



Off-field curriculum guide

**Mental
Health**

Years 7 - 8

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 7 – 8

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 be 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.

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.

Session One

Introduction to Mental Health Stereotypes

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

Opposite are a selection of quotes from various media sources. Ask students to select one quote as the basis for an assessment piece, arguing for or against the statement. This can be one of the following –

- 1 Written essay response
- 2 Oral presentation
- 3 Podcast episode

This can also work as a class debate activity. Students should be sure to demonstrate prior learning in Session One, pertaining to stereotypes. Ask students to identify the stereotypes recognizable in their chosen quote at the end or the beginning of their assessment piece.

QUOTES

“I think the biggest thing I learnt is that when you are sick or you have a broken arm or broken leg you see a professional. But when your mind is not right a lot of people just put it aside and think that it will just disappear.”

“Everyone (only) sees the glitz and the glam and the fun side of things.”

“I think back in the day you get bullied in the schoolyard but then you go home and you are safe in your own sanctuary,” he said. “But now, you go home you can be bullied online. People can be posting pictures or comments on your Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.”

“...but the toll of perfectionism can be tough when the results don't match an athlete's own expectations...”

“Scott Goldman, president-elect of the Association for Applied Sport Psychology, told me it's hard for fans to understand what it's like to constantly be in the spotlight. He recalled watching a pro football player prepare to run onto the field and wonder aloud whether anyone else in the building had people howling at them when they went to work.”

“Now the scrutiny and attention is unrelenting, especially when every phone doubles as a video camera and every fan has a hotline into players' brains via Twitter. It is hard to ignore a bad game or poorly worded comment when it is met with a 24-hour barrage of bile on social media.”

“I know you don't just get rid of problems by talking about them but I've learned that maybe you can better understand them and make them more manageable.”

Click on quotes to be directed to sources.



Session Two

Student content creation response

Ask students to explore the articles provided as a starting point to create an in depth reflection piece on the subject of mental health issues in sport. This reflection should include supporting content, examples and student opinion and reflection.

It should also include a list of organisations that they can reach out to for information on how to help a friend or family member or seek help themselves.

- [Wikipedia - Mental Health in the Australian Football League](#)
- [The West - Nic Naitanui opens up on mental health struggle](#)
- [AFL - Dusty reveals his struggle with anxiety and depression](#)
- [SBS - AFL players who face mental health battles](#)
- [The Australian - Breaking point: AFL players speak out](#)
- [Royal Australian College of General Practitioners - Masculinity and mental health in the AFL](#)
- [Science Daily - Stigma deterring elite athletes with mental health issues from seeking help](#)
- [The Conversation - Why it matters that more athletes are talking about their mental health](#)
- [Heads Up Guys - 22 Male Athletes Speaking Out About Depression](#)

This can be delivered back to the teacher/class in the following ways

- Essay
- Podcast
- Video

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Apps for creating podcasts](#)



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

- › [Walk in Our Shoes - Lesson Plans](#)
- › [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

Analyse factors that influence emotions, and develop strategies to demonstrate empathy and sensitivity ([VCHPEP128](#)), ([ACPPS075](#))

Personal and Social Capability

Self-Awareness and Management

Describe how and why emotional responses may change in different contexts ([VCPSCSE034](#))

SESSION TWO

Health and PE

Being healthy, safe and active

- Examine barriers to seeking support and evaluate strategies to overcome these ([ACPPS089](#)), ([VCHPEP125](#))

Communication and interacting for health and wellbeing

- Analyse factors that influence emotions, and develop strategies to demonstrate empathy and sensitivity ([VCHPEP128](#))

Personal and Social Capability

Development of resilience

- Discuss the range of strategies that could be used to cope with difficult tasks or changing situations ([VCPSCSE036](#))

SESSION THREE

Health and PE (Being healthy, safe and active)

- Investigate and select strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing ([ACPPS073](#)), ([VCHPEP126](#))

Communicating and interacting for health and wellbeing

- Plan and use health strategies and resources to enhance the health, safety and wellbeing of their communities ([ACPPS075](#)), ([VCHPEP130](#))

Personal and Social Capability

Relationships and diversity

- Explore their personal values and beliefs and analyse how these values and beliefs might be different or similar to those of others ([VCPSCSO038](#))

Collaboration

Identify ways to be proactive in initiating strategies to prevent and/or accomplish positive resolutions to conflict ([VCPSCSO042](#))

HANDY TIP

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



