

TAKE A STANCE: VALUES CLARIFICATION

Values
 Sexual orientation
 Homophobia
 Violence
 Gay
 Lesbian
 Bisexual
 Gender-based violence
 LGBTI
 Bullying
 Questioning

- ✓ 1. To help learners clarify core values, and understand their own values.
- ✓ 2. For learners to become comfortable listening to ideas and views different from their own.

🕒 1 hour – 1hr 15min

★ Teacher Prompt: Value Statements (provided)
 Sign cards: 'AGREE / DISAGREE / UNSURE' (provided)
 Hand-out: South African Bill of Rights (provided)

PROCEDURE

- 1 Print out the three signs (provided), or use cardboard and markers to make your own signs. One will say AGREE; the second will say UNSURE; and the third will say DISAGREE. Tack the signs to the wall in three different parts of the classroom.
- 2 Explain to the class that this activity is about **values**, and they will be asked to express their feelings about particular values. Emphasise that no one is going to judge them, and that they should be as honest as possible. At the same time, they should not judge others, and should respect everyone's input.
- 3 Show learners where you have posted the three signs. Tell them that you will read several value statements. After each statement is read, they should think very carefully about how they feel about it and move to the sign in the room that matches their personal beliefs and feelings about that value statement.
- 4 Tell them that you will ask for volunteers to describe how they feel about each statement. Remind them that they can say anything so long as they do so respectfully. Everyone has a right to express an opinion, and no one will be put down for having an opinion different from others. Be sure to mention that participants have the right to pass if they would rather not explain their stance on a particular value statement. However, passing is not the same as being unsure.
- 5 Also say that they are free to change their stance and move to another sign in the room at any time. For example, someone may change their mind after hearing another learner's argument for a particular value.
- 6 Read out the value statements one by one. After each one, ask for a volunteer or choose someone to explain their choice. Allow learners to pass if they feel uncomfortable, but encourage them to speak as much as possible. You should try to:
 - a. Hear from at least one learner who agrees, and from one who disagrees. Every now and again, also ask a third learner who is unsure.
 - b. Point out conflicting values. Choose learners, if possible, who seem to have conflicting values. For example: "Shane, in the last round you agreed that the most important thing in any relationship is love and respect, but now you disagree that a LGBT learner should be able to take a same sex partner to a school dance. Can you explain why you feel this way?"
 - c. Always affirm core, or Constitutional values, such as equality across race, class, gender, sexual orientation. Refer to the Bill of Rights (provided). Do not tell learners who do not choose this, that they are wrong, but if conflict emerges, or someone expresses support for these views, mention that this is what is in our Constitution, or show support by standing closer to them, or putting a hand on their shoulder.

d. If all learners disagree with a core/Constitutional value it is especially important for the teacher to problematise this. Ask learners why they disagree, ask them how this may conflict with any values they have demonstrated previously. Again remind them that everyone enjoys constitutional protection, and the Constitutional values are the ones that govern our society. It may be helpful to tack the Bill of Rights to the board or elsewhere in the classroom for ease of reference.

- 7 Ask the class to go back to their seats and reflect on the exercise for 5 minutes.
- 8 Conclude with the discussion questions below.
 - a. What do you think was the point of this exercise?
 - b. What did you learn about yourself?
 - c. Was it hard to choose a stance because you were not sure? When was this? Why? Did you eventually pick one or did you choose 'unsure'?
 - d. Was it difficult to express disagreement with another person's values? Why or why not?
 - e. Were there times when you felt uncomfortable or unsafe? Was this because of the answer that you chose?
 - f. Were there any times when you felt unable to stand for your values? Why do you think that was so?
 - g. Can you think of situations in school or elsewhere where you have felt unable to express your values or opinions? Why was this?



Chapter 7: Sexual Orientation | Exercise 3

h. Do you think that you live in a community where unpopular values or ways of life are dismissed, ignored or silenced? Why?

i. What can you do to ensure people feel comfortable enough to share their values at school and elsewhere?

j. Are there times when you think it is better that people do not speak out about what they believe in? When? Why?

k. Do you think the size of the groupings affected the choices individuals made? Are people more or less likely to be honest about their values in large or small groups? When they feel that they are being watched or when they are alone?

l. How might a person's values/choices make them vulnerable to violence?

m. What can we do about this? How can we protect people and prevent violence? How can we intervene in a safe way?

TEACHER TIPS



General

An exercise like this works best if learners have already had some introduction to the idea of **values**, or if they have studied the South African Constitution and Bill of Rights. Depending on the class some prior discussion of **sexual orientation** and **homophobia** may also be necessary.

If learners seem uncomfortable, or anxious, do not focus attention on them. Remind everyone that if they really do not want to they can decline to answer questions, or can pass on clarifying a value. Remember that the more comfortable and at ease you seem with a topic, the more comfortable learners will be.

Sexual orientation is a controversial topic and some teachers may feel uncomfortable talking about it. As a teacher it is important that you create an environment of respect and understanding for all your learners, and that your personal views or religious beliefs do not prevent you from doing this. Remember that discussions about sexual orientation are not about moral judgement, or religious views, but about treating people equally and fairly, and respecting other people's right to engage in mutually consensual relationships of their choice, as afforded to them by the law. In this regard the Constitution is a particularly helpful benchmark.

You may refer to core values, or Constitutional values enshrined in the Bill of rights, such as:

- Everyone has equal worth.
- Everyone is equal before the law.
- Discrimination is always wrong.
- Everyone has the right to be free from **violence**.
- **Violence** is always wrong.
- No one should ever be forced to do or say something against their will.

Teaching learners about **sexual orientation** may help them be more empathetic to other people who they see as different. Remember that young people need accurate information and an opportunity to discuss an issue that may be difficult for them. They should be encouraged to share their feelings, but reminded that discrimination, hate and violence are always wrong.

If debates get heated, emphasise that **values** differ from individual to individual, and that so long as no one advocates harm to themselves or others there is no right answer.

Everyone does not have to agree so long as they are respectful. Emphasise that listening to different points of views is important to help one think critically about one's own views, develop own values and make better decisions.

Encourage learners to listen and try to understand each other without judgement.

Explain that standing up for one's values is important but it is not the same as forcing others to listen, or judging others, and demeaning others.

It is important for teachers to remain non-judgemental. If a learner expresses an opinion that is prejudicial, such as a **homophobic** view, ask how that view might make others feel, or how it may hurt others. Emphasise that the most important values are ones that promote caring, empathy, and freedom for individuals. So for example, they may think that being **gay** is wrong, but they should be able to understand that, even though they choose not to have a same-sex partner themselves, others are free to choose for themselves and the law allows them to love and be in relationships with whomever they choose. Other people having homosexual relationships does not impact them in any way.

Learners may ask about your own values. With a controversial topic like sexual orientation you should avoid this. You are an important figure for learners and your views will shape the discussion, and possibly their own views. If asked for your opinion on a contentious issue, or asked to take a side in a debate you could defer to the law by saying something like: 'The Constitution is the highest law in the land and it says that people can love whomever they want'. Do not support discrimination of any kind.

As you lead this activity, remember that there are probably **gay, lesbian, bisexual**, and teens who are questioning their orientation, in your group. An important part of this exercise is to make them feel acknowledged and understood. You will not know the **sexual orientation** of every participant, so be very sure to use inclusive and affirming language. For example, say 'we,' 'all people,' and 'some people,' not 'they' or 'people like them.'



Making the Link with Gender and Violence

Once the class has worked through the first five discussion points, they should be able to see how important values are to an individual, and how they may conflict with the values of others. Here it is important to stress that everyone has the right to their values, so long as no harm is done. No one should force their values or beliefs on others. This is a good opportunity to link with **gender-based violence**. Ask, them the last two discussion questions:

- How might a person's values/choices make them vulnerable to violence?

Ask them to think about bullying of **LGBTI** people who they may know or have experienced in the media; or about **bullying** girls because of how they dress. Has this ever made them feel afraid for the person being bullied? Did this escalate into **violence**, or was there the potential for violence?

- What can we do about discrimination? How can we protect people and prevent **violence**? How can we intervene in a safe way?

Again, relate the question to their own experiences. In situations as mentioned above, do they think that intervening by telling the bullies to 'stop' or explaining that it is wrong, would help? How can we change attitudes, and promote an environment for accommodating other viewpoints?



Assessment Ideas

This is not a good exercise for assessment as it is intended to help learners clarify their own values, and to solicit their feelings about difference, as the basis for further discussion.

References:

Adapted from: <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/for-professionals/lesson-plans-professionals/241?task=view>

VALUE STATEMENTS

If you have only one hour, pick six or seven statements that you think will be most important for the group to discuss.

- Deliberately hurting someone is never okay.
- Using 'put downs' like 'that's so gay' is okay because everyone does it.
- Treating people differently because of whom they love, is wrong.
- The most important things in any relationship are love and respect.
- Everyone should have the same rights irrespective of sex, race, ethnicity, language, (dis) ability, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity.
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) learners should be able to take a date of the same sex to the matric dance.
- If LGBT people are in the 'wrong place' at the 'wrong time', they deserve whatever might happen to them.
- Violence is never the victim's fault.
- Our Constitution is the highest law in our country and we should all uphold its values.
- It's okay for religious and political leaders to say things against LGBT people because it's just their own opinion.
- People in positions of power should set an example by upholding the values of our constitution.
- It is good that our law allows same-sex couples to marry or have a civil union.
- If I see or hear someone harassing one of my LGBT peers, it is my responsibility to step in and stop it.

AGREE

UNSURE

DISAGREE

THE SOUTH AFRICAN BILL OF RIGHTS

EQUALITY

Everyone is equal before the law and may not be unfairly discriminated against on any grounds including their race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.

HUMAN DIGNITY

Everyone has inherent human dignity which must be respected.

LIFE

Everyone has the right to life.

FREEDOM AND SECURITY OF THE PERSON

You have a right to be free from all forms of violence, and to have control over and make decisions about your body.

SLAVERY, SERVITUDE AND FORCED LABOUR

You may not be subjected to slavery or forced labour.

PRIVACY

Your right to privacy includes your body, home and possessions.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION, BELIEF AND OPINION

You have the right to think, believe and worship as you choose.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

You have the right to say, read and study whatever you choose but hate speech – any action that tells people to commit violence, or advocates for hatred or harm of anyone based on their race, ethnicity, gender or religion – is not allowed.

ASSEMBLY, DEMONSTRATION, PICKET AND PETITION

You have the right to peacefully assemble, demonstrate and protest.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

You have the right to associate with anyone.

POLITICAL RIGHTS

You may form a political party, run for office and vote for any party in free and fair elections.

CITIZENSHIP

No citizen may be deprived of citizenship.

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND RESIDENCE

You have the right to enter and leave South Africa at will.

FREEDOM OF TRADE, OCCUPATION AND PROFESSION

You have the right to choose any legal trade or occupation freely.

LABOUR RELATIONS

Every worker and employer has the right to organise and negotiate to further their aims.

ENVIRONMENT

You have the right to live in a protected, healthy environment.

PROPERTY

No-one may be deprived of property, except in terms of law of general application.

HOUSING

You have the right to have access to adequate housing.

HEALTH CARE, FOOD, WATER AND SOCIAL SECURITY

You have the right to have access to health care, adequate food and water and social security.

CHILDREN

Every child has the right to a name, nationality, adequate care and protection from abuse and exploitation.

EDUCATION

You have the right to receive basic education in the official language of your choice where that education is reasonable practicable.

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

You have the right to use the language of your choice and practise your own culture.

CULTURAL, RELIGIOUS AND LINGUISTIC COMMUNITIES

You have the right to form, join and maintain cultural, linguistic and religious grouping of your own choice.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

You may access any information held by the state for the protection of your rights.

JUST ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

You have the right to administrative action that is lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair.

ACCESS TO COURTS

You have the right to resolve your legal disputes in a court or another impartial tribunal.

ARRESTED, DETAINED AND ACCUSED PERSONS

When arrested for allegedly committed an offence, you have the right to remain silent, to be brought before a court within 48 hours and the right to legal representation.

LIMITATION OF RIGHTS

Everyone's rights may be limited. The limitation should apply to everyone to the extent that it is reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All citizens are equally subject to the duties and responsibilities of citizenship.