



Year 8 Character Respecting Diversity

'Respect

'Respect' is a term we hear used frequently. We are told to respect our elders, respect our parents, respect the furniture, respect each others' religion. It is a term we are brought up hearing, and from a very young age it probably became clear to us that respect was a good thing. As with many things in life, however, respect is a term that is rarely explained to us in a clear, straight-forward fashion. That is probably because respect looks and sounds different depending on the situation. In most situations, respect is when we show due regard for the feelings, wishes, or rights of others. It is a positive feeling or action, and demonstrates a sense of consideration for others.

Failing to Treat Others as Humans

Dehumanisation is failing to treat people like they are human. This can happen to an individual (a single person) or a group (for example an ethnic group, a particular group in society, or a gender). The offender can similarly be either a single person or a group. There are many historical and contemporary examples of governments and large organisations and institutions actively dehumanising particular groups within society. From the Ancient Greeks and Romans, to the Nazi Regime, to Rwanda, Bosnia and Myanmar, to the institutional racism that we can still see in modern-day America - failing to treat others as humans is sadly a constant feature of society.

When people are dehumanised, the individuality and feelings of the victims are ignored. The victims are shown no compassion. They often have to face force and oppression, and are subjected to various cruelties and indignities as 'they' are not like 'us'. This is not just emotionally and psychologically damaging. It can and has led to violence and even genocide. Dehumanisation is not always violent or obvious. It can also be: Social segregation, Cyber abuse, Verbal bullying.

Harming others Harms Ourselves

A recent study looked at the human, biological basis of compassion. Princeton University conducted a study that found that when people contemplated harm being done to others, a network of regions in their brains lit up. **This suggests that compassion isn't simply a fickle or irrational emotion, but that it is an innate human response embedded into the folds of our brains.** In other research by Emory University, participants were given the chance to help someone else while their brain activity was recorded. Helping others triggered activity in the *caudate nucleus* and *anterior cingulate*, portions of the brain that turn on when people receive rewards or experience pleasure. **The brain therefore seems wired up to respond to others' suffering as essentially it makes us feel good when we can alleviate that suffering.**

Racism and Stereotypes

Racial stereotypes continue to fuel racism in society. Sometimes these stereotypes are overtly offensive - for example that young black men are criminal and violent, or that people from the South Asian community cannot speak good English. It is these stereotypes that not only cause prejudice but also lead to the perpetuation of racism. Sometimes stereotypes are more subtle, and we are exposed to them without even knowing. This is often the case with racial stereotypes in the media - in TV and film. Many people argue that these less obvious stereotypes are even more dangerous, as because we are often unaware of them they are even harder to challenge. They will be accepted without being questioned, allowing the stereotype to take-root in our psyche.

#Black Lives Matter

The #Black Lives Matter movement is an international human rights movement that speaks out against violence and racism towards the black community. It focuses on the treatment of black citizens by the police and the justice system. It originated in 2013 in America, following the unlawful shooting of black teenager Trayvon Martin.

**“It's not enough to be non-racist,
we must be anti-racist”.**

Key Terms and Concepts

Respect

Showing due regard for the feelings, wishes, or rights of others. It is a positive feeling or action, and demonstrates a sense of consideration for others.

Humanise

To make (something) more humane or civilized. To treat others with dignity and equality - as equal beings worthy of respect, compassion and kindness.

Dehumanise

To deprive a person or group of positive human qualities. To treat someone as if they are not worthy of respect, compassion and kindness.

Racism

Discriminating against a person or group because of their race, ethnicity or skin colour

Discrimination

Treating a person or group differently (usually badly) because of a perceived difference.

Stereotype

A fixed, oversimplified and often negative idea of a particular type of person. These can lead to prejudice and discrimination.

Oppression

Holding someone down. Denying someone their rights or freedom.

Protest

Speaking out against something you believe to be wrong or unfair. Protests tend to be peaceful.

Justice

Equality. Fairness. A lack of discrimination and racism.

Homophobia

A range of negative attitudes and feelings toward homosexuality or people who identify as being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. It may be based on irrational fear and ignorance, and can be related to religious beliefs.

Queer

An umbrella term that refers to lesbian, gay, transsexual, bisexual and pansexual people. [Pansexuality is being attracted to people regardless of their gender].

Bisexual

A person who is attracted to people of their own and other genders.

Homosexual

A person who is attracted to a person of the same gender

Heterosexual

A person who is attracted to a person of the opposite gender.

Values

principles, ideas or concepts which are important to us that we treasure

Diversity

Directly translates as 'difference'. A range of different races, ethnicities, genders, sexualities, cultures and identities all living together.

