

BIG *h* ART

It Starts With Us



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Study Guide overview



About the Study Guide

This series of resources features:

- 1 documentary (30 minutes)
- 1 song (4 minutes)
- 5 short films (3–5 minutes each)

These videos and accompanying Study Guide are accessible via [Vimeo](#) or on [ClickView](#).

Each film or song is supported by a ready-to-use lesson plan, including a creative classroom activity inspired by the real experiences of the young people featured. The activities are designed to support personal reflection, build empathy, and open up conversations about identity, healthy relationships, and agency in fun and engaging ways.

Content	Themes
<i>'It Starts With Us'</i> documentary	Family violence prevention, creative approaches for exploring challenging topics with young people, advocacy
<i>'I'm Dreaming'</i> song	Identity, inclusion, safe love, diversity, creativity
<i>Bailey</i>	Healthy masculinity, managing emotions, and preventing violence
<i>Charlotte</i>	Bullying, belonging, identity, and safe spaces
<i>Archie</i>	Neurodiversity, inclusion, bullying, and creativity
<i>Xiao</i>	Shyness, family pressure, advocacy, and finding your voice
<i>Rosie</i>	Advocacy and prevention: why they matter, and how young people can lead change

While we have provided a 'recommended order', the films and lesson plans can be used in any order, making them easy to adapt to your curriculum planning, whether exploring topics like respectful relationships, emotional regulation, identity, inclusion, bullying, resilience or student agency.

Lesson structure overview

Before watching activity

The key intentions for 'before' activities are to establish a safe and respectful space, and to introduce concepts of violence. Examples of activities could include:

Practicing respect: The group workshops different ground rules of respectful dialogue for the lesson, offering examples. How do we practice respect? What are some ways we can demonstrate respect during the classroom activities today?

Diversity welcome: The group collaborates on their own version of a 'Diversity Welcome' – an exercise where each student in the room identifies a different form of diversity inclusion. For example, "I'd like to welcome all genders into the space"; "I'd like to welcome all disabilities, visible and invisible"; "I'd like to welcome all cultures"; "ages"; "sexualities"; "religions", etc.

You can learn more about the Diversity Welcome concept and activity [here](#).

Content warning: We have also provided a tailored 'content warning' for each short film and lesson plan.

While watching activity

Questions for discussion are provided specific to each film, with timecodes to pause and discuss.

After watching activity

The key intentions for 'after' activities are to debrief the films, assess student duty of care, and expand into a fun and creative activity that extends the discussion.

Debrief

After watching each film, take a moment to debrief with your class in a way that suits your students and teaching style. This is an important opportunity to check in, support emotional safety, and respond to any strong reactions. Be mindful of your duty of care, allowing space for students to process or seek support if needed (see **Teacher notes** on page 5). Examples have been included in each lesson plan.

Creative activity

Each lesson plan is accompanied by a creative classroom activity specific to the lesson.

Key takeaways

- Australia is experiencing an epidemic of family violence, and the rates of violence against women and children are reportedly climbing.
- Family violence has a significant impact on young people, with 2 in 5 children under the age of 18 exposed.
- While the crisis end of the issue requires urgent attention, more resource is required for 'primary prevention', which is about teaching respect, fairness, and healthy relationships—so young people learn to treat others well and to stop violence from happening before it even starts.
- Gender-based stereotypes are closely linked to family and 'gender-based' violence.
- Children and young people are often overlooked in efforts to eliminate family violence.
- Issues young people face, such as bullying, exclusion, neurodiversity, foster care, peer-to-peer violence, family instability and housing instability, can increase the risk of experiencing or perpetrating family violence.
- Creative approaches are an effective tool for engaging young people, with 'mentorship' playing a key role in supporting young people to safely explore topics related to family violence, and to process the issues they face.
- Safe and inclusive spaces are important for young people, to feel heard and listened to.
- We can all play a role in the prevention of family violence when we build positive relationships with children and young people, and provide them with relevant social and emotional learning and respectful relationships education.
- People who have had difficult life experiences can be powerful advocates for change, by sharing their lived experience to help others - art and storytelling is a powerful tool for this.
- Children and young people have important opinions and insights to share. We can all benefit from young people having 'a seat at the table' when it comes to tackling family violence (and all forms of violence).



Curriculum alignment



Theme	Australian Curriculum	NSW Curriculum	Victorian Curriculum
Identity and belonging	AC9HP10P01	PH5-IBC-01	VC2HP10P01
Managing changes and transitions	AC9HP10P02	PH5-RRL-01	VC2HP10P02
Respectful relationships	AC9HP10P03 AC9HP10P04 AC9HP10P05 AC9HP10P07	PH5-RRL-01 PH5-SHW-01	VC2HP10P03 VC2HP10P04 VC2HP10P05
Societal and contextual influences on behaviour	AC9HP10P05	PH5-SHW-01	VC2HP10P05
Health, safety and wellbeing strategies	AC9HP10P06 AC9HP10P08 AC9HP10P10	PH5-SHW-01 PH5-IPS-01	VC2HP10P06 VC2HP10P07 VC2HP10P10



Teacher notes



Welcome teacher!

The *It Starts With Us* documentary and associated Study Guide stem from a long-term family violence prevention initiative Project O, produced by arts and social change organisation Big hART.

Project O applied creative methodologies to work with young people, creating safe spaces for expression and discussion, and making great art that highlighted youth voices in the mission to end family violence.

Over ten years, Big hART ran thousands of Project O workshops and accumulated a great deal of know-how. These resources impart some of that knowledge and share the Project O philosophy and approach, so that you can feel confident to deliver this content in your classroom.

The Project O approach

In Project O, youth workers and artists acted as ‘mentors’, collaborating with young people to learn new skills, have important conversations, and co-create artistic content. We encourage educators to adopt some of these key elements of the approach to support a positive experience for the young people participating.

Mentors acknowledged that all children and young people have their own lived experience, and no classroom is a ‘clean slate’. Family violence is an issue that impacts people from all demographics and postcodes. With 2 in 5 children under the age of 18 exposed to family violence* many young people in the classroom are likely to have experienced family violence as well as many other forms of gender-based violence.

**Australian Child Maltreatment Study, 2023*

“Ending domestic, family and sexual violence hinges on getting it right for children and young people and we cannot do that unless they are involved at every step, on their own terms.”

Dr Tessa Boyd-Caine, ANROWS CEO, 2025

Project O mentors focus on creating a safe and strengths-based space. Key elements of the approach include:

- **Engage them** - Creativity is an ideal tool for engaging young people and discussing sensitive topics. Project O mentors centre creativity and fun, and thoughtful discussion flows as a by-product.
- **Level with them** - The adult figure (mentor, educator, teacher) is part of the group. They bring themselves to the discussion and strike a balance between facilitating and contributing.
- **Learn from them** - The Project O space centres the opinions and voices of young people by valuing their insights and experiences. They have so much to offer!
- **Welcome them** - Project O spaces are inclusive, welcoming of diverse experiences, and respectful of differing levels of confidence. 'Engagement' looks different for every young person, and that's OK.

Linking prevention and learning outcomes

Project O was an evidence-based approach that paired prevention learning with engaging art-based methods. For this suite of resources, by viewing and discussing compelling film content, students can analyse the impact of social norms and peer influences on attitudes and behaviours, and develop strategies for creating safe and respectful spaces.

Students can be encouraged to reflect on how emotions influence behaviour and relationships, and discuss ways to express themselves respectfully. Through the activities, students will demonstrate collaborative problem solving in peer contexts and explore strategies to enhance their safety and wellbeing.

For definitions of family violence and prevention, please refer to **Context** on page 8.

Duty of care

The documentary and associated short films and Study Guide have a hopeful and strengths-based focus, while exploring challenging topics such as:

- Family violence
- Peer-to-peer violence
- Bullying
- Foster care
- Neurodivergence
- Stress and anxiety
- Disadvantage

Talking about these issues may raise concerns and challenges for some young people.

Before delivering this Study Guide in your classroom, familiarise yourself with the school disclosure processes and referral pathways available, so you're prepared should a student make any disclosures or experience distress.

You can provide a sensitive and supportive response by listening without judgement, believing their experiences, and providing information to help them make choices about what happens next.

Specialist services are also available, and contact details for these are noted in **Support referrals** on page 38 of this Study Guide.

The young people in *It Starts With Us*

The young people participating in the documentary were part of Project O in Frankston North, Victoria, which ran for 5 years. The producers and documentary makers continue to work closely with the young people, their parents, carers, and teachers, to ensure the safe sharing of their powerful stories. Big hART continues to support them with leadership development and opportunities connected to the film.

Context



About Big hART

Big hART is Australia's leading arts and social change organisation, telling Australia's most invisible stories and creating social impact through art. Founded in the north-west of lutruwita/Tasmania 32 years ago, Big hART has worked with over 64 communities in regional, remote and urban Australia to great acclaim, receiving over 47 awards. bighart.org

About Project O

Project O is an arts-based primary prevention program that Big hART ran for 10 years in 6 locations nationally, supporting young people in communities with high rates of family violence. Project O worked with young people on creative workshop programs to build the confidence and skills to become change-makers in their community and to contribute to ending family violence.

Frankston North in Victoria - where *It Starts With Us* is set – is one of the communities where Project O operated. The area has the highest rates of family violence in Metropolitan Melbourne (Crime Statistics Agency). Over 5 years, 170 young people aged 11–18 explored the early behaviours that lead to violence, and created powerful, youth-led content promoting respect, inclusion, and prevention. While open to all students, the majority of participants were in some way affected by family violence. Project O had a measurable, positive impact on school engagement, skill development, social inclusion, and wellbeing.

It Starts With Us – Synopsis

A group of teenagers who struggle to express themselves join a groundbreaking high school program called Project O, for kids at risk of exposure to family violence. With mentors including family violence prevention advocate Rosie Batty, they use art to unpack the social pressures that lead to gender-based violence.

The documentary centres the voices of young people in the context of their often-complicated lives, exploring how they strive to overcome the pressures in their lives, break cycles of violence and engage with the key themes of prevention - respect, power, control, identity, gender, stereotyping, equality, independence and leadership.

Family violence

Simple definition

“Family and domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behaviour where one person seeks to control and dominate another. It includes physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, financial, spiritual and cultural abuse.”

— *Fourth Action Plan 2019, Australian Government, Department of Social Services*

Family and domestic violence (referred to throughout this resource as ‘family violence’ or FDV) is when someone in a family or close relationship uses hurtful, threatening, or controlling behaviour to make someone else feel scared or unsafe. It includes not only physical violence, but also emotional, psychological, sexual, financial, and cultural abuse, as well as damaging property, isolating a person, or using children to control a partner. It can happen between adults, parents and children, or other family members.

Family violence in Australia

2 in 5 Australian children under the age of 18 are exposed to family violence.

Australian Child Maltreatment Study (ACMS), 2023

Family violence remains a critical and escalating issue in Australia.

- 62.2% of Australians have experienced at least one form of child maltreatment before the age of 18 – this includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect, and exposure to family violence. [acms.au](https://www.acms.au)
- One in five Australians (21%) have experienced violence, emotional abuse, or economic abuse by a current or former partner since the age of 15. [abs.gov.au](https://www.abs.gov.au)
- Family violence affects people regardless of demographics or postcode
- In 2023 - 2024, 46 women were killed by a current or former intimate partner, amounting to nearly one woman per week. [aic.gov.au](https://www.aic.gov.au)
- Domestic and family violence is a gendered issue. The majority of victims are women and children, experiencing violence perpetrated by men. [aihw.gov.au](https://www.aihw.gov.au)
- Filicide, the killing of one’s child, is the second most common type of domestic homicide in Australia. [anrows.org.au](https://www.anrows.org.au)
- DFV is a main reason women and children leave their home. [ahuri.edu.au](https://www.ahuri.edu.au)

These statistics underscore the pervasive nature of family violence in Australia and the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to prevent and address domestic and family violence, with a particular focus on protecting women and children who are most at risk.

The impact of family violence on young people

The impacts of domestic and family violence on children and young people are significant. Domestic, family and sexual violence can impact a child or young person's mental and physical health, family relationships, ability to form healthy connections with others, school engagement and academic achievement, as well as their ties to faith, community and culture. anrows.org.au.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people experiencing DFV can struggle to maintain themselves in education systems, which can lead to negative experiences in school, including expulsion. anrows.org.au.

Prevention

Simple definition

Primary prevention refers to actions taken to stop family and domestic violence before it starts. It aims to address the underlying causes of violence - such as gender inequality, rigid gender roles, disrespect, power imbalances, and cultural norms that excuse or tolerate violence. It's also about challenging social conditioning and intervening to break generational cycles of violence.

Unlike crisis support or intervention after violence has occurred, primary prevention works at the community and societal level to change attitudes, behaviours, and systems that enable violence.

Why prevention?

While the film makes reference to prevention programs decreasing the risk of young people becoming perpetrators of violence, it is important to note that a key function of prevention programs is to decrease the likelihood that children and young people will become victims themselves. Children and young people are often overlooked as victim-survivors, and those who have experienced violence need support and safety to thrive.

Alongside the critical safety and justice reforms that must urgently take place to stem the tide of violence, we must not lose focus on the conditioning environments in which our young people grow up. How do these environments influence our behaviours and attitudes? Are there alternative ways institutions can support positive change? Why do the experiences and voices of young people matter?

“Primary prevention is about changing the attitudes, behaviours, social norms and systems that excuse, justify or even promote violence.”

Fourth Action Plan, Federal Government, 2019

Australia lacks consistent data on funding allocated to family violence prevention, both by federal and state governments. Prevention receives less than 5% of sector funding*. Reports consistently argue that increased funding for prevention is required to stem the tide of family violence.

For example, in her [May 2024 paper](#), Emily Maguire states, *“the quest should be an overall increase in funding across the entire spectrum... so that primary prevention funding is commensurate to the size and the scale of the problem”*.

Similarly, [a Victorian Government report](#) states *“stakeholders agreed that a larger investment is needed to properly address the drivers of violence population-wide and, ultimately, to drive a sustained reduction in the incidence of family violence”* (P38).

“There won’t be a shift in how adults treat each other, unless we focus on the next generation, and listen to young people”

Rosie Batty, Family Violence Prevention Advocate, 2024

**This statistic has been derived from a range of sources in different states, analysing the amount of funding channeled towards prevention activities that aim to ‘stop violence before it starts’ as opposed to funding for crisis and response.*

Lesson plans



Lesson 1.1: 'It Starts With Us' documentary

Learning intention

Learn about family violence and the role young people and creativity can play in preventing the issue.

Essential question

How were young people in Project O inspired to play a role in preventing family violence?

Key vocabulary

prevention

family violence

safety

creativity

Before watching activity

We recommend opening the first lesson with some simple scene-setting activities to help establish a safe, respectful, and inclusive classroom environment. This creates a strong foundation for the conversations that follow. You can refer back to this throughout the series, but there's no need to repeat the full setup in each lesson.

The film producer Big hART's motto is "*It's harder to hurt someone if you know their story*". Inspired by this, there are some discussion prompts on the following page. Depending on your teaching style and class, these scene-setting discussions could take place in small, peer-to-peer groups or as a whole class.

Discussion prompts

- What makes a personal story about someone's life really connect with viewers or readers?
- What do you think 'lived experience' means when someone shares their own story?
- Can you think of any young people who've been through something really tough and come out the other side? (*This could be someone you know, someone from the news, or even a character from a book or film*)

These questions are designed to help students explore the power of personal storytelling and to reflect on the value of listening to and sharing lived experiences.

Discussing violence

After establishing a safe space for discussion, introduce the key topics of the film in a way most appropriate for your group. The film largely focuses on the issue of family violence, so a broad discussion on the different forms of violence, and a specific reference to the definitions of family violence and prevention in **Context** (page 8) is one approach.

Content check-in

We recommend using a content warning appropriate to your group. Here is an example:

Heads up: This content includes themes of domestic and family violence, peer-to-peer violence, bullying, neurodivergence and the foster care system. Please take care while engaging, and if needed, talk to your teacher to access supports available to you.



While watching activity

Pause the film at each timestamp and pose the following discussion questions:

Timestamp	Discussion questions
7:01	How might creativity help people to express their feelings safely?
10:21	What are some common things people write songs about?
15:21	What does Rosie mean by 'meet young people where they're at and give them a voice', and why is it important?
18:02	What might Rish mean when she talks about "your idea of love"?
19:50	What is the value of a creative approach like this songwriting project when discussing issues of family and domestic violence?
22:32	What are some of the reasons a person might have for not wanting to perform in front of others?
26:17	Why is it a good thing for Xiao that she's 'loud' now?
27:09	What is the key thing Archie has learnt? What might have helped him to learn this?

After watching activity

Debrief

Take a moment to debrief with your class in a way that suits your students and teaching style. This is an important opportunity to check in, support emotional safety, and respond to any strong reactions. Be mindful of your duty of care (see **Teacher notes** on page 5), and allow space for students to process or seek support if needed.

You can use the questions below to debrief:

- What stood out for you in the documentary?
- Who in the film did you relate to and why?
- Discuss Archie's simple but important final statement, "You can get along with anyone".

Creative activity

Part 1: The song

The song *I'm Dreaming* produced by the young people and mentors in the documentary is a powerful reflection of their opinions and perspectives on respect, conflict and relationships.

To start the creativity activity, listen to the *I'm Dreaming* song in full, with the lyrics on hand. See *I'm Dreaming Song Lyrics* on page 16.

Part 2: The lyrics

After listening to the song, facilitate a group discussion.

Discussion prompts might include:

- What do you think of the song, knowing some of the story behind it?
- What lyrics stand out to you and why?
- How does the process of creating 'art' together help the students discuss and think about issues of safety and violence?



LESSON 1.1 & LESSON 1.2

I'm Dreaming Song Lyrics

Verse 1

My story is the only thing I own
I can be myself, I don't have to put on a show
I love my culture, and I love my hair
Learn to read the lines of love, a fairytale is hard enough

Chorus

I'm dreaming
Of a world where no one's left behind, where language won't collide
I'm dreaming
Of a world where we are free to think, to feel, to find

Verse 2

Your life is full of anger and broken words (not mine to hold)
Words that were never meant to be true (not mine to hold)
I felt protected, safe in your idea of love (not mine to hold)
There's no need to hide your vulnerability

Alternative chorus

I'm dreaming
Of a world where we are free to share our creativity
I'm dreaming
Of a world where we can be the people we were meant to be

Verse 3

One minute left, I'm down by four, I was shaking from the start
But my spirit never bends, can't tear me apart
All eyes on me, but they can't see, what's underneath the surface
I'm alright with me, can paint me how you like

Bridge

Living in a world where we need to hear
Where we need to meet each other's fear
Open up your heart, open up your mind
Let our differences be the light

I'm dreaming...

Lesson 1.2: 'I'm Dreaming' song

Learning intention

Analyse the song and engage in a collaborative songwriting activity, as an exercise in creative approaches to violence prevention.

Essential question

What ideas can young people contribute towards a world free of family violence?

Key vocabulary

prevention

creativity

mentor

After watching activity

Part 1: Listen

As a refresher, listen to the song and read the lyrics (provided on page 16).

Part 2: Discussion

Break into groups and pull out a verse, bridge or chorus. Discuss and write down:

- How are the lyrics addressing themes of violence and prevention?
- In your world, what would you keep, what would you change, and what would you 'dream of' to prevent family violence?

Part 3: Collaborative Songwriting – 'One-line lyrics'

In groups or as a class, build on discussions by translating thoughts into lyrics:

- Start with one person writing one line/lyric at the top of a piece of paper. Fold the paper so the writing is concealed and pass it on to the next person to write their line. Pass around until everyone has had a turn.
- Unfold the paper and take turns reading out the sentences.

- Break into smaller groups, and have a go at writing your own verse of a song using the group's sentences. You could use the melody of I'm Dreaming or come up with your own.

Note: The purpose of concealing what has been written is to allow students to write freely in their own style – this often produces the best results.



Lesson 2: Bailey

About the video

Bailey is a young man participating in the unique prevention program “Project O” (see **Context**, page 8). In this video, Bailey and his mentor discuss growing up in the foster system, strategies for dealing with anger, peer-to-peer violence, and the role young people have to play in building safer futures.

Learning intention

Learn about the different situations and conditions that can lead to violence, and one young person’s reflections on preventing it.

Essential question

What inner strengths can we nurture to help navigate challenging situations that could lead to violence?

Key vocabulary

family violence

prevention

cultural identity

emotional regulation

Before watching activity

See **Study Guide overview** on page 1 for kicking off this content series with your class using the discussion prompts and/or the Diversity Welcome.

Introduce Bailey’s video. We recommend using a content warning appropriate to your group. Here is an example:

Heads up: This content includes themes of domestic and family violence, peer-to-peer violence and the foster care system. Please take care while engaging, and if needed, talk to your teacher to access supports available to you.

In welcoming Bailey’s story, encourage students to be open-minded. Bailey has participated in this film to share his lived experience with others.

While watching activity

Pause the film at each timestamp and pose the following discussion questions:

Timestamp	Discussion questions
1:24	What are some other strategies for coping with frustration or anger?
3:06	Why do you think some parents or people from older generations thought family violence was either 'ok' or should be kept secret?
3:30	Why is 'accepting someone for who they are' important?

After watching activity

Debrief

Take a moment to debrief with the class in your own way, or use these questions:

- What stood out for you in Bailey's story?
- Why was a safe space important for Bailey?

Introduction to creative activity

In Project O, one of Bailey's creative projects was interviewing people – developing questions and learning to ask them at live discussion events.

Some stories can explore topics that seem negative at first, but in hearing more from people with 'lived experience', we can be more empathetic in our understanding. Interviews are a great tool for these kinds of discussions and generally consist of a 'set-up', discussion and 'close'.

Interview tips:

- **Start easy** - Warm-up with simple questions before deeper topics
- **Listen** - Show you're paying attention and try not to interrupt your partner
- **Be respectful** - Everyone's experiences and opinions are valid
- **Be objective** - Remain open to learning from your subject
- **Take your time** - It's okay to pause before answering or asking
- **Follow-up** - If something isn't clear, ask, "Can you tell me more about that?"
- **Say thanks** - Always thank your partner for sharing their experiences.

Creative activity

Part 1: Developing your questions

Set-up

Think of two questions you can ask to make your guest feel welcome.

Discussion

Choose 3 questions from the list below, or develop your own:

- What are some things that you or others can relate to in Bailey's story?
- What kinds of stresses or pressures do young people experience that can make it difficult for them to manage emotions?
- What are some of the reasons why young people might find it difficult to talk about challenges they may be experiencing?
- What are some situations and conditions that young people might face that could lead to aggression or violence?
- When is violence more likely to happen at school?
- Thinking about your school experiences, how can young people choose NOT to use violence even when they feel hurt, angry, jealous or scared?
- What changes at school could make students feel safer and more respected?
- What can be improved for young people now to prevent family violence in the future?

Close

Draft a final reflection or quick question for your interviewee, being prepared for that to change depending on what the discussion brings up!

Part 2: The interview

Get into pairs or groups and practice interviewing each other with your questions. Write down some of the responses or do the interview for the class.

Wrapping up

Write down something that stood out and why - a key takeaway, a question you liked, or an answer that made you think. Then, discuss and attempt to answer the essential question as a class.

Lesson 3: Charlotte

About this video

Charlotte is a young woman participating in the unique prevention program “Project O” (see **Context**, page 8). In this video, Charlotte discusses her experiences of bullying and violence, and the strength she draws on from being a ‘survivor’.

Learning intention

Learn about the impacts of bullying and violence, and one young person’s reflections on resilience and survival.

Essential question

What does Charlotte’s story teach us about survival and the importance of safe spaces for young people?

Key vocabulary

bullying

victim

survivor

resilience

Before watching activity

See **Study Guide overview** on page 1 for kicking off this content series with your class using the discussion prompts and/or the Diversity Welcome.

Introduce Charlotte’s video. We recommend using a content warning appropriate to your group. Here is an example:

Heads up: This content includes themes of domestic and family violence, bullying and peer-to-peer violence. Please take care while engaging, and if needed, talk to your teacher to access supports available to you.

In welcoming Charlotte’s story, encourage students to be open-minded. Charlotte has participated in this film to share her lived experience with others.

While watching activity

Pause the film at each timestamp and pose the following discussion questions:

Timestamp	Discussion questions
1:35	Why do some young people feel like they are the 'odd one out'?
3:43	What are some attributes of a 'survivor'?
4:11	What are some examples Charlotte uses to describe safe places?

After watching activity

Debrief

Take a moment to debrief with the class in your own way, or use these questions:

- What stood out for you in Charlotte's story?
- Where's a good place to go to get support?

Introduction to creative activity

In Project O, Charlotte used poetry to share thoughts and feelings that can be hard to express in everyday conversation. Poetry allows for emotion, imagery, and reflection - often saying big things in small, powerful ways. There are many different forms poetry can take, depending on the message or mood. You could create a free verse, rhyming couplet, haiku or piece of short form poetry.

Poetry tips:

- **Group lines** - You could write several lines in a row using the same starter - creating a sense of progression or stages.
- **Vary length and detail** - Use more or less detail, to keep the rhythm interesting.
- **Build contrast and emotion** - Use different starters to show change e.g. past and future, fear and hope, struggle and strength.
- **Repeat for emphasis** - If a line feels powerful, it's okay to repeat it to remind the reader of your core idea.
- **Be honest** - Share your feelings and hopes, even if they feel small or big.
- **End with hope** - Try finish your poem with something positive or powerful.

Creative activity

Part 1: Sentence starters

Reflect on Charlotte's story and the essential question, and jot down any themes that come to mind. Choose 2-4 sentence starters below, write as many sentences as you can on post-it notes or paper.

- I have seen...
- I have carried...
- I have felt...
- Sometimes I wonder...
- I wish...
- I am...
- We can...
- It matters when...
- No one should...
- I will...
- Like a...
- With a...

Part 2: Assemble a poem

- In groups or pairs, assemble a poem in response to the essential question by arranging different sentences together. Refer to the poetry tips for ideas and remember the themes from Charlotte's video.
- Share the poem with your class or each other.

Wrapping up

Before the lesson ends, write down or share one thing you liked - a key idea, a favourite poem, or a line that really spoke to you.

Lesson 4: Archie

About this video

Archie is a young person participating in the unique prevention program “Project O” (see **Context**, page 8). In this video, Archie reflects on his experiences of violence at school as a young person who struggles to fit in, and how participating in creative activities has helped him cope.

Learning intention

Learn about the situations that can lead to violence, and one young person’s reflections on inclusion, safe spaces and creativity.

Essential question

How can creative activities and inclusive spaces work to prevent violence?

Key vocabulary

bullying

neurodivergence

belonging

inclusive spaces

Before watching activity

See **Study Guide overview** on page 1 for kicking off this content series with your class using the discussion prompts and/or the Diversity Welcome.

Introduce Archie’s video. We recommend using a content warning appropriate to your group, class or school. Here is an example:

Heads up: This content includes themes of neurodivergence, peer-to-peer violence and bullying. Please take care while engaging, and if needed, talk to your teacher to access supports available to you.

In welcoming Archie’s story, encourage students to be open-minded. Archie has participated in this film to share his lived experience with others.

While watching activity

Pause the film at each timestamp and pose the following discussion questions:

Timestamp	Discussion questions
1:35	What do you think Archie means when he talks about emotions making it hard to think?
3:05	What are some ways to describe resilience?

After watching activity

Debrief

Take a moment to debrief with the class in your own way, or use these questions:

- What stood out for you in Archie's story?
- How did participating in the creative projects help Archie feel included?

Introduction to creative activity

In Project O, Archie helped design two card games to express ideas about relationships, choices, and respect. Games might not seem emotional at first, but they can be powerful tools for storytelling, reflection, and change.

In Project O, Archie and his peers were introduced to the concept of 'four respects' by his Māori mentors. Archie helped adapt the concept into one of the games – The Battle of R4.

We'll be taking inspiration from Archie's approach, exploring the four respects to help reflect on some of the themes in his story, and spark conversations about respect, power, and choice.

Battle of R4 – Respect 4 descriptions

Respect for the Kaupapa (purpose) – Kaupapa is a Māori word meaning ‘purpose’. This type of respect is shown by thinking bigger than ourselves. Resisting distractions, showing courage in keeping everyone on track, and contributing to discussions are all ways to Respect the Purpose.

Respect for yourself – This is often thought of as self-care. Respect for yourself can also look like: Be willing to give things a go, make mistakes, and learn from your mistakes.

Respect for others – This is the most commonly taught respect. We can respect others by treating other people how we would like to be treated, to show great etiquette, and to help those in need.

Respect for the environment – This is about being mindful of how the space around us influences us and our role in influencing these spaces.

Creative activity

Part 1: ‘Battle of R4’ card game

- Discuss with your group the four kinds of respect.
- Organise students into small groups.
- Give each group a copy of the *Respect 4 Cards* worksheet (provided on page 28).

Part 2: Play the game

Place students in small groups, and have them follow the instructions below:

1. Place the four types of ‘respect’ cards on the table in separate piles
2. As a team, what category do you think each scenario belongs in? Refer to the Respect 4 category descriptions.
3. Place the scenario cards under one of the four respect categories.
4. Once completed, try and come up with at least one new scenario as a group for each type of respect.

Wrapping up

Before the lesson ends, write down or discuss with the class your key takeaways.

LESSON 4: ARCHIE

Respect 4 Cards

Cut out the cards below along the dotted lines.

The four main 'respect' cards are your base cards. The rest of the cards are 'scenarios' – you need to choose which category of respect they belong to!

Respect 4 THE KAUPAPA (purpose)	Respect 4 YOURSELF	Respect 4 OTHERS	Respect 4 THE ENVIRONMENT
You picked up your rubbish that you dropped and put it in the bin... because it's your rubbish. #MakesSense	You shared your thoughts in a roundtable discussion despite feeling nervous and afraid of being judged. Great work!	You were helping set up lots of seats for a Creative Symposium event. Each seat needed a pen and pair of headphones. You worked hard to set up the space with all the chairs evenly aligned with the pen and headphones neatly placed. The audience loved the vibe!	You focused on what your teacher had planned for science class, despite multiple distractions today. Great focus!

<p>You were afraid to try a new sport because you were worried about what others would think. But you tried it anyway! Great effort!</p>	<p>You see someone crying with a cut on their leg. Instead of laughing at them like the others, you help them get medical attention. #Kindness</p>	<p>You've just been through a hard time and instead of beating yourself up about it, you treat yourself and relax. #BeKind</p>	<p>You got to be a photographer for a community event. You focused on the event and enjoyed capturing special moments. #LensOfRespect</p>
<p>You picked up someone else's rubbish and put it in the bin. Because you care!</p>	<p>You're starting to get into fitness and it's inspiring you to make healthier food choices. #HealthyEnergy</p>	<p>You accepted an opportunity to speak on a panel with some peers and guest speakers, helping to generate conversation. The audience left the event reflecting on how they can be more accepting of people in their community. You did that!</p>	<p>You failed a maths test despite trying really hard. But you studied the answers you got wrong, learned the correct answers, and got better. Let's go!</p>
<p>One of your friends shared that they are now non-binary. Instead of judging them like the others, you support them. #TrueFriends</p>	<p>You performed "You are welcome here" on stage, despite being really nervous. You ended up enjoying it! #HypeCrew</p>	<p>You stayed back after class to help clean the room because everyone made a big mess! Thank you!</p>	<p>You and your friends are mucking around, and you see they are getting annoyed. They ask you to stop... so you do! #Understanding</p>

Reference sheet (for teachers)

The groups below reflect the correct placement of the cards.

Respect for the Kaupapa (Purpose)

- You shared your thoughts in a roundtable discussion despite feeling nervous and afraid of being judged. Great work!
- You got to be a photographer for a community event. You focused on the event and enjoyed capturing special moments. #LensOfRespect
- You focused on what your teacher had planned for science class, despite multiple distractions today. Great focus!
- You performed “You are welcome here” on stage, despite being really nervous. You ended up enjoying it! #HypeCrew

Respect for Yourself

- You’ve just been through a hard time and instead of beating yourself up about it, you treat yourself and relax. #BeKind
- You’re starting to get into fitness and it’s inspiring you to make healthier food choices. #HealthyEnergy
- You failed a maths test despite trying really hard. But you studied the answers you got wrong, learned the correct answers, and got better. Let’s go!
- You were afraid to try a new sport because you were worried about what others would think. But you tried it anyway! Great effort!

Respect for Others

- You and your friends are mucking around, and you see they are getting annoyed. They ask you to stop... so you do! #Understanding
- You see someone crying with a cut on their leg. Instead of laughing at them like the others, you help them get medical attention. #Kindness
- One of your friends shared that they are now non-binary. Instead of judging them like the others, you support them. #TrueFriends
- You accepted an opportunity to speak on a panel with some peers and guest speakers. In doing so, you helped generate conversation and the audience left the event reflecting on how they can be more open and accepting of people in their community. You did that!

Respect for the Environment

- You picked up your rubbish that you dropped and put it in the bin... because it’s your rubbish. #MakesSense
- You stayed back after class to help clean the room because everyone made a big mess! Thank you!
- You were helping set up lots of seats for a Creative Symposium event. Each seat needed a pen and pair of headphones. You worked hard to set up the space with all the chairs evenly aligned with the pen and headphones neatly placed. The audience loved the vibe!
- You picked up someone else’s rubbish and put it in the bin. Because you care!

Lesson 5: Xiao

About this video

Xiao is a young person participating in the unique prevention program “Project O” (see **Context**, page 8). In this video, Xiao shares her experiences of shyness as a child, growing up in a community with high rates of violence, and how creative activities have helped her to find a voice and speak up.

Learning intention

Finding your voice to speak up about issues you care about can be empowering and healing.

Essential question

Why is it important that young people can speak up about important issues?

Key vocabulary

mentorship

finding voice

advocacy

family violence

Before watching activity

See **Study Guide overview** on page 1 for kicking off this content series with your class using the discussion prompts and/or the Diversity Welcome.

Introduce Xiao’s video. We recommend using a content warning appropriate to your group. Here is an example:

Heads up: This content includes themes of domestic and family violence. Please take care while engaging, and if needed, talk to your teacher to access supports available to you.

In welcoming Xiao’s story, encourage students to be open-minded. Xiao has participated in this film to share his lived experience with others.

While watching activity

Pause the film at each timestamp and pose the following discussion questions:

Timestamp	Discussion questions
2:22	How has Project O helped Xiao discuss things like family violence?
2:52	What are the key points that come out of the discussion with Xiao and her peers?
3:52	Why is it important for young people to be part of the solution to preventing family violence?

After watching activity

Debrief

Take a moment to debrief with the class in your own way, or use these questions:

- What stood out for you in Xiao's story?
- Xiao shared her perspective on respect – what does respect look like to you?

Introduction to creative activity

As part of Project O, Xiao wrote and delivered a speech for a public event. Speaking in front of others can be challenging, but it can also be a powerful way to share a message, raise awareness, and inspire change.

We'll be using Xiao's work as inspiration to craft our own short speeches — expressing ideas about respect, identity, or change, and finding our voices to speak up about what matters.

Speech writing tips:

- **Be yourself:** Write the way you naturally speak. You don't have to use fancy words. Honesty and clarity are powerful.
- **Connect:** Imagine you're talking to people you care about. Use phrases like "Have you ever felt..." or "I believe we all..." to help your audience relate.
- **Share your experience:** Use stories or examples from your own life that make your speech more real and interesting.
- **Persuade them:** Words like important, unfair, hopeful, courageous, change, and together help convey emotion and urgency.

Creative activity

Part 1: Write an introduction to a speech

Write an introductory paragraph to your own speech. Think about the things that matter most to you and other young people growing up today. Why is it important for you to be able to speak up about these issues? What gets in the way and makes it hard to share your thoughts at school or in your community? In your introduction, talk honestly about these challenges and what could help you and others feel more confident and supported to use your voice.

Choose one issue you care about and tell us why it matters to you and perhaps to your peers, and why people should listen. See speech writing tips.

Use any of the prompts below to help you develop your introduction:

- Greet your audience.
- Introduce yourself - tell us one or two key things about who you are.
- Share a sentence that helps everyone feel welcome and included.
- Explain why you believe it's important for young people to speak up about the issues that matter to them.
- Share your ideas about what could be done to better support young people to speak up.
- Talk about one important issue you personally care about, and why – for example, respect, relationships, or family violence.
- Propose a question for your listeners, or a solution.

Part 2: Deliver the introduction

Share your introduction with the class, or each other.

Wrapping up

Before the lesson ends, write down or share with the class your key takeaways.

Lesson 6: Rosie

About this video

Rosie Batty is a family violence prevention advocate and a mentor in the unique prevention program “Project O” (see **Context**, page 8). In this video, Rosie reflects on the experience of her son, Luke Batty, being murdered by his father, how this has shaped her life and advocacy, and the importance of working with young people.

Learning intention

Learn about the significance of Luke Batty’s death, the role of ‘lived experience’ in family violence advocacy, and the importance of centering the voices of young people to prevent family violence.

Essential question

How does Rosie Batty's advocacy and courage help others and contribute to family violence prevention?

Key vocabulary

lived experience

advocacy

healing

family violence

Before watching activity

See **Study Guide overview** on page 1 for kicking off this content series with your class using the discussion prompts and/or the Diversity Welcome.

Introduce Rosie’s video. We recommend using a content warning appropriate to your group, class or school. Here is an example:

Heads up: This content includes themes of family violence, death and child loss. Please take care while engaging, and if needed, talk to your teacher to access supports available to you.

In welcoming Rosie’s story, encourage students to be open-minded. Rosie has participated in this film to share his lived experience with others.

While watching activity

Pause the film at each timestamp and pose the following discussion questions:

Timestamp	Discussion questions
1:57	Rosie's story is personal and difficult. Why is it important to hear?
3:36	What can young people learn from Rosie?
4:03	What can adults learn from young people?
5:05	What are we learning from Rosie about advocacy?

After watching activity

Debrief

Take a moment to debrief with the class in your own way, or use these questions:

- What stood out for you in Rosie's story?
- How do you think Rosie's story and mentorship have helped to inspire young people?

Introduction to creative activity

In Project O, Rosie Batty took part as a mentor, helping to guide discussion roundtables with young people. These roundtables weren't just about talking - but about listening deeply, sharing perspectives, and finding common ground. Inspired by Rosie's role and these Project O conversations, we'll be holding our own small group discussions — exploring themes like respect, power and safety. This is a chance to listen, reflect, and have a shared conversation about what matters.

Roundtable tips:

- Start the activities and roundtable with a simple, generic question to warm up into deeper discussions. For example: *Does pineapple belong on pizza?*
- Use a talking toy/stick. Whoever has the talking toy can speak while others respectfully listen.
- Finish the roundtable with a quick icebreaker.

💡 Creative activity

Part 1: Safety spectrum

On a whiteboard or butcher's paper, note the words 'safe' and 'unsafe' at different ends of a line.

Give students some sticky notes each.

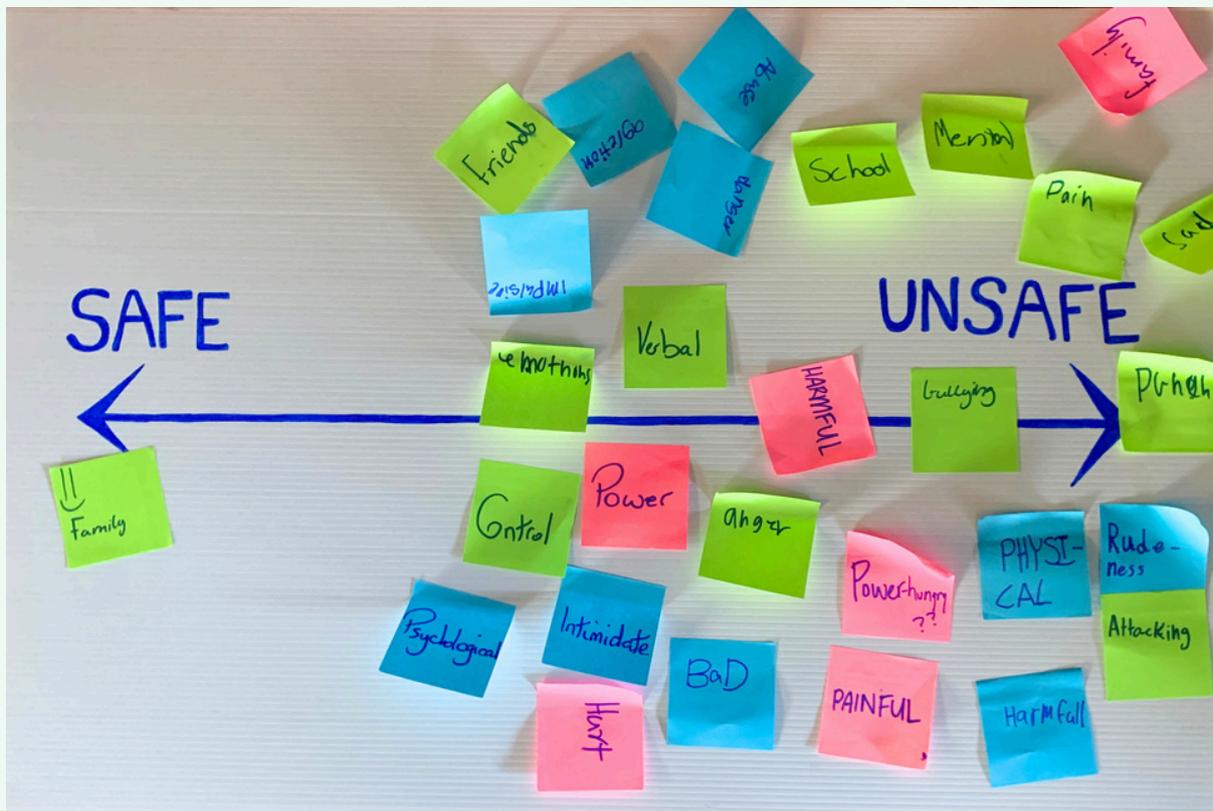
Facilitate a discussion with students on different examples or experiences (physical, mental, emotional) of being safe and unsafe.

Ask them to write their thoughts and ideas down on sticky notes, and to place the sticky notes along the spectrum.

Prompts might include:

- Where/when/why do you feel safe?
- What are some examples of unsafe situations?

Visual example



Next, help students think about common ideas and stereotypes in society and their own community, by asking the following questions.

These questions are to explore what society thinks, what people think – in YOUR community. So... we're being very binary for a reason – because we're talking about dominant or mainstream culture.

- According to society or your community, what words describe the "ideal" girl or woman?
- According to society or your community, what words describe the "ideal" boy or man?

Write one-word answers on the sticky notes. Try to write as many words as possible in a short space of time (approx 2mins).

Now, encourage students to again place these sticky notes along the spectrum.

At the 'unsafe' end of the spectrum, examples of the different forms of violence might emerge, and how these can relate to gender. This can create a peer-led jumping off point for sharing perspectives on the different forms of violence, and how we can tip the scale towards safer spaces.

Part 2: Roundtable

The teacher facilitates a group discussion working through some or all of these provocations:

- What are ways people feel pressured to behave to live up to these ideals daily?
- How do these behaviours make you feel?
- How can these ideals and behaviours make people feel small, diminished and out of control?
- How do these ideals and behaviours make people feel tall, strong, in control?
- How do these ideals and behaviours create power imbalances and how can these imbalances lead to violent behaviours?
- How do gender stereotypes link to gender-based violence?
- Where do the 'ideal girl and boy' sticky notes fit on the safe/unsafe board?
- How can we challenge these norms and behaviours?

Wrapping up

Before the lesson ends, write down or share with the class your key takeaway or favourite roundtable discovery.

Support referrals



If these videos or Study Guide have raised anything for you or your students, you're not alone, and support is available if you need it.

Please talk to someone you trust— like a teacher, school counsellor, family member or youth worker.

You can also contact the following support lines:

1800RESPECT – 1800 737 732

A free, confidential service for anyone experiencing sexual assault, domestic or family violence. Available 24/7 to talk, listen and help you find support.

13YARN – 13 92 76

A free, confidential support line for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Speak with a trained Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander crisis supporter 24/7.

PeerChat (ReachOut) - au.reachout.com/peerchat

A free, one-on-one, anonymous, text-based service for young people aged 16-25 years old. It's a safe and secure space to talk about what's going on for you, with a ReachOut peer worker who has their own lived experience of mental health.

Kids Helpline – 1800 55 1800

A free, private and 24/7 phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5–25. You can talk about anything — big or small.

Safe Steps (Victoria only) – 1800 015 188

A 24/7 crisis support and accommodation service for anyone in Victoria experiencing family violence. They're there to help you find safety.

Rainbow Door (Victoria only) – 1800 729 367 (call) or 0480 017 246 (text)

A free, confidential support service for all LGBTQI+ people in Victoria. Call or text between 10am to 5pm everyday to speak to a peer support worker for support, advice, information and referral.