

Teaching and learning activity

For students in Year 3 to 6



Overview

This resource provides a teaching guide for the Growing connections video, delivered as part of the 2023 National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence.

This activity is suitable for students in Year 3 to 6, and highlights the importance of a sense of belonging and connectedness to support student social and emotional wellbeing and the prevention of bullying.

Learning intention

Students will understand what connection means.

Students will recognise the connections that they have in their lives, and understand how this can contribute to bullying prevention.

Resources

- [Growing connections video](#)
- Blank paper
- Writing equipment
- Colouring equipment (optional)

Learning sequence (30-40mins)

- Facilitate class discussion (5mins)
- Watch the Growing connections video (2mins)
- Context and questions (10-15mins)
- Activity and follow up discussion (15mins)

Curriculum links

[Australian Curriculum Links version 8.4](#)

Years 3 and 4 Health and Physical Education Achievement Standards

Students investigate how emotional responses vary and understand how to interact positively with others in a variety of situations.

Students describe the connections they have to their community.

Years 5 and 6 Health and Physical Education Achievement Standards

Students recognise the influence of emotions on behaviours and discuss factors that influence how people interact.

Students examine how physical activity, celebrating diversity and connecting to the environment support community wellbeing and cultural understanding.

Personal and Social Capabilities

Social awareness element

Social management element

Cross-Curricular Priorities

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures
Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia



Important to note

This teaching and learning activity provides an opportunity for students to focus on the connections that they have in their lives. By establishing connections in different areas of their lives, students will be best supported to seek help if bullying does occur.

Knowing exactly what bullying is and understanding why it happens are critical to finding positive and lasting solutions for everyone involved. Bullying is a complex, multifaceted issue, different in each school and year level. The appropriate way to respond will be different for each situation and every student.

Teachers may need to scaffold student responses about bullying to ensure they are appropriate. When discussing bullying, it is recommended that teachers ensure:

- students are aware that this activity is a general discussion on what to do when responding to the topic of bullying and that students can raise their concerns with you after class
- there is currently no obvious or immediate bullying issue — if there is, this may not be the right time for the class. In some cases, it may be better to delay this discussion until the problems are addressed
- students know classroom rules for talking and contributing ideas — remind students that bullying is a sensitive topic, and it is important to use respectful listening
- they avoid using class role-play related to this topic as it can raise issues and cause distress to some students
- they know how to use protective interrupting (acknowledge that they have heard the student but stop them from divulging further details) if a student begins to reveal inappropriate personal information about themselves or other students. Refer to your school policies and procedures for advice about responding to disclosures
- that any students who become distressed should be referred for support to guidance officer or other appropriate staff member and parents or carers to be notified.

School connectedness

The Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO, 2023) describes a student's sense of belonging at school as school connectedness. When a student feels valued, accepted, and connected to their environment, there are flow-on benefits that support their learning and engagement. Positive connections with peers and the school community can enhance the development of students' cognitive, behavioural and emotional engagement. Further benefits of school connectedness which can help to prevent bullying include improved academic outcomes, reduced absenteeism, increased trust and respect, and empathy.

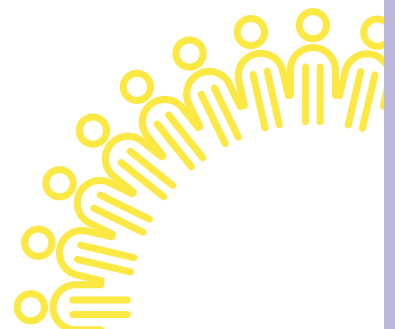
More information and resources

Bullying. No Way! – Supporting school communities with evidence-informed resources and activities for a proactive approach to bullying education and prevention.

Australian Education Research Organisation – Encouraging a sense of belonging and connectedness in primary schools.

Be You – Supporting educators to develop a positive, inclusive and resilient learning community.

Australian Student Wellbeing Framework



Activity

Introduction 5mins

Facilitate a class discussion around the words, "connection", "community", and (if applicable) "bullying".

For younger students, connections can mean a person that they have something in common with. If scaffolding is required during this conversation, you could review the definitions of these words, and what they mean for your class context.

Video 2mins

[Watch the Growing connections video](#)

Activity / Context

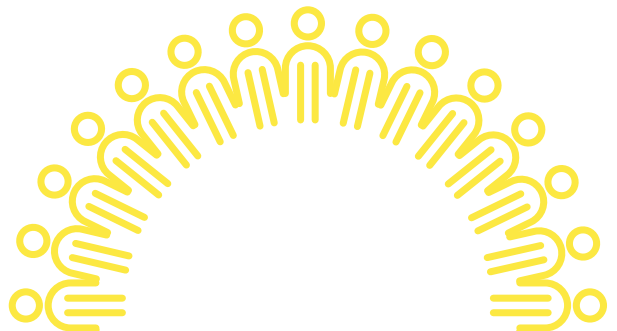
Teacher reads statement below -

"When someone has many connections to people and places, they feel safe, happy and supported. The more connections they have, the better they are at coping with challenging situations in their life. Being connected and having people to talk to or to ask for help are great ways to prevent bullying."

Questions 10mins

Brainstorm with students the connections they have in their life. These connections can be at different levels: family, school, community, etc.

- When your friends say hello or ask you to join their activities, how does that make you feel?
- When teachers welcome you to the class, how does that make you feel?
- When you are feeling happy (connected/relaxed/calm), how does that influence how you behave at school and with your friends?
- Does everyone always agree or have the same opinion? Why/why not?
- Does everyone communicate in the same way at your school?
- What are some ways that students at our school connect with each other?
- What support do your connections give you?
- How do you connect with these people? (Consider connections with school staff as well)
- How can you make more connections/how can you connect with people who you don't know well, or are different to you?
- Do you think online platforms make connections better or worse? How?
- How does growing connections help prevent bullying?
- How could you support someone that was involved in bullying/going through a tough time?
- How can you make a new connection in your life?

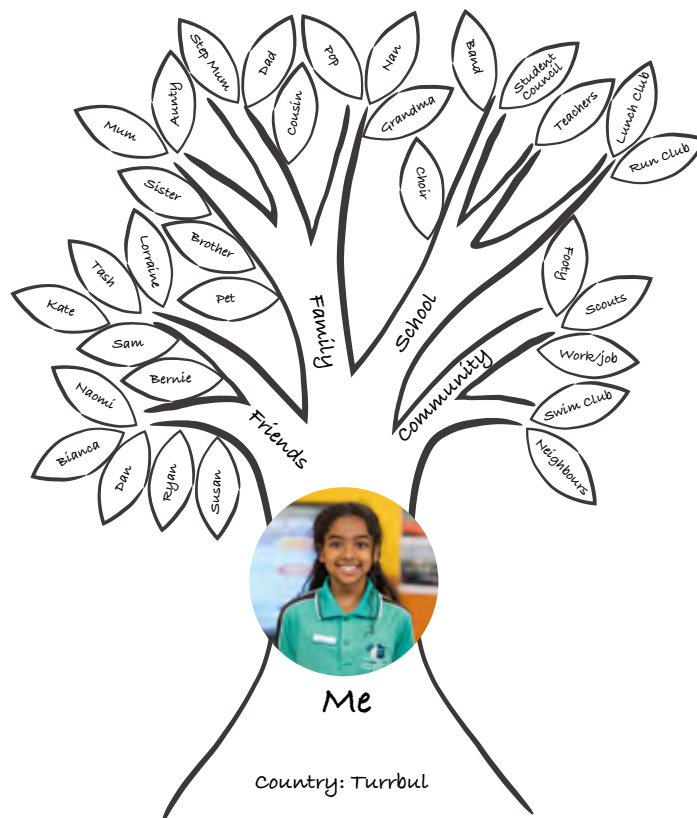


Activity

Activity
15mins

Make a **Tree of Connections** to create a powerful visual statement about connections:

1. Using a blank sheet of paper, students draw a tree trunk with roots in the ground.
2. Students write their name and draw themselves on the tree trunk.
3. The tree roots in the ground symbolise connection to Country. Write the name of Country where the activity is being held. If you are unsure of the Country where you currently are, find information on the [Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies \(AIATSIS\)](#) website.
4. Students then draw and label four branches out from the trunk. These branches are: Family, Friends, School, Community.
5. Students can draw leaves from each branch to highlight the connections they have for each of these groups.
For example:
 - Family – parent/carer, siblings, grandparents, aunty/uncle, pet, cousins
 - Friends – names of friends from school or outside school
 - School – sporting or music groups, leadership groups, clubs, school staff
 - Community – Cultural connections, sports and recreation teams, arts activities, neighbours, etc.
6. Students could create a goal/s, for a new connection that they could make in each of the four categories.
7. Facilitate a whole class discussion reflecting on connections, shown by the growth of their trees.



Differentiation

- Replay video to support student understanding.
- Teacher can draw a tree template (trunk, branches, roots) and photocopy for students to use in groups or as individuals.
- Teacher can create one whole class tree, where students write/draw their connections on paper leaves, which can be added to the class tree.
- Students can colour in (for example, current connections can be one colour, goal connections another).
- Students can draw their connections on the tree, rather than write them.
- Students can offer peer support to other students.