

Secondary| Year 8+

Diversity Role Models Teachers Resource

Theme: Social Pressure



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Overview

How To Use This Resource

This resource accompanies a video or series of videos from our inspiring Role Models sharing their personal stories. Each resource covers a different topic area and comes with discussion questions, challenge questions, suggested activities and challenge activities. Further notes for teachers are written in italics or in boxes.



Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify the different types of pressure a young person may face.
- Consider the emotional impact of pressure turning to stress. Suggest ways to combat this.
- Explore social pressure from social media platforms and/or historical contexts.

Suggested Age

All materials should be reviewed by teaching staff to ensure they are appropriate and can be adapted to suit your class' needs.

Diversity Role Models recommend Ben's story for Year 8+, Eva's story for Year 9+ and Anne's story for Year 10+

Curriculum Links

- **English:**
Comprehension
- **PSHE:** Diversity, equality, LGBTQ+ identities, Peer Pressure, Social Pressure, Social Media
- **History:** LGBTQ+ Rights, Social Pressure

Notes

Students may be introduced to new terms in this resource, the definitions of which are in the 'useful definitions' section of this resource.

This resource discusses a range of pressures and care should be taken to ensure students can speak to staff about pressures they may be facing.

Overview

Summary of stories

Ben's Story

Ben reflects on their experiences at school, of never feeling like they belonged, of the pressure they felt to fit in, and the bullying they faced as a result of being different. They talk about finding their true self and the happiness and joy this brought them. Ben uses they/them pronouns and is non-binary.

This video discusses peer pressure, bullying, coming out, LGBTQ+ identities, and the importance of accepting your true self. Recommended for Year 8+



[▶ Watch Here](#)

Eva's Story

Eva discussed the pressures she felt from home and at school to follow a certain path. She reflects upon the bullying she experienced and the effect this had on her mental health. She discusses the things that helped her on her journey to discovering her true self and finally feeling liberated and happy.

This video discusses family pressures, bullying, coming out, LGBTQ+ identities, and the importance of accepting your true self. Recommended for Year 9 +



[▶ Watch Here](#)

Anne's Story

Anne reflects on the pressure she felt from family and friends growing up and the impact this had. She discusses her journey to embracing her identity and living the life she was suppose to live.

This video discusses family pressures, peer pressure, divorce, coming out, LGBTQ+ identities, and the journey to discovering your true self. Recommended for Year 10+



[▶ Watch Here](#)

Top Tips

For facilitating positive discussions in your classroom

1. Working Agreement

As a group, set some simple agreements for how to engage with the lesson. This could include:

- The importance of listening to each other and respecting all of our views
- Taking turns and not having to answer if you don't want to
- Using appropriate and respectful language
- Trying to build dialogue not debate

Cover the importance of confidentiality, but be sure to explain the school's safeguarding policy and explain when, why, and with whom you may need to share something that is said in the lesson.

2. Facilitate: Basketball Not Tennis

Create space for young people to explore and express their views with each other, not just with the teacher.

- Consider including small group or pair discussion, plenary, role play or creative approaches.
- Consider the layout of the room and how small groups or circles can help build dialogue between students. We're aiming for ideas to be bounced around the room like a basketball, not back and forth with the teacher like tennis!

Be sensitive to the needs of each individual and share clear ways young people can get support if they have been impacted by any of the issues discussed. Be wary about sharing your personal views but ensure that you reflect the school values, policies and laws in relation to equality and inclusion.

3. Managing Questions

It's important that young people feel empowered to ask the questions that are important to them. Consider some techniques that could give young people the confidence to ask questions, such as by writing them down rather than asking them aloud.

Not all questions need a whole class answer on the spot. If you need more time to think, or feel that a question would be better answered outside of a whole-class setting then say: *'That's a brilliant question and deserves a good answer, let me take some time and get back to you with an answer'*.

4. Distancing Techniques

Our videos are a great way of sharing an engaging and impactful narrative, that is relevant to pupils' lives while not making the issue too personal for pupils. This allows young people to engage in an objective way, avoiding defensive reactions, while still exploring ideas around empathy, allyship, and identity. It will also help you manage challenging questions as you could suggest some of the ways others might feel rather than having to share your view or your personal experiences.

5. Questions For Dialogue And Deep Engagement

Ask open and stretching questions, or better still, get the young people to come up with their own. You could ask young people to generate questions for the role models featured and then consider how each might answer.

We've compiled some questions aimed at building empathy and encouraging discussion on the key themes. Remember to ask probing questions to draw out more depth and reflection from pupils such as *'That's brilliant, could you expand and tell us why you think that?'*. Consider asking philosophical questions such as *'Why do you think that is right/ wrong?'* too.

Suggested Questions

See Appendix 1 for a worksheet featuring these questions.

Ben's Story

1. How and why did Ben struggle when they first started school?

They felt different to everyone else; they didn't feel like they didn't fitted in; they felt like an outsider; they struggled to make friends and struggled to connect with other children; other children were wary of Ben because they were different.

2. Ben said they had no one to look up to, or to be themselves around. How did this impact them?

They spent a lot of time on their own, they became very insular, they didn't make friends, they didn't go out.

3. Ben was bullied throughout school, how did they respond to this?

They spent a lot of time on their own, they became very insular, they didn't make friends, they didn't go out.

4. When did Ben finally feel happy and why?

In their mid 20's, when they went to university and they met other LGBTQ+ people who were happy being themselves and this gave Ben the permission and the freedom to be themselves (as a non-binary/transgender person).

5. What advice does Ben give?

If you see anyone being bullied because they are different – stand up, help them see they are wonderful as they are. Educate others that it is not ok to be cruel to others because they are different because differences are a wonderful thing.

6. What is Ben's final message?

Everyone deserves the right to be happy just as they are because we are all perfect.



Suggested Questions

See Appendix 2 for a worksheet featuring these questions.

Eva's Story

1. What is Eva's identity?

East Asian, transgender, uses she/they pronouns.

2. Eva describes herself as creative. How did this help her when she was younger?

It was an outlet, a way to channel all her thoughts, a way of removing herself from difficult experiences.

3. Eva said she comes from a strict, traditional East Asian family. What pressure did she say she felt as a result?

Pressure of expectation to follow a certain pathway.

4. What difficulties/pressures did Eva face at high school and how did this impact her?

She wasn't able to be herself, didn't know who she wanted to be or what she wanted to do, didn't have anyone to speak to, was bullied, lacked friends, had problems at home. This impacted her mental health, she felt lonely, felt lost.

5. What did Eva find that really helped her?

She found music, lyrics, found people who had similar interests to her and creating music and writing lyrics was an outlet for what Eva was feeling.

6. When her tour with the band ended, Eva took some time to reflect. What did she realise and how did this make her feel?

She realised that she was transgender - this felt liberating - she came out and this made her feel the happiest she had ever felt, being her true self.



Suggested Questions

See Appendix 3 for a worksheet featuring these questions.

Anne's Story

1. How does Anne describe her family and what pressures did she feel?

Very traditional, she was brought up Catholic; she describes this as difficult; she felt like she needed to behave and act in a certain way; she had to dress in a certain way; she felt she couldn't go to certain places or do what her friends were doing; certain things were not discussed in the family home.

2. How did Anne deal with the pressure she felt?

She focused on school and on sport as an excuse to not give in to peer pressure and to deal with the pressure she felt at home.

3. What job did Anne do and how did she use this to help others?

She worked as a teacher, she realised that young people were struggling with their identity just as she had, she helped the children she worked with reflect on who they were and who they wanted to be.

4. Anne married and started a family with her best friend. Why did this relationship end?

She was unhappy; she had started this relationship as she felt this was what she was meant to do; she hadn't had the space and support to reflect on what she wanted and who she wanted to be.

5. When Anne came out to her son, what surprised her?

She hadn't realised how open minded, how tolerant, how inclusive her son, his friends and his school environment were. She hadn't realised how different things are now compared to when she was younger.

6. What has Anne learnt from her experiences?

It is never too late to be brave, to reflect on who you are, and to live in the way you are suppose to live.



Challenge Questions

See Appendix 4 for a worksheet featuring these questions.

- 1.** Ben, Eva and Anne talk about facing pressure from family, friends and peers to act a certain way or to follow a certain path. What other pressures do you think a young person may face?
- 2.** Think about the stories you have heard and your own experiences, what might be the consequences of feeling pressure from family, friends or society to act a certain way or to follow a certain path?
- 3.** Eva talked about music and being creative as an outlet, Anne talked about focusing on sport. Can you suggest some positive ways people might manage the pressure they might be feeling from others?
- 4.** Explain what you think is meant by social pressure. From whom or where do you think young people feel the most pressure and why?
- 5.** We often talk about negative pressure, like friends talking friends into trying drugs or alcohol. But pressure isn't always bad. Friends and family can encourage and inspire us to do great things. Give some examples of positive pressure.
- 6.** It can often be hard to stand up to negative social pressure. What advice would you give to someone dealing with such pressure?

Activities

- 1.** We can face pressure from many different places (family, friends, peers, social media, society). Using the worksheet provided (Appendix 5) get students to list examples of the kinds of pressures they may feel from each source e.g. Family pressures may include: doing well at school, passing exams etc. Once complete, remind students that pressure can sometimes be positive and sometimes negative. Using two different colours, ask students to highlight on their sheet, which they think is positive and which they think is negative. Could some be both?
EXTENSION: Ask students to explain why they think they are positive/negative and discuss when pressure can turn from positive to negative.

- 2. When pressure turns to stress.** Although some pressure can be positive, if a person is under too much pressure (especially negative pressure), this can turn to stress and stress can have a negative impact on a person's wellbeing. Get students to complete the Stress Bucket Activity (see Appendix 6 for completed example and Appendix 7 for a worksheet). They can complete this from their own personal perspective, link it to a Role Model Story, or complete it more generally for young people. They should identify and write down the pressures that fill the bucket. They should identify the feelings and emotions that can come as a result of the bucket overflowing. Finally they should identify what can help empty the bucket and the feelings and emotions that come as a result of emptying the bucket.

- 3. Pressure snow balls.** Discuss the different types of pressure a young person might feel (family, friends, social media, society etc.).
 1. Give students a blank piece of paper and get them to write a scenario of pressure in the centre (you may want to prepare some yourself as the class teacher). Once this is written get students to screw these up into a ball, like a snow ball.
 2. Students are then asked to gently throw these around the room to collect a different snowball.
 3. Once they have collected someone else's, they should open this up and write some advice on how to deal with the given example of pressure. They should then repeat step 2.
 4. Once they have collected another snowball, they should read the scenario and advice and respond to this - is it good advice? Would they advise anything different?
 5. Step 2 and 3 can be repeated if necessary.
 6. Collect in all scenarios and discuss some of the examples with the class.

Challenge Activities

1. Pressure from social media. A lot of pressure that young people face comes from social media platforms. Task students with analysing this pressure, and suggest possible ways to manage/resist such pressures.

1. Divide the class into small groups and assign each group a different social media platform, such as Instagram, Snapchat, or TikTok.
2. Each group should research and discuss how their assigned platform influences social pressure. Consider sharing some of the organisations listed on pages 13-15 to assist students in their research.
3. Encourage students to consider factors such as peer validation, body image, lifestyle portrayal, including how this could impact different groups e.g. boys/girls, LGBTQ+ young people.
4. After the group discussions, ask each group to think of ideas of how a young person might resist this pressure, or ways in which they might manage this pressure. Get students to create a post (for the platform they have been analysing) that explains social pressures, its impact, and any ways to manage/resist this pressure.

2. Social pressure throughout history. Encourage independent research on social pressure in different contexts by getting students to research different points in history. Consider sharing sources to research how discrimination such as **sexism**, **racism** or **homophobia** impacted people in different areas.

1. Divide students into small groups and allocate each group a specific historical era or form of discrimination.
2. Instruct students to conduct online research and investigate the impact of discrimination on individuals and the pressure they may have felt in the era.
3. Students should consider factors such as societal norms, expectations, legal rights, political freedoms etc.
4. Groups should present their findings, highlighting the similarities and differences across different historical contexts.
5. Discuss what pressures marginalised communities still face today as a result of discrimination.

Extension ideas:

The theme of Peer Pressure is explored in the **Childnet film 'Back me up'**. Accompanying this short film is a resource pack and activities.

The theme of accepting your true self and identity is explored in **this resource**, and the Role Model stories of **Simon** and **Adam**.

Organisations

Organisations that provide further support and resources for staff and students on Bullying. These links are to support teachers to access further information, lead discussions or to signpost to students for research and support. Diversity Role Models can take no responsibility for the content hosted on other organisations platforms or shared directly, and we recommend that all signposted resources be checked for suitability by staff before use.

NSPCC

The NSPCC understands how difficult it is for children to talk about bullying. Professionals can contact the NSPCC Helpline by calling **0808 800 5000**, **emailing help@NSPCC.org.uk** or **completing their online report abuse form**.



The Anti-Bullying Alliance has lots of videos and resources for young people who might be a victim of bullying, or know someone who is being bullied.

View the resources **here** or visit their website at:
<https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk>



Childline can be contacted 24/7. Calls to **0800 1111** are free and confidential.

Childline has lots of advice about **different types of bullying** and about **dealing with peer pressure**.

Children can also contact **Childline online** here: **www.childline.org.uk**

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SWITCHBOARD

Switchboard is the national LGBTQIA+ support line for anyone, anywhere in the country, at any point in their journey.

They have a text, email and phone service to discuss anything related to sexuality and gender identity, in addition to information on their website:

<https://switchboard.lgbt/>

The Mix is the UK's leading support service for young people.

They offer young people a free, confidential helpline and a counselling service, as well a whole host of information and advice on a range of topics (including LGBTQ+) via their website: <https://www.themix.org.uk/>



Useful resources for staff supporting LGBTQ+ students:

- [Brighton and Hove Trans Inclusion Toolkit](#)
- [NEU Supporting trans and gender questioning young people](#)
- [NPSCC: Safeguarding LGBTQ+ young people](#)

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YOUNGMINDS fighting for young people's mental health

Young Minds provide young people with reassurance and advice to help them make positive choices for their mental health and know what to do next if they are struggling. They also provide resources and training for adults working with young people.

They have a page with tips for young people dealing with peer pressure [here](#).

Internet Matters supports parents and professionals with comprehensive resources and expert guidance to help them navigate the ever-changing world of child internet safety.

They have resources for students, including a section on 'advice for young people on managing peer pressure' [here](#).



internet
matters.org

BARNARDOS

Barnardo's supports children, young people and families. They offer parenting advice, counselling and support services on matters such as: mental wellbeing, family breakdown, bereavement, discrimination and back to school.

They have information on resisting peer pressure for 13-19 year olds [here](#).

Useful Definitions

Social Pressure

The combined pressures that are around you during everyday life such as peer pressure, academic pressures, family pressures and socioeconomic pressure.

Peer Pressure

When you are influenced by your peers to act in a certain way.

Transgender

A person whose gender identity is different from the sex they were assigned at birth.

Non-binary

A person whose gender identity does not fit the binary categories of 'male' or 'female'. Non-binary can be used as an identity, or an umbrella term for numerous identities including but not limited to 'agender' or 'genderfluid'.

Intersectionality

The way in which social categories such as race, class, gender, disability and sexual orientation overlap and shape the discrimination people can face.

Pressure

Experiencing a sense of urgency or expectation to perform a particular task or meet a deadline.

Stress

The body's reaction to feeling threatened or under pressure.

Appendix

Printable worksheets for use with students and example activities for staff.

1. Ben's Story - Questions - Printable Worksheet
2. Eva's Story - Questions - Printable Worksheet
3. Anne's Story - Questions - Printable Worksheet
4. Challenge Questions - Printable Worksheet - 2 pages
5. Different Types of Pressure - Printable Worksheet
6. When Pressure Turn To Stress - Example
7. When Pressure Turns To Stress - Printable Worksheet

Note: Resources can be printed out in greyscale to save on coloured ink.

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1. How and why did Ben struggle when they first started school?
2. Ben said they had no one to look up to, or to be themselves around. How did this impact them?
3. Ben was bullied throughout school, how did they respond to this?
4. When did Ben finally feel happy and why?
5. What advice does Ben give?
6. What is Ben's final message?

Eva's Story

1. How does Eva identify?
2. Eva describes herself as creative. How did this help her when she was younger?
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Anne's Story

1. How does Anne describe her family and what pressures did she feel?
2. How did Anne deal with the pressure she felt?
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Challenge Questions

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Types Of Pressure

Pressure from family

For example...



Pressure from friends/peers

For example...



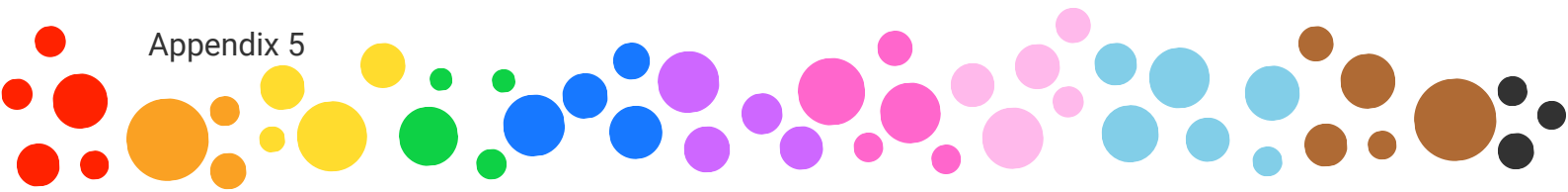
Pressure from the media (including social media)

For example...



Pressure from society

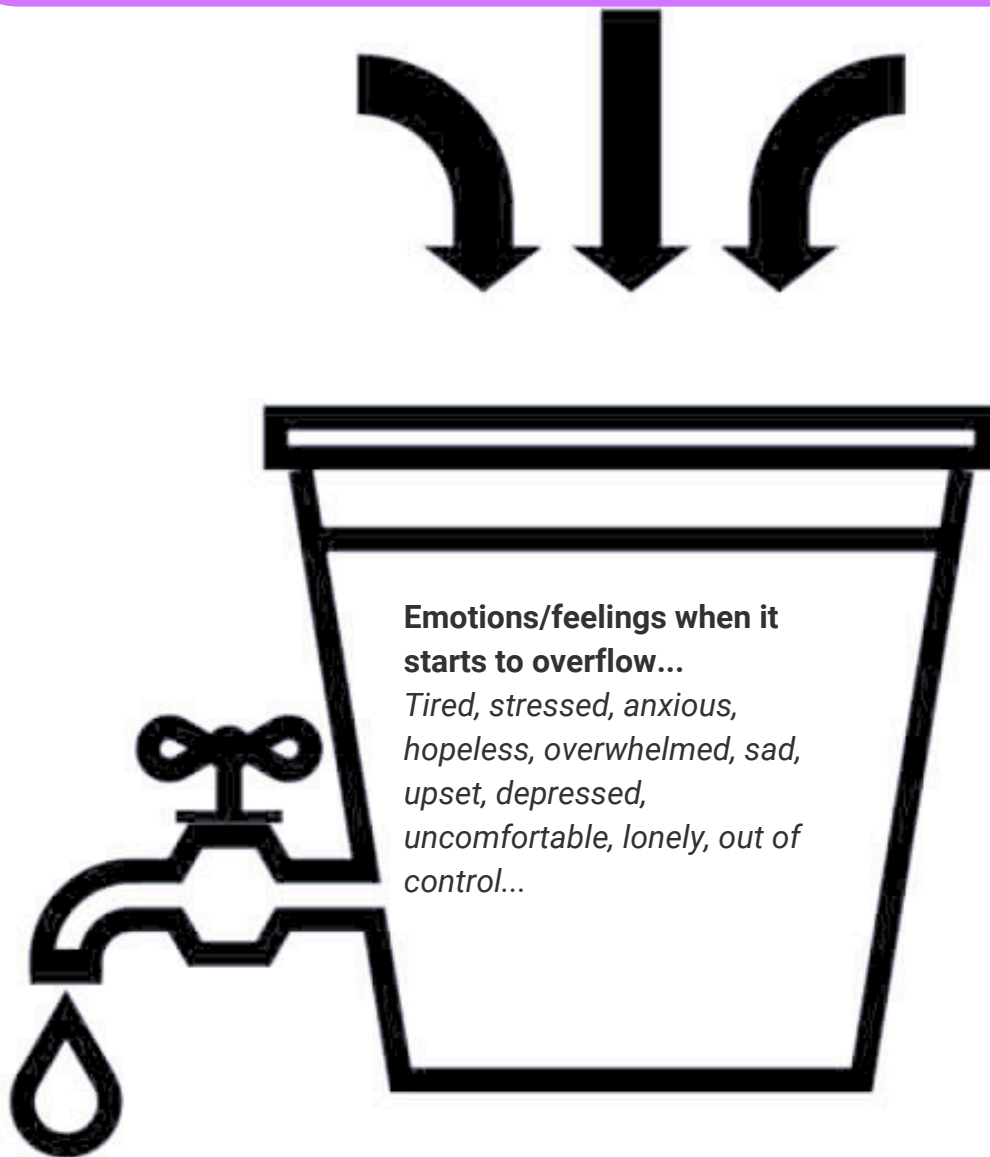
For example...



When Pressure Turns To Stress EXAMPLE

What pressures goes in?

Exams, friendships, body image, deadlines, socialising, hobbies, relationships, stereotypes, material possessions, clothes, style, future, family...



What can help to empty the bucket?

Talking to others (friends, family, teachers), doing things you enjoy (sport, art, music), saying 'no', being true self, social media break, reminding self of achievements/things you are good at

Emotions/feelings when you empty the bucket...

Relaxed, happy, content, in control, hopeful, energised, comfortable

When Pressure Turns To Stress

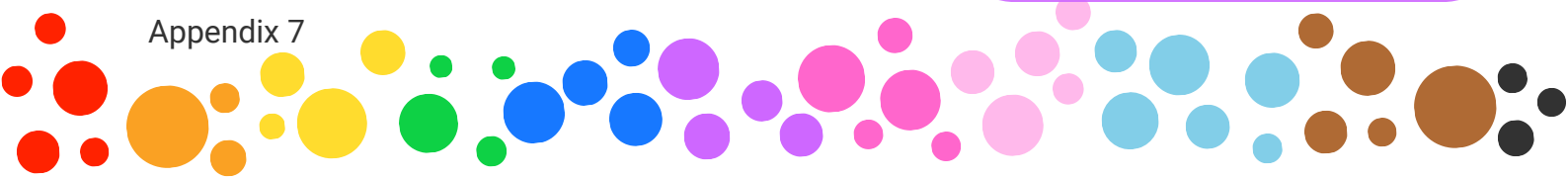
What pressures goes in?



What can help to empty the bucket?





Emotions/feelings when you empty the bucket...



Contact Details


Get in touch

 [Contact us via our website](#)

 Contact us via email at: education@diversityrolemodels.org


Find us online


 www.instagram.com/diversityrm


 www.facebook.com/DiversityRoleModels

 <https://twitter.com/DiversityRM>

 www.youtube.com/@DiversityRoleModels

 <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/diversityrolemodels>

 www.tiktok.com/@diversityrolemodels

 www.linkedin.com/company/diversity-role-models

Find out more

 www.diversityrolemodels.org

