

How Do You Define Yourself?

Resources

- [How Do You Define Yourself? \(13:10\)](#)
- [How Do You Define Yourself \(Lesson Slideshow\)](#)

Identities & Themes

- Identity affirmation
- Standing up for self/others
- School success
- Bias, prejudice, and stereotypes
- White/European
- Ability and Neurodiversity

Summary of Resource

In this TEDx Talk, Lizzie Velasquez shares her story of living with a rare genetic syndrome and the public shaming she faced from being labeled “the world’s ugliest woman”. Her story about how she came to love herself is one of empowerment and resilience.

Condition for Belonging: Identity Affirmation

Anti-Bias Education Tenets

- Empathy & Understanding
- Healthy Complex Identities
- Respect Across Differences
- Responsiveness & Action

Social-Emotional Learning Competencies

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- Social Awareness
- Responsible Decision Making

Before You Teach

Bullying is used to describe teasing or physical, verbal, or emotional harassment behaviors that create mental, emotional, or physical harm. Some of the sources cited here use the word “bullying”. We’ve included them because harassment and mistreatment are problems responsive educators in all schools must be aware of and address.

At AmazeWorks, we encourage teachers and school leaders to try to understand behavior by examining the purpose of it. We would like educators to stop using the word “bully” when referring to a student. When we label a child as a bully, we miss an important opportunity to see the whole child and address the purpose of the behavior. In addition, the label of “bully” can stick with a child and can often become a self-fulfilling prophecy as adults and peers look to confirm their negative biases of that child. (Taken from the AmazeWorks blog)

We encourage educators to describe the behavior rather than give a child a label in order to encourage school success identities and help children discover empathy and kindness.

What is bullying? (From StopBullying.gov)

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- An Imbalance of Power: Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying is different from peer conflict, which is a fight, argument or disagreement between two kids with no perceived power imbalance.

What is the difference between teasing and bullying? (From DefeatTheLabel.com)

Teasing is when you make fun of or are attempting to provoke someone. There are two types of teasing:

- Playful and Friendly Teasing
 - Used as a way of fitting in or when talking with our friends.
 - It is not used to make fun of characteristics that are out of someone's control such as disabilities, ethnicity, faith, etc.
 - It is not harmful.
 - It is not repetitive.
- Hurtful Teasing
 - Someone starts getting more than their fair share.
 - Repetitive, even when the person has asked them to stop.
 - Often done by someone you don't have a close relationship with.
 - Makes fun of characteristics that are out of someone's control such as disabilities, ethnicity, faith, etc.
- Bullying
 - The behavior is aggressive with the intent to inflict physical or emotional pain.
 - The behavior is repetitive.
 - The behavior occurs in a relationship where the bully has more power than the victim.

Read more about teasing versus bullying from [HEAR](#).

For more resources about bullying prevention, [click here](#).

For curriculum resources that teach students about bullying and prevention, [click here](#).

Teacher Reflection Questions

- What defines you as a person?
- What is your reaction or response when students ask questions about or comment on a person's appearance?
- Are you prepared to intervene in instances of teasing or bullying? What steps can you take to show your students you are a safe and supportive adult in whom they can come for help?

Materials Needed for Lesson

- [How Do You Define Yourself \(Lesson Slideshow\)](#)
- Ability to project a slideshow and video
- Journal or notebook
- Complete the Follow-up Activity if time allows.

Process of Implementing

- Project the [How Do You Define Yourself \(Lesson Slideshow\)](#)
- Introduce the lesson and vocabulary.
- Show the video.
- After showing the video, give students time to complete a written reflection to at least one of the journal prompts.
- Lead students through the discussion questions.

Journal Prompts

- What are some positive character traits about Lizzie that helped her get through tough times? What are three positive character traits about you?
- What defines who you are? How can you not let others define who you are?
- If you were a motivational speaker, what message would you want your audience to hear? What would you say, and what stories would you tell?

Discussion Questions

*Essential questions are in bold.

- What moved or inspired you about Lizzie's story?

- **How did Lizzie overcome the bullying and not let others and her syndrome define who she is?**
- **What can you do to embrace the things that you don't like about yourself and not let them define who you are? How can you overcome the hard things in your life and not let them define who you are?**
- **If Lizzie were a student at your school, how could you support her?**

Follow Up Activity

Work with your students to create a list of affirmations for your group. Ask students to share some of the positive things about themselves (perhaps from their journal responses). Then, together as a whole-group or in smaller groups, compile a list of 5-10 affirmations for your class. When writing affirmations, keep the following tips in mind:

1. Use present tense (Like "We are....")
2. Try not to highlight the negative, and keep them positive. (Instead of "We will no longer put each other down", say "We are deserving of kindness from each other")
3. Choose meaningful affirmations, and make sure they are things that really matter to you.

Students can create posters of the affirmations, and you can start each day or week by saying the affirmations together to foster a growth mindset and stay optimistic in times of stress.