigma that migrants may experience when arriving in a new community. This is something that happens in many countries, including in the UK. Begin by asking what a migrant is? Record the ideas to come back to later.
2. Explore migration further through activity called “We all come from somewhere”. You will need a large space for this. A hall or outside space would be ideal, but a room can work with care. This activity relies on some basic geographic knowledge so you may want to have an atlas handy *[note the idea is more important than the accuracy]*.

Use the space you have and, to begin with, imagine it is a map of the UK. Help learners to locate themselves in the space by pointing out a few places (e.g. London is over there by XX, over here is Wales, up there is Scotland, and here is Northern Ireland). Explain that you will ask learners a series of questions and they must move around the imagined map to answer them. **They can extend the map beyond the UK** so be sure not to make the UK too big. [if space becomes an issue then learners can stand clearly off the UK and you can ask them where they are even if physically, they cannot place themselves there.]

The questions:

* Where are we right now? [they move to the location you are in]
* Where were you born? [they move to that place]
* Where was your mother/father born? [they move to that place]
* Where was your grandmother/grandfather born? [they move to that place]

Dependent on the make up of your learners you will have different responses. *[Note that some learners may not know this. It could always be set as a homework activity, perhaps with a blank map of the world to trace other family roots as well.]* In most groups there will be some movement, even if just within the UK. The key to draw out is that we all come from somewhere and that migration is an experience many people and communities share. The common factor is movement, whether local, regional or international. *[In the unlikely event that there is no movement at all, the learning is that if people have not moved a great deal or encountered people who have, then their views and ideas may be very limited. This can lead to fear or misunderstandings and these can lead to stigma.]*

1. Whilst learners are still in the open space ask them to form into groups and think about why people might move or migrate. Give each group a set of [**Migration Story Cards**](http://www.redcross.org.uk/~/media/BritishRedCross/Documents/What%20we%20do/Teaching%20resources/Lesson%20plans/Identity%20and%20belonging%20-%20Story%20cards.docx). Create an imaginary migration line in the open space. At one end of the line is ‘forced to migrate’ and at the other end is ‘chose to migrate’. Ask learners to review each card and decide where to place it on the line, remembering there is the space between the two extremes.

Review the placement of the cards and enable discussion around different responses, drawing out their reasoning.

The key learning here is that ‘migrant’ or ‘migration’ covers a range of different situations as shown in the cards.

**Extension/clarification exercise:** There are many terms used when discussing migration and migrants. These can be confusing. This short [**Migration Terms matching activity**](http://www.redcross.org.uk/~/media/BritishRedCross/Documents/What%20we%20do/Teaching%20resources/Lesson%20plans/Identity%20and%20belonging%20-%20Matching%20terms.docx) could be done in groups or as a whole group and helps to clarify the different terms that learners may come across.

**Taking action: putting yourself in their shoes**

1. Share with learners that they may never know what it is like to have to leave everything they know and arrive in a strange place – this is the experience for some refugees or asylum seekers *[obvious care needed if there are learners with that experience in the room, activities can be adapted to sensitively draw on that experience if the learner is comfortable to share]*.

What we can do however is try and **empathise - imagine how it must feel** to leave your home, friends, family and all you are familiar with. Ask learners to close their eyes and think quietly for a couple of minutes about how this would feel.

If they need support to engage with their feelings then learners could be prompted to think about the things they might have to leave – friends, pets, favourite places, family members, photos, belongings, home etc – how might that make them feel?

When they are ready ask them to turn to a new partner and share their feelings. Give them a few minutes before inviting some ideas to be shared with all. Invite group reflection with prompts such as *‘how many others felt similar to XX?’* or *‘did anyone have very different feelings to XX?’* *[note that some might see it as exciting or adventurous and that is a real possibility also. How would it feel to then face stigma?]*

1. There are a number of fiction and picture books that explore migration, stigma and discrimination in different ways. You can find a list of recommended books with brief descriptions [**here**](http://www.redcross.org.uk/~/media/BritishRedCross/Documents/What%20we%20do/Teaching%20resources/Lesson%20plans/Identity%20and%20belonging%20-%20Reading%20list.docx).

An extract from one of these books called Boy Overboard by Morris Gleitzman is reproduced[**here**](http://www.redcross.org.uk/~/media/BritishRedCross/Documents/What%20we%20do/Teaching%20resources/Lesson%20plans/Identity%20and%20belonging%20-%20Boy%20overboard.docx) for you to read aloud. Using stories is a powerful way to help learners build empathy and understanding – in this case about how two children feel as they are fleeing their home for Australia. After you have read the extract use some of the following discussion prompts or activity ideas to explore feelings and empathy.

**Discussion prompts:**

What concerns might you have for Jamal and Bibi? [some ideas might include: lack of food, water… she is ill with fever…he forgets her birthday.. perhaps their own government has not been kind and caring…]

What extra information do you want to know? [You might want to draw on how information helps us understand people better? What about when we don’t have all of the information?]

How do you think Jamal and Bibi will feel if they reach Australia?

What do you think might happen to them if they reach Australia?

If Jamal and Bibi arrived in your school tomorrow, what would you do? What would you say?

If you were Jamal’s teacher, or had been asked to look after him, and experienced people discriminating against him, how would you deal with this? [this may include supporting Jamal, talking to those involved, or informing someone else to help deal with the issue.]

**Activity ideas:**

**Role play in pairs:** Person A is a journalist reporting on a boat of asylum seekers that has arrived in Australia. Person B is Jamal or Bibi and is answering their questions. Ask learners to think about the questions they might ask and the answers they might give.

**Paired or individual thinking:** Put yourself in the position of Jamal or Bibi. Try and imagine how they must be feeling. Divide a page into ‘hopes’ and ‘fears’ and note your ideas to share with others.

**Group positive thinking:** Jamal believes that the Australian government will be “kind and caring” and gives an example of what they might do to look after people. How could you look after Jamal?

**Taking action: Making people welcome**

1. Discuss with learners that although they may not have been a migrant (like some of the people on the story cards) most will have experienced being somewhere different and perhaps unfamiliar. Examples might include:
* Moving to a different place
* Changing schools
* Going on holiday to somewhere different

Can they remember how they felt? What made them feel welcome or unwelcome in that situation? Ask them to build on their own experience to think about what might make migrants welcome or unwelcome. Use the [**writing frame**](http://www.redcross.org.uk/~/media/BritishRedCross/Documents/What%20we%20do/Teaching%20resources/Lesson%20plans/Identity%20and%20belonging%20-%20Welcome%20writing%20frame.docx) to help them.

Divide the learners into two groups - ‘welcome’ and ‘unwelcome’ – and ask them to write a short poem to share their perspective. Try to include the feelings and words they have been using so far. Invite some learners to share their completed poems for group comment and reflection.

**Closing reflections: a shared humanity**

1. A key learning objective in these activities is to encourage anti-stigmatising behaviour and greater understanding of our shared humanity. This can help to avoid the harmful effects of discrimination. To help learners reflect on this you could use one of the following closing ideas:
2. Ask learners to **research Malala Yousafzai** as an example of a young person who is a high profile asylum seeker from Pakistan now living in Birmingham in the UK. If you prefer you could link them to this summary of her story on the BBC [insert link to <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-24379018>] *[please ensure you read the story first to satisfy yourself that it is suitable, or extract the story and remove any inappropriate content].* Ask learners to read Malala’s story and identify examples of stigma, discrimination, migration, welcome, unwelcome, help etc that appear in the story.
3. A quiet individual activity uses a [**humanitarian identity frame**](http://www.redcross.org.uk/~/media/BritishRedCross/Documents/What%20we%20do/Teaching%20resources/Lesson%20plans/Identity%20and%20belonging%20-%20Identity%20frame.docx) that encourages learners to reflect on their individual and collective identity, celebrating shared humanity and positive difference.