



Module 2

Assumptions and judgements



Assumptions and judgements

UK Curriculum links

English, PSHE, Citizenship, Health and Wellbeing, Personal & Mutual Understanding

This section encourages pupils to consider the assumptions, judgements and stereotypes that we hold about people who are blind or vision impaired and where do these assumptions come from.

In this module one of the activities requires:

- Resource sheet '**How would you feel?**'
- Link to video a **Test of Blind Ambition**

Activity

Teacher led discussion

Another option would be to split the class into groups to mind map the assumptions and judgements their group has about people who are blind.

Draw together all assumptions then discuss – Where do these concepts come from? This discussion requires direction from the teacher to ensure that exploration of stereotypes doesn't encourage prejudice or inappropriate views.

- What do you think a person who is blind looks like?
- How would you know someone was blind?
- What are their hobbies?
- What would their job be?
- Would you consider a person who is blind to be disabled?

How is 'the person who is blind' portrayed in books/films?

People who are blind are often portrayed for comedic purpose bumping into things, or as a villain who has had an accident, or a witch or old person, there are very few positive images of blind people in the media outside of Paralympics. The film 'Daredevil' has a superhero blind character who uses his other senses to perceive the world, and this is seen positively, which also taps into the myth that blind people have heightened super senses.

Assumptions and Judgements real-life stories:

Has anyone in the class ever met a person with a vision impairment? Are they portrayed a certain way in the media? Discuss – do these assumptions come from experience?



I was sighted guiding an older lady and a woman came up to me and said, in front of the lady, "I think that's a great thing what you're doing, helping this woman." The blind lady could hear everything being said and had to listen to this, as well as being completely ignored.

People assume that they have to be over-helpful e.g. making a massive gap in the pavement for the GDO (guide dog owner) to walk through, following the GDO through the shop, etc making sure they are ok.

People assume that the person who is blind or partially sighted is "stupid" e.g. talking to them very loudly and slowly. Many GDOs I have worked with have experienced this and some of the more plucky GDOs have told me they reply with "Thanks but I'm blind not deaf!" When I am sighted guiding, people often ask me questions for the other person, rather than ask the person directly. This belittles the person who is blind and makes me feel uncomfortable. I've had this happen to me so many times that I now reply with "You can/please ask Alex, Mrs Smith, etc." **Lynda – sighted guide**

Katie, a puppy walker has experienced people's assumptions and judgements about her and her puppy, DeeJay.

- People assume that they can come up and pat and talk to the dog while it's working. Katie's reply now is "Please don't be offended but he's working so please don't distract him."
- People assume that Katie:
 - Is blind if she's wearing sunglasses
 - Offer her a seat on the tube
- People talk to the dog rather than Katie
- People say to Katie "He's not a puppy!" as he's not 'Andrex – size' anymore
- People often assume that DeeJay should be perfect.

The public's perception of guide dogs being perfect is a positive assumption that can turn into a negative when they see a puppy in training or a working guide dog doing something they don't expect e.g. barking or having a wee in the street. It's important that the public remember that a guide dog is still a dog, it isn't a robot and we don't discourage the dogs from being dogs.

Activity

Video with group Discussion

Watch the video 'A Test of Blind Ambition' as a class and use the following for topics of discussion. NB- the video does contain some mild swearing

Link to video a Test of Blind Ambition

- What noises could you identify?
- Describe any noises you couldn't work out?
- What assumptions and judgements did you hear?
- What were your thoughts on the parents discussing sending Libby to a school for the blind? How would you feel if this was you? (encourage the positives and negatives to be voiced)?
- What did you think about the suggestion "that career choice is a bit ambitious for someone like you, how about receptionist in a gym?"
- Discuss "Normal"
- How did it make you feel? (Both positive and negative feelings should be discussed).

An additional activity could be to watch the BBC 3 video around assumptions and the questions people with vision impairments get asked.

A link to BBC 3 Video

Activity

how would you feel? - pairs/small groups discussion

Discussion

How do we react around people with a vision impairment?

Often we don't know how to behave around people with a vision impairment, we feel awkward and unsure of how we should speak or act. This discussion explores these feelings.

Give each group a guide dog owner quote to explore, from the resource sheet 'How would you feel?'

- Would you behave differently around a person with vision impairment?
- Would they make you feel awkward/uncomfortable? Why?
- Do you feel you should offer help?
- Do you assume they can't see you?
- Does someone's vision impairment make you judge their abilities?
- Would you exclude a young person with vision impairment from your activities?
- Where does the assumption come from?
- Is it something they have assumed?
- How would it make them feel?
- How could you people help break down these assumptions?

Activity

Paired/small group project work

Create a campaign to help break down assumptions about people with vision impairment

Groups could create a poster, film, or leaflet which should include a call to action and catchphrase. The campaign should be based around the 'how would you feel' guide dog owner quotes.

These could be grouped together to create the following campaign themes:

- Hannah & Debbie – How to talk to a person with vision impairment – being blind doesn't mean you are invisible, or stupid.
- Rosie, Kelly & Lora – preconceptions about guide dogs. They are dogs, not robots and they aren't perfect.
- Deb & Holly – Ask before you assist someone.