

Theme 3: Changing relationships

Suggested content

Teacher notes

Changes in personal identity and the impact on relationships

Dependence, independence and interdependence

- the circumstances which cause dependence
- the circumstances which allow independence
- the circumstances which promote interdependence

Personal identity is not static. People are always seen in a social context. As they move from group to group their relationship with the group changes, as does their identity.

Rites of passage in adulthood

- rights and privileges of adults
- decision making

It is difficult in our society to be sure that one has reached adulthood. Discuss the various rites of passage such as voting, getting a driver's licence, age of consent etc.

Changing relationships

- friendship changes
- friendship groups
- different sorts of relationships

Since identity is not static, relationships with others constantly change. People develop different interests and concerns. They have different sorts of friendships with different people.

Value of relationships

- relationships at school
- relationships at work
- family relationships
- intimate relationships

People are happiest when they interrelate with others, although some relationships can lead to conflict. Those who have strategies for dealing with conflict will find most benefit in relationships.

Negative relationships

- evaluation and self-evaluation
- ending a relationship
- dealing with rejection

Sometimes there are relationships which cause more anxiety and distress than happiness, but at the same time ending them can be very stressful. It is important that students are encouraged to evaluate their relationships e.g. How do I know when a relationship is not working?

Different relationships with the same person in different contexts

- inappropriate and appropriate behaviour
- recognising different contexts

This could be explored by discussing relationships between students and teachers which may occur outside school. For example, discussion could focus on setting parameters and expectations and ways to respect the rights of each person.

Coping with change

The nature of change

- constancy of change
- positive change
- skills for effective change

Change is constant throughout life. Discuss the major changes that have occurred in different aspects of students' lives over the last ten years.

Reactions to change

- grief
- anger
- despair
- isolation
- personal growth
- acceptance
- new insights
- increased confidence

Change leads to both loss and gain. People feel different emotions when faced with new situations (e.g. a new job may bring opportunities but also force a person to leave family and friends to work in a new area). Students can explore how they react to change and the impact of change on their sense of self.

Resilience

- characteristics of resilient people
- attitudes to change
- having some support
- learning from one situation so that you approach the next situation with more resources

Resilience is defined in different ways. It refers to the process and capacity which allow individuals to adapt successfully to challenges or threats in their lives. This is a good opportunity to acknowledge the quiet, heroic feats of many people coping with the many challenges that life deals out.