



Off-field curriculum guide

**Mental
Health**

Years 5 – 6

Session Overview

The purpose of these lesson plans is to provide educators with a vehicle to explore and discuss stereotypes and perceptions around three main societal strands, using AFL/AFLW as a lens.

All lesson plans are linked to the Australian Curriculum and address the following key themes and general capabilities

- › Cultural and Ethical understanding
- › Identity and Belonging
- › Health and Physical Wellbeing
- › Adversity

Curriculum/General Capabilities

- › Literacy
- › Media Studies
- › Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Capability
- › Critical and Creative Thinking Personal and Social Capability
- › Ethical Understanding
- › Intercultural Understanding
- › Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

Resource

This education resource comprises of three complete units of work, each broken into three one-hour sessions, linked to the Australian Curriculum, including methods for assessment.

Considerations

Consider any personal sensitivity amongst students. You could inform students that you will be exploring some controversial subject matter and it is not your intention to upset anyone but if anyone is affected during the class they should feel free to raise their hand and ask to speak with you about how they are feeling.

Be aware that some students may express negative attitudes. It is important to allow them to voice their views and they should be explored, but this should be followed by clearly stating that as a community of learners, you don't tolerate offensive and harmful attitudes and promote the importance of respect towards difference.

Years 5 – 6

Mental Health

Unit One

Mental Health

There is a multitude of misinformation and misconception about mental health in today's society. Stigmatism and stereotypes regarding mental health issues abound, despite there being multiple initiatives to challenge, address and overcome these stigmas and stereotypes.

Mental health issues in sportspeople are particularly misunderstood. There is a general perception that a healthy body must equal a healthy mind. Elite athletes are seen as untouchable in many regards. They have achieved amazing feats of human endurance to play at the top of their sport, they are often paid well and perceived to have a lifestyle not unlike that of revered celebrities. How then, could they possibly feel sad, anxious, depressed, alone? How could they be vulnerable?

This unit is designed to open discussion with students about their perceptions of mental health and who might be vulnerable to it. This unit will hopefully not only facilitate discussion, and overcome stereotypical perceptions, but also arm students with new knowledge and strategies to reach out for themselves or others, who may be affected by mental health issues.

Session One

Introduction to Mental Health Stereotypes

LEARNING INTENTION

We are learning to:

- Discuss, observe and recognize stereotypes
- Challenge stereotypes that exist around mental health

SUCCESS CRITERIA

I can:

- Identify where stereotypes exist in my life
- Challenge and discuss stereotypes around mental health and provide examples to support this

Begin by asking the class if they know what the word stereotype means.

Suggested teacher script

You have probably heard about stereotypes. These are commonly held ideas or preconceptions about specific groups. They can be ability, gender, race or culturally specific.

You most often hear about negative stereotypes, but some are positive — the stereotype that tall people are good at basketball, for example.

One of many problems with any stereotype is that even if it's true in some cases, it's certainly not true in all cases. A stereotype is a preconceived notion, especially about a group of people. Many stereotypes are rooted in prejudice — so you should be wary of them.

What Are Mental Health Stereotypes?

There are many negative stereotypes and attitudes surrounding mental illness. These often result in stigma, discrimination, and isolation of people with mental illness, and in some cases, the isolation of their families and carers.

Mental Health stereotypes are commonly recognised yet oversimplified ideas about what it means to have a mental illness. These stereotypes assume that all mental illnesses share the same characteristics. They are uninformed judgements based on superficial information rather than facts.

Common Stereotypes About Mental Illness

- People with mental health issues are dangerous.
- People with mental health issues are weak.
- People with mental health issues are unreliable.
- People with mental health issues were born with something wrong with their brain.
- People with mental health issues are suffering from a traumatic event.
- People with a mental illness cannot work normal jobs.
- People with a mental illness are pessimistic
- People with a mental illness need medication.
- People with a mental illness are disabled.
- Mental illness cannot be cured.

Activity

Ask students to work in pairs or groups. Students should choose one negative stereotype listed above to refute. As a team, students should prepare a 2 minute oral presentation to share with the class, arguing a case against their chosen negative stereotype.

Session One

Introduction to Mental Health Stereotypes

Pre Assessment

Ask students to complete the questionnaire provided. The questions are designed to get students thinking about mental health stereotypes in sport. Students should make note of their answers and thoughts whilst taking the survey, to reflect upon and share later.

Tuning In

As a class discuss the questions in the survey. Were there any questions that students had trouble deciding on an answer for? Ask students if they wish to further discuss any of the questions with the class.

Michael Wilson's Lens on the AFL



Using a projector, have the Michael Wilson Lens on the AFL Exhibition ready to share with the class.

Discussion Prompts

- Ask students to share some perceived stereotypical thoughts/view/opinions of mental health.
- Who in our society is perceived to be the most vulnerable to mental health issues?
- Do AFL/AFLW players fit these perceptions? Why? Why Not?
- How did these stereotypes evolve and why?
- How does social media affect these stereotypes and the perpetuation of?
- How is the AFL addressing these stereotypes?

Ask students to compile a list of factors they believe might contribute to or affect mental health.

Questionnaire

Answer the following questions using one of these terms: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Undecided, Agree, Strongly Agree



- 1 I am comfortable discussing my own mental health with friends, family or teachers

- 2 There is a certain kind of person who is generally more affected by mental health issues than others

- 3 I can identify signs of mental health issues from someone's body language, behaviour and conversations

- 4 I feel up to fighting stereotypes that exist around mental health

- 5 I understand what it takes to help someone suffering from poor mental health

- 6 I know why it is important to fight common mental health stereotypes

Session Two

Student content creation response

LEARNING INTENTION

We are learning to:

- Understand that a person's exterior is not always reflective of their interior feelings
- Understand mental health and the challenges it presents
- Breakdown our own stigma associated with mental health and identify ways to help

SUCCESS CRITERIA

I can:

- Identify examples of times when a person appears fine but may have mental health issues
- Identify what challenges mental health presents and how this differs between individuals
- Identify ways to address mental health concerns in my own and my friends' lives

A picture is worth a 1000 words

Ask students to look closely at the images in the Michael Willson Exhibition. Choose one picture to reflect on or ask students to write a short analysis on each picture and their imagining of the story behind it.

Students should consider the following questions –

- What emotion is being conveyed in the image?
- What might the person/people in the image thinking?
- Might there be a bigger story to this image?
- Speculate on what you think might have happened before hand/afterwards.

Football Players Are...

Ask students to write a short reflection on what they think football players are traditionally perceived as. Strong, tough, fast, tall, healthy etc. Do the images they see portrayed in the media reinforce this image? Would they like to see more images of football players being vulnerable? How do they think this might alter societal perceptions of football players and mental health?

Body Language

As a class, discuss the concept of body language. Explain that we communicate on two levels; in verbal and non-verbal ways. Emotions are often communicated through body language, like facial expressions, eye contact, posture and spatial distance.

In pairs, choose 3 emotions to demonstrate using your face, hands and other body movements but without using words. Take turns guessing what emotion is being expressed.

- How can you work out how someone else feels by looking at their body language? Give some tips.
- What can happen when we get it wrong?
- What can happen when we get it right?

Journaling/Digital Scrapbook

- What things might affect your mental health? Keep a journal of positive and negative things you experience, think about or hope for, over one week. After a week share with a partner or the class how your journal made you feel.
- What are ways that you keep yourself healthy? Spend a few minutes writing down your ideas on post- it notes. Stick your post- it notes together on a board or wall in the classroom.
- Who would you speak to or where would you go if you thought you needed help for a mental health issue? Create a mind map of all the support places/ people/organisations you can think of that are available to help young people going through a tough time.

Session Three

Reflection – self/peer identity/social responsibility

LEARNING INTENTION

We are learning to:

- Challenge stereotypes that exist around mental health
- Identify ways to ensure mental health is openly discussed and addressed in my life
- Create a code of conduct that will help to minimize mental health issues

SUCCESS CRITERIA

I can:

- Identify stereotypes that exist around mental health and challenge these on various levels
- Discuss realistic ways that mental health can be a top priority in my life
- Identify a code of conduct which my classmates and I can adhere to which helps our mental health

This session is about taking the time to reflect as a class on what students have learned and discovered and share their content creation pieces.

Begin by asking students if their own perceptions have changed? If so, why?

What do students feel they can do to help overcome stereotypical perceptions of mental health in sport? How can they educate the wider community?

Questions could include:

- How might they combat these stereotypes in everyday life and or sport?
- Why is this important to combat mental health stereotypes?
- What does being an ally look like?

Group activity suggestions:

- As a class, create a strategy document to prevent/ combat the continuation of stereotypes of mental health in sport.
- Create a code of conduct for social media commentary. Include suggested responses to negative comments and strategies for supporting one another in a positive way.
- Create a code of conduct for your class/school/club that includes a protocol for calling out/addressing those who do not abide by the code of conduct respectfully.

Further resources and suggestions for teaching and learning

Digital Scrapbook

- Choose one of the following applications to create your digital scrapbook; Pages, Keynote or Word.
- Name your Digital Scrapbook.
- Your name/Term/Start date.
- Save this to your desktop, you will be working on this throughout the duration of this unit.
- As you follow the directions that will be given to you for creation of a reflection piece, remember to cut and paste all URL's of all sites you use to research, create pieces, and access/find images/music/film links into your Digital Scrapbook.
- During tuning in/class discussion: Use your Digital Scrapbook to keep track of thoughts, feelings, ideas and responses to the content and discussion.

Session Three

Reflection – self/peer identity/social responsibility

Further resources and suggestions for teaching and learning

- › [Beyond Blue – Mental Health in Sport](#)
- › [Tackle Your Feelings](#)
- › [Dept. of Health – Mental Health Myths](#)
- › [Reach Out – Mental Fitness](#)
- › [Behind the News – Resilience](#)
- › [Kids Helpline – Anxiety](#)
- › [Kids Helpline – Being Resilient](#)
- › [Resilient Kids - Feelings](#)
- › [Developing Minds – How teachers can help kids deal with negative emotions in the classroom](#)
- › [Kids Bite Back – Mental Fitness](#)



Victorian and Australian Curriculum Links

SESSION ONE

Health and PE

Communicating and interacting for health and wellbeing

Recognise how media and important people in the community influence personal attitudes, beliefs, decisions and behaviors ([ACPPS057](#)), ([VCHPEP111](#))

Personal and Social Capability

Self-Awareness and Management

- Explore the links between their emotions and their behavior ([VCPSCSE025](#))
- Relationships and diversity
- Define and recognise examples of stereotypes, discrimination and prejudice and discuss how they impact on the individual ([VCPSCSO030](#))
- Describe the characteristics of respectful relationships and suggest ways that respectful relationships can be achieved ([VCPSCSO031](#))

SESSION TWO

Health and PE (Being healthy, safe and active)

Investigate community resources and strategies to seek help about health, safety and wellbeing ([ACPPS053](#)), ([VCHPEP107](#))

Communicating and interacting for health and wellbeing

Examine the influence of emotional responses on behaviour, relationships and health and wellbeing ([VCHPEP110](#)), ([ACPPS056](#))

Personal and Social Capability - Self-Awareness and Management

- Explore the links between their emotions and their behavior ([VCPSCSE025](#))

Relationships and diversity

- Define and recognise examples of stereotypes, discrimination and prejudice and discuss how they impact on the individual ([VCPSCSO030](#))
- Describe the characteristics of respectful relationships and suggest ways that respectful relationships can be achieved ([VCPSCSO031](#))

SESSION THREE

Health and PE (Being healthy, safe and active)

Being healthy, safe and active

- Plan and practise strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing ([ACPPS054](#)), ([VCHPEP108](#))

Communicating and interacting for health and wellbeing

Examine the influence of emotional responses on behaviour, relationships and health and wellbeing ([VCHPEP110](#)), ([ACPPS056](#))

Personal and Social Capability

Relationships and diversity

- Define and recognise examples of stereotypes, discrimination and prejudice and discuss how they impact on the individual ([VCPSCSO030](#))
- Describe the characteristics of respectful relationships and suggest ways that respectful relationships can be achieved ([VCPSCSO031](#))

HANDY TIP

Click on the content codes to be directed to the corresponding curriculum pages on their respective websites.



