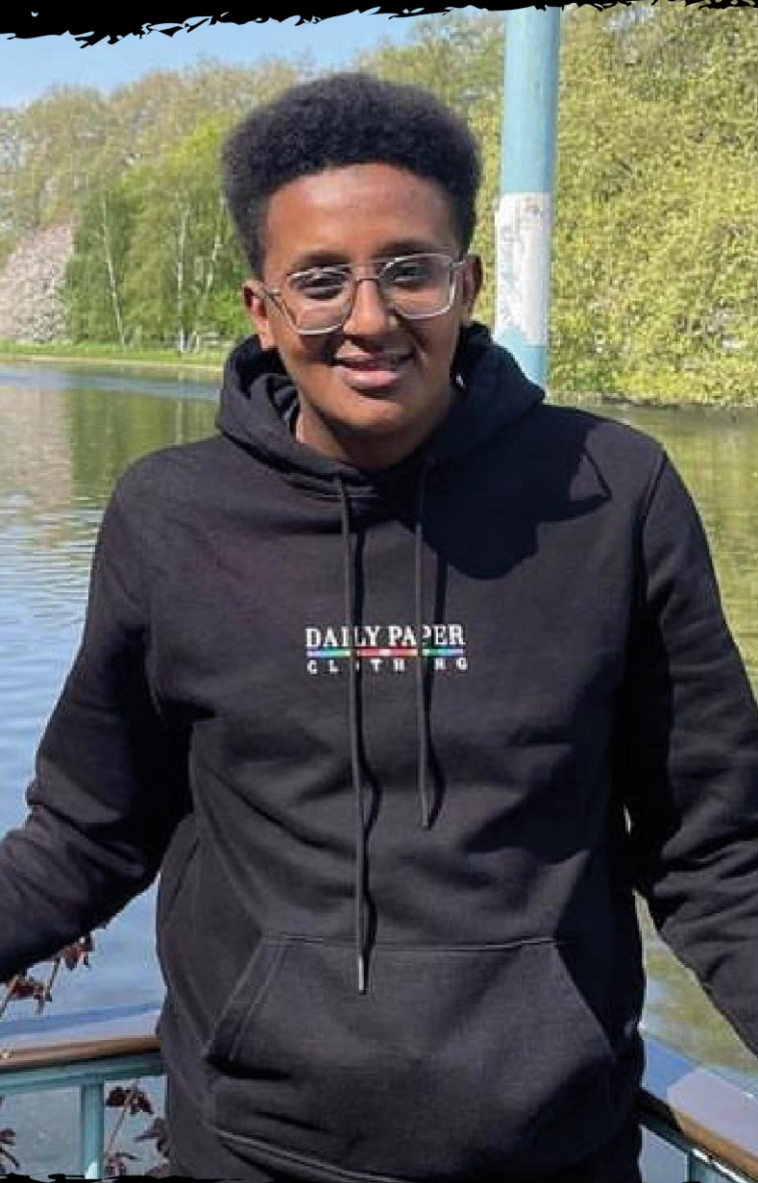


Neurodiversity Is A Superpower



With Abz Abby and Jeremy Lyons

MALK
FLUENCERS



Ages: 11-14, 14-16 & 16-18

Time: 60 minutes

Materials: 'Put a finger down'
'What Makes Me Unique'

Preparation

In preparation for this session, you can print out the resources attached to enhance the experience for the students – but it is not necessary to complete the lesson.

Due to the sensitive nature of this topic, it's important to be mindful throughout this session of students that may have personal experience, whether it's with themselves or family/friends.

This lesson plan has been developed in partnership with Abz Abby & Jeremy Lyons, Make Life Kind's Neurodiversity Speakers, adapted from the presentations they can offer.

For more information about Make Life Kind, our Diversity speakers, and how we're making a change in education - go to www.makelifekind.co.uk/about

Introducing the 'Safe Space'

Creating a safe space is crucial when delivering this lesson, and ensuring the classroom is an inclusive environment. Encouraging the students to be respectful and aware, and making sure you are sensitive when it goes to discussion and sharing individual's experiences and opinions.

Explain to the class that nobody will be judged on their answers or opinions, and make it clear that it's okay to say the wrong thing, or question things - as long as we learn and correct them where needed. Respect is the key.

At Make Life Kind, we encourage an open and honest approach to discussing these 'stigmatised topics' – and want that to extend to your classroom and students.

Ice Breaker (5-10 minutes)

'PUT A FINGER DOWN' / BINGO CHALLENGE

This ice breaker is designed to get the students to start thinking about neurodiversity, and what it might mean to them and others. It's a great way to warm up and ease the students into the more difficult subjects.

Depending on the age of the group and the vulnerability – you could offer the option to make it a more active game, or alternatively make it anonymous. If they are reluctant to share their personal experiences, offering an option to comment anonymously would work best.

Give students the option to either:

- Use their hand and put fingers down after each statement
- Draw a 'bingo' style grid and cross out as they go
- Give out post it notes (can be kept for a later discussion)

Statements:

- 1) If you know what neurodiversity means**
- 2) If you've been bullied in school**
- 3) If you know anybody with ADHD, Autism or a neurological difference.**
- 4) If you've made fun of somebody for being different**
- 5) If you know what a stereotype is**
- 6) If you know what being inclusive means**
- 7) If you think difference is a good thing**
- 8) If you like being different**
- 9) If you've felt sad because of someone at school**

What is Neurodiversity (10 Mins)

Begin by asking the students what they think Neurodiversity is, and discuss in small groups / on their tables. Allow 5 minutes for discussion and then begin the next section.

So, let's learn a bit about what neurodiversity is and the importance of developing our understanding...

“Neurodiversity is a word used to describe the different thinking styles that affect how people communicate with the world around them.” ([BBC Newsround](#))

It comes from the words: **NEUROLOGICAL**, which means things that affect our brains, and **DIVERSITY**, which means difference.

Being ‘Neurodiverse’ includes people who have condition such as:

- **Autism**
- **ADHD**
- **Dyslexia**
- **Dyspraxia**
- **Dyscalculia**
- **Tourettes**

If you are Neurodiverse, or know someone who is, what do you/they experience? Here’s some examples:

- **Find it hard to concentrate**
- **Difficulty sitting still**
- **Overwhelm from sensory overload**
- **Social anxiety**
- **Mood disorder**
- **Challenges reading and writing**
- **What else?**

Did you know?

15-20% of people living in the world are thought to have a neuro-difference.

Challenging Stigmas

The first part of this activity is to explain what stereotypes and stigmas in relation neurodiversity (and difference) are to the group.

A stereotype is an assumption about what someone will be like / what they will do / how they behave... based on who they are or their behaviour.

Bullying occurs a lot of the time because people have stereotypical views of groups, and have not learned properly about the importance and positivity of difference and inclusion.

Recognising stereotypes activity (10 mins)

Ask the class if they can think of an example of a stereotype of a person / animal etc

(Prompt)... a stereotype is normally a negative thought / feeling about a group of people, or thing.

(Help)... an example could be:

- Girls should just play with dolls / boys should just play with trucks
- Sharks are aggressive creatures and scary - only like the film 'jaws!'
- In the film Aladdin... the evil characters have non-american accents (Jafar and Gazeem) whereas the other arabic characters speak american

... in terms of Neurodiversity, it could be examples of bias based gender:

- Labelling boys who are neurodiverse as 'aggressive and rude'
- Under diagnosis for girls, which leads to masking (actions or coping strategies that individuals use to hide their thoughts, emotions and challenges)

Get them to discuss their answers and review why we think these things/ why others think these things and why it's wrong.

Celebrating Difference (20 mins)

It's important for us all to talk about our differences! We need to be open, welcoming and inclusive to everyone, especially in the classroom.

To create inclusive spaces, it's important to know how to support Neurodiverse students, for other students (and staff).

Tips to make everyone feel included:

- Give students the opportunity to highlight 'difference' through strengths and well as challenges, like creativity and share special interests
- 1-1 TA to provide safe spaces to disclose needs and create wellbeing plan
- Don't single out the SEND students or put in serrated spaces (back of class)
- Ally/buddy system to watch out for bullying
- Don't tease or make fun of anyone in your class that does things differently
- Be kind, understanding and encouraging
- **ASK** students what might help them

What else can we suggest?

Examples of tools for Neurodivergent students: (everyone is different - these will not work for every student)

- Reasonable adjustments
- Time management tools
- Loops
- Adjustable text tools
- Fidget spinners
- Visual reading guides
- Sensory break out rooms
- Sensory ear defenders

Celebrating Difference Cont.

Celebrating Our Differences activity (10 mins)

In small groups, get the students to write down their differences and then you can discuss them as a whole class. Use the printout called 'what makes me unique' and display it in the classroom!

Prompts:

- Activities you enjoy
- Songs you like
- Hair colour
- Skin colour
- Eye colour
- Subject that they like
- Favourite film/ tv show

Positive Quote - "Your difference is your superpower!"

Encourage the class to consider their uniqueness, and how it makes you YOU. Difference is a good thing!

What Makes Me Unique?



A large rectangular box containing six horizontal dashed lines for writing.



PUT A FINGER DOWN IF..

<p>If you know what neurodiversity means</p>	<p>If you've been bullied in school</p>	<p>If you know anybody with ADHD, autism, or a neurological difference</p>
<p>If you've made fun of somebody for being different</p>	<p>If you know what a stereotype is</p>	<p>If you know what being inclusive means</p>
<p>If you think difference is a good thing</p>	<p>If you like being different</p>	<p>If you've felt sad because of someone at school</p>