Background

This session is the first step in a process of self-reflection that students will be asked to engage in over the course of this program. The self-reflection process is designed to encourage the students to get to know and like themselves better and also to recognise the role of self in increasing connectedness both within the school setting and in the wider community. As a commencement activity, students will be asked to share materials they have collected during the previous week that reflect images of adolescents portrayed in print and visual media, in songs, advertising, and by adults in a variety of settings (e.g. school, family, shops). Through this, they will gain a greater awareness of stereotypes about young people.

Students will be asked to generate a common list of issues, challenges, and problems that typically confront young people (e.g. social pressures, physical changes, family expectations). The relationship between these issues and existing portrayals will be discussed. In addition, students will be able to determine whether these are also issues for themselves as well as recognising that there may be considerable individual and contextual differences that influence the extent to which issues are important to other students. These issues may also be incorporated as discussion points in activities in following sessions throughout the program.

Learning outcomes

Students will analyse issues and challenges associated with adolescent development and significant transitions.

In this session, students will:

• identify significant issues associated with changes and transitions during adolescence; and

• identify some resilient skills to cope with a personal challenge or change.

Describe ways people define their own and other’s identity.

In this session, students will:

• define what is meant by stereotypes; and

• describe how stereotypes influence images of adolescence.

In this session, students will understand the requirements of the ongoing assessment task.
**session outline**

- Review
- Activity 1. Portrayal of adolescents and stereotypes
- Optional/extension activity
- Activity 2. Times of change
- Reflection
- Introduction of assessment task
- Home tasks

**Preparation/resources**

- It may be necessary to gather a series of pictures, posters, newspaper clippings and articles that portray adolescents, to supplement those brought by students.
1. Review the previous session — e.g. purpose of the program, resilience and classroom agreement.

2. Review home tasks. Did they research resilient skills and characteristics? What did they find? Have students collected images of adolescents for the task today?

3. Link to current session.

**Points to make**

- **This program is designed to build resilience.**
- **Being resilient (emotionally strong) helps you to build good relationships, cope with life challenges and to pursue goals as both an individual and a member of a community.**
- **The classroom agreement sets standards for a safe and supportive environment that helps students feel valued and respected.**
- **Today’s session will be about how other people and society view adolescents and the issues and challenges that occur during adolescence.**
Activity 1. Portrayal of adolescents and stereotypes [5–10 mins]

Process

1. Have the class move into their groups and share the adolescent images they collected for homework.
2. Have the groups discuss what they think is the ‘stereotyped’ view of an adolescent that is promoted by society. Refer students to page 18 of the Student Workbook to list some of the characteristics of an adolescent as portrayed by the media.

Points to make

• A variety of images of adolescents exist in the media, in advertising, in schools, families, and the community. These images can have an impact on how people react to adolescents and consequently interact with others.
• Being represented in certain ways or choosing to portray a particular image can give different messages.
• Stereotypes can be a useful way to categorise our world and they provide some clues about how we expect certain people to behave. They allow us to make sense of our world and to reduce large amounts of information about people into more manageable chunks. They also tell us about our own group membership. However, they can create prejudice and they stop us considering people as individuals.
• Stereotypes may make it difficult for individuals to behave in ways they would like or to try different things (e.g. boys don’t cry; girls can’t read maps).

Purpose

The activity aims to highlight to students that certain images or perceptions of adolescents exist within society. This activity will lay the foundation for students to begin reflecting on the influences on their own self-concept.
1. Ask the students to decide within the group what they think is a realistic image of an adolescent and to make a list of the characteristics of a ‘real’ adolescent on page 18 of the Student Workbook.

2. Have the students report back their findings and discuss whether the ‘one size fits all’ concept of an adolescent is useful, and does this image affect how adolescents see themselves.
   - If so, is this good or not so good?
   - What happens if you don’t fit the image?
   - What other information about people can you use to make better judgements about them?
   - Is there other information you would like others to use to make judgements about you?
**Activity 2. Times of change [15–20 mins]**

**Process**

1. Allocate one of the four pictures depicting adolescents on pages 109 to 112 of the Student Workbook to each group.

2. Then refer students to page 19 of the Student Workbook and have them answer the questions about their impressions of the person/s in the picture.
   - What are the first words you think of when you look at the picture?
   - What do you think might be happening in this person’s/these people’s life? List some of the issues that could be facing this person/these people in the different areas of their life:
     - Social
     - Physical
     - Family
     - School
     - Other
   - How do you think this person/these people might be feeling?

3. Have each group report back to the class. On the board, draw up the table above and record the list of adolescent issues generated by the groups.

4. Have a class discussion about these issues, drawing out the ideas that many of them are unique to this period of development and can significantly impact on self-esteem and self-concept.

**Points to make**

- Changes in our lives can have an impact on our self-perception, our interactions with others and the challenges and problems that we experience.
- There are things that we can do or people we can call on to help make these transitions smoother. We may also be able to help others with transitions in their lives.

**Purpose**

Students will begin to identify changes and challenges that occur in adolescence leading them to consider the particular issues that are relevant for them as individuals.

Adolescence is a time of significant change and transition.
Adolescents face a range of challenges in their social, physical, family and school domains.
There are things you can do to help make this time easier.
5. Refer students back to the adolescent in the photo. Working in groups, have students:
   • think about who are the people (sources of support) who might be able to help if this person is having problems?
   • consider the support that might be available in the different contexts of their life (at home, school, or in the community).

6. Have students list these sources of support on page 20 of the Student Workbook.

7. Refer students to page 108 of the Student Workbook which lists the sources of support that are available if they or their friends are experiencing difficulties.

**Reflection [5 mins]**

Refer students to page 21 of the Student Workbook. Ask students to complete the following tasks:

- Refer to the table on the board of adolescent issues generated by the class.
- Make a list of the six issues you think are most influencing your life.
- Consider the following:
  - How do these issues affect the way you feel about yourself?
  - How do media stereotypes affect the way you feel about yourself?
1. Explain to the students that they will be working in their groups on an assessment task. As a team they will be able to choose from one of the two tasks.

2. Explain the purpose of the activity and how it will be assessed.

3. Refer students to pages 22 to 26 of the Student Workbook. Have the students read the assessment tasks and as a team decide upon the task of their choice.

4. Allow the students time to share ideas with each other about the group task, discussing the most appropriate format. Encourage the students to think about it over the coming weeks.

Purpose
The aim of the task is to have students implement the knowledge and skills gained throughout the program in lifelike situations. The reflective tasks at the end of each session will form a bridge for this transfer of knowledge and skills. To allow for individual differences in learning styles and preferences, the final product may take one of several forms: pamphlet, poster, song, mural, play, poem, Web page, magazine, marketing campaign, report, etc. The final product needs to be designed with an authentic audience in mind, e.g. parents, teachers, other adolescents, policy makers.

See Resource 2.1 for the outlines and criteria for the assessment tasks.
Home tasks [1–2 mins]

Refer students to page 27 of the Student Workbook. The home tasks this week are:

• Choose an advertisement to review (this could be a TV, radio, magazine or billboard advertisement). Examine the way the media uses stereotypes to give us messages about particular individuals and situations:
  – What is the advertisement selling?
  – Who is it aimed at?
  – Is it using stereotypes to sell the product? How?
  – Does this advertisement appeal to you? Why or why not?

• Read the assessment task in your own time and start planning.
Assessment task 1

Stereotyping

This task is designed to explain the effects of stereotyping and the media on images of adolescents and on individual self-concept. Class groups will illustrate, through a presentation to their class, how popular media, e.g. television, newspapers, magazines, and music, define images of young people. They will describe how different generations view young people, and they will develop an image, through words or pictures, of how young people view themselves. They will identify those personal characteristics that help to define each member of the group.

In completing the task, you will be working towards achieving the following outcomes:

Describe ways people define their own and others’ identity.

- Students will describe how stereotypes influence images of adolescence.

Recommend and demonstrate skills that promote a positive self-concept and resilience.

- Students will generate and use self-praising statements.

The task can be presented, for example, as a poster, an oral presentation, a pictorial record or a letter.
The completed task should include the following components:

### Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In this task you are required to:</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collect</strong> pictures, words or illustrations, to give examples of stereotypes, particularly in relation to adolescents — girls, boys, famous, not famous, sports people.</td>
<td>The final presentation should include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Choose</strong> 3 or 4 pictures or drawings.</td>
<td>A minimum of three pictures, quotes, illustrations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Record</strong> the first impressions of the group to the pictures, using the first words you think of when you look at the pictures. The descriptions can be one word, a phrase or a sentence that clearly describe the images the pictures or drawings are portraying.</td>
<td>Interviews with at least two people.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Describe</strong> in words the stereotypes of adolescents portrayed in the pictures.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Record</strong> these first impressions, and the words describing the stereotypes, in your final presentation, alongside the relevant pictures or illustrations.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Discuss</strong> how these images influence expectations we have of ourselves and that others have of us, and:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>List</strong> some of these expectations; and</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>List</strong> when these stereotypical images are useful and when are they harmful, e.g. they could be good role models, they encourage a sense of belonging, they market a particular product, they encourage unrealistic images in relation to expectations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use</strong> the following headings: <em>media, older people and adolescents</em> and <strong>record</strong>:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• what the media says about adolescents — use some quotes from magazines and newspapers</td>
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<td>• what older people say about adolescents — ask some people you know (parents, teachers, neighbours, grandparents)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• what you say about adolescents — use some positive words, and some words about how you (the members of the group) feel when you hear statements that are unfair or untrue.</td>
<td>(You could develop a collage of sayings, pictures, quotes, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Discuss</strong> with the group some examples of helpful self-talk that young people could use when confronted with unfair images.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Record</strong> these examples on your final presentation.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Discuss</strong> positive qualities of each member of the group, or qualities members would like to develop, and <strong>record</strong> on the final presentation.</td>
<td>Evidence that each member of the group has contributed to the task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finally, <strong>record</strong> examples of positive ‘adolescent self-talk’ that illustrate the different qualities of each member of your group.</td>
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</table>
Assessment task 2

Surviving a bad day

This task is designed to illustrate how our thoughts about different events influence feelings, mood and interactions with others, and to identify strategies and sources of support to help cope with the events.

In completing the task, you will be working towards achieving the following outcomes:

Evaluate the influences on self-concept, self-esteem and resilience

• Students will describe the role of different thoughts in specific situations and the influence of these thoughts on subsequent feelings/mood.

Recommend and demonstrate skills that promote a positive self-concept and resilience

• Students will select resilience strategies that they have found to be personally useful; and
• Identify sources of support in the school community.

The task could be presented as a small booklet, or in a folder. The map and cards could be presented on an OHT or as a handout.
The completed task should include the following components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In this task you are required to:</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Use</strong> the following story as a guide, and <strong>write</strong> a story of a day at school, including some good things that happened and some ‘disasters’. Include no more than five or six events.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Today</strong> is Wednesday, sports day. I’m not really any good at sport anyway and Steve always yells at me and bumps into me so I lose the ball and everyone laughs. First lesson, Maths, one I really like and what happens? I’ve done the wrong homework and Mr Mitchell asks me first for the answers. Look like an idiot. At least I’ve got a decent lunch today. Tried out for the Year 8 play. Paula says I won’t make it, I’m too short. Afternoon as bad as I thought, had to play anyway and as usual lost the ball twice to the other side, Steve yelling as usual. Can’t wait to get out of here!!</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Write</strong> down each of the events or happenings, and against each one:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>Describe</strong>:</td>
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<td>• what words (self-talk) might the student be saying to her/himself, both positive and negative</td>
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<td>• how the student in the story might feel</td>
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<td>• what body language might the student be showing</td>
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<td>• how might the student act (e.g. individual actions, actions towards others)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• who could the student go to for help</td>
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<tr>
<td>• what might the student say when asking for help or support</td>
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<tr>
<td>• some actions others in the class could take to help the student feel better.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>Make a survival kit</strong> that includes:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• a map of all the sources of help and support you can think of in the school for young people</td>
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<tr>
<td>• cards that give ideas for resilience skills that would help a young person to cope with a really bad day.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>Record</strong> examples of positive self-talk that a young person could use to help them cope better with a very difficult day.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The final presentation should include:</td>
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<tr>
<td>At least five sources of help</td>
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<tr>
<td>At least four cards</td>
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<tr>
<td>At least three examples of positive self-talk</td>
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</table>