



Grade 5: Lesson 2

## Stigma

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**Optional Mentor texts:** Proudest Blue – Ibtihaj Muhammad with S.K. Ali  
Red – Michael Hall  
We Are All Wonders – R.J. Policio  
Maple Moon – Bonnie Brummel Crook

**Time:** Lesson – 1 period  
Extension – 1 period

### OVERALL EXPECTATIONS:

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**A1.** apply, to the best of their ability, a range of social-emotional learning skills as they acquire knowledge and skills in connection with the expectations in the Healthy Living strand for this grade.

**D3.** demonstrate the ability to make connections that relate to health and well-being – how their choices and behaviours affect both themselves and others, and how factors in the world around them affect their own and others' health and well-being.

### SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS:

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**A1.6** apply skills that help them think critically and creatively as they participate in learning experiences in health and physical education, in order to support making connections, analysing, evaluating, problem solving, and decision making.

**D 3.4** demonstrate an understanding of how our attitudes about mental health affect those around us and how they might contribute to or prevent creating stigma.



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## LEARNING GOALS:

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We are learning...

- to explore the concept of mental health stigma and how hurtful it can be to people
- different ways to challenge stigma when we notice it.
- that stigma exists regarding mental health problems, and that stigma can impact others.
- to consider attitudes about mental illness and exhibit a realistic and positive understanding of mental illness.

## SUCCESS CRITERIA:

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Consider using these questions to co-develop success criteria with your students:  
“How will we know we are achieving our learning goals? What will that look like/sound like?”

### Sample success criteria to help guide you

- I can determine which words are hurtful and could create stigma.
- I can determine ways to prevent stigma.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES NEEDED:

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### Lesson

- Whiteboard / Chart paper – somewhere to record answers
- “Impact of Words & Stopping the Stigma” handout (provided)

### Extension

- “Unique Me” activity (provided)
- “Unique Me” template (provided)
- Markers/Pencil Crayons

## CONSIDERATIONS:

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- Approaches to all instruction, including Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) skills, must be mediated through respectful conversations about students’ lived realities, inequity, bias, discrimination and harassment.
- Unique Me activity: Recognize that people may see things like skin colour or type of clothing, but may not see things like historic trauma resulting from residential schools, impact of systemic racism and poverty.



# Cross Curricular Expectations

NOTE: Language expectations are met when adding the optional extension task. If you are not using, then ignore.

Health & Physical Education	Language
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Social Emotional Learning Skills – Specific Expectations</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Strand A</b></p> <p><b>A1.6</b> apply skills that help them think critically and creatively as they participate in learning experiences in health and physical education, in order to support making connections, analysing, evaluating, problem solving, and decision making.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reading – Specific Expectations</b></p> <p><b>1.3 Comprehension Strategies</b> Identify a variety of reading comprehension strategies and use them appropriately before, during, and after reading to understand texts (e.g. activate prior knowledge, ask questions, make and confirm predictions based on evidence from the text, synthesize ideas)</p> <p><b>1.5 Making Inferences</b> Make inferences about texts using stated and implied ideas from the texts as evidence</p> <p><b>1.6 Extending Understanding</b> Extend understanding of texts by connecting the ideas in them to their own knowledge, experience and insights, to other familiar texts, and to the world around them</p> <p><b>1.7 Analysing Texts</b> Analysing texts and explain how specific elements in them contribute to meaning</p> <p><b>1.8 Responding To and Evaluating Texts</b> Express opinions about the ideas and information in texts and cite evidence from the text to support their opinions</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Media Literacy – Specific Expectations</b></p> <p><b>3.4</b> Produce some short media texts for specific purposes and audiences, using a few simple media forms and appropriate conventions and techniques (e.g., a sign or poster for their classroom or the school).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Healthy Living – Specific Expectations</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Strand D</b></p> <p><b>D3.4</b> Demonstrate an understanding of how our attitudes about mental health affect those around us and how they might contribute to or prevent creating stigma.</p>	



# Lesson

## Minds On – 5 minutes

Using a Think/ Pair /Share have students generate ideas about the meaning of the word, “stigma”. As a class, generate a definition of the word, stigma and use the definition to lead a whole class discussion about stigma. (See definition below)

Stigma refers to negative attitudes and negative behaviour (like discrimination) towards a topic.

It also has a profound impact on the way young people (and adults) discuss mental health and mental illness, and how someone treats people experiencing mental illness. (definition from World Health Organization, 2012)

Explain to students that...

Our attitudes towards mental health affect the people around us. This includes the words we use and our actions. If we choose to speak negatively about someone’s mental health, it can create stigma, which hurts. It’s important that we are able to speak positively about mental health and mental illness so that it is safe for others to talk about. People can experience stigma in relation to many things - racism, poverty, body size or shape. It is important to be aware of these things so we can be a part of changing this.

## Action Task – 25 minutes

**Suggested Teacher Prompt:** (*Ontario Curriculum, Health and Physical Education, 2019, p206*)

“We know that from time to time we all feel challenging emotions that make it difficult for us to feel like we fit in or belong. Everyone experiences these ups and downs at different points.

It’s important for all of us to think about the ways we can make it easier for ourselves and others to recognize, accept, and manage these feelings.

For example, let’s think about language. Sometimes we make statements that we think are funny but that can cause stigma and make others feel uncomfortable. Jokes at someone else’s expense are not funny and not okay.

When it comes to supporting one another’s mental health, what are some of the things we can do at school and in the classroom to make everyone feel safe to talk about their mental health and ask for help?” [SEL 1.6]

**Possible Student answers:**

“When we talk about mental health in a positive way it makes it safe for us to be open and honest about our feelings.”



“Sometimes people are made fun of if they seem ‘different’ or if they show emotion or cry at school.”

“When someone is having a bad day, we could put ourselves in their shoes and think about how that might feel. We could ask them if they want to talk and respect their need for space if that is what they want.”

**Suggested Teacher Prompt:** (*Ontario Curriculum, Health and Physical Education, 2019, p206*)

“When we talk about ‘putting ourselves in someone’s shoes’, that’s called empathy – it’s when we have understanding for the feelings of others. Showing empathy is a great way to make our classroom and school safe for everyone to be themselves. When we talk about mental health as a positive concept, it makes it safe for everyone to share when they are feeling emotions that are challenging or if they’re having a bad day.”

“Let’s come up with a list of three actions that contribute to mental health stigma”:  
(write down student answers) [SEL 1.6]

(answers can include – making jokes or fun of other people’s challenges, excluding people or spreading rumours and gossip about people who are different, mocking others, etc.).

“Now let’s think of some ways that we can help stop these mental health stigma:  
(write down student answers) [SEL 1.6]

(answers can include – willing to listen to others, showing empathy, be kind, talk to others, be positive, treat others how you want to be treated, speak up for others, etc.)

**Activity:**

Put students into small groups or pairs and have them work on the handout “Impact of Words & Stopping the Stigma”. [SEL 1.6]

## Consolidate – 10 Minutes

Bring the group back together and take up the handout together and discuss their responses.

Close the conversation by letting students know that it’s important to use positive talk and not put down others. If they hear someone use language that they know is not okay, say something.

It’s important to reach out to people and ask if they need to talk or respect their space if they need to be left alone for a bit.

What’s most important is to know that it does not need to be dealt with alone and to remember to speak with a trusted adult if you don’t know what to do or you know someone that needs help.

Remind students that there are supports available at the school and in the community if they need or want to talk about their mental health or other things they may be struggling with.



## Optional Extension Task – 40 minutes

1. **Choose** an optional Mentor Text that will best fit your needs.
2. **Read** text.
3. **Go** over the task with your students. The instructions attached will work for any of the activities.

### TASK:

Create a collage/poster/slideshow/etc. based on the “Unique Me” handout. See instructions on student page.

Students can use magazine clippings, drawing, pictures, images from the computer to create and 11x14 page of what makes them unique based on what people can visibly see and what is invisible to most.

### Overview of the books suggested:

#### PROUDEST BLUE

With her new backpack and light-up shoes, Faizah knows the first day of school is going to be special. It's the start of a brand new year and, best of all, it's her older sister Asiya's first day of hijab--a hijab of beautiful blue fabric, like the ocean waving to the sky. But not everyone sees hijab as beautiful, and in the face of hurtful, confusing words, Faizah will find new ways to be strong. S.K. Ali bring readers an uplifting, universal story of new experiences, the unbreakable bond between siblings, and of being proud of who you are.

#### RED

A blue crayon mistakenly labeled as “red” suffers an identity crisis in this picture book. Red has a bright red label, but he is, in fact, blue. His teacher tries to help him be red (let's draw strawberries!), his mother tries to help him be red by sending him out on a playdate with a yellow classmate (go draw a nice orange!), and the scissors try to help him be red by snipping his label so that he has room to breathe. But Red is miserable. He just can't be red, no matter how hard he tries! Finally, a brand-new friend offers a brand-new perspective, and Red discovers what readers have known all along. He's blue! This funny, heartwarming, colorful picture book about finding the courage to be true to your inner self can be read on multiple levels, and it offers something for everyone. It is a great book to use to build an understanding of identity and reinforcing the value of unique identities.



## WE ARE ALL WONDERS

Now younger readers can meet Auggie Pullman, an ordinary boy with an extraordinary face, and his beloved dog, Daisy. Countless fans have asked R. J. Palacio to write a book for younger readers. With *We're All Wonders*, she makes her picture-book debut as both author and artist, with a spare, powerful text and striking, richly imagined illustrations. Palacio shows readers what it's like to live in Auggie's world—a world in which he feels like any other kid, but he's not always seen that way. *We're All Wonders* may be Auggie's story, but it taps into every child's longing to belong, and to be seen for who they truly are. It's the perfect way for families and educators to talk about empathy and kindness with young children.

## MAPLE MOON – Bonnie Brummel Crook

Fictional story of how Maple Syrup may have been discovered by a boy named Rides the Wind. With his discovery, despite his disability he is able to help his people through the tough winter. This builds confidence in him and helps him to stand up to the cruel taunts of other children.

## Suggested Mentor Texts and Guides

### PROUDEST BLUE

#### *Before Reading:*

Today we are going to read a story called The Proudest Blue. This is a story about a girl named Faizah and her sister Asiya's first day wearing a special piece of clothing called a hijab. As we read the story, I want you to think about why the title of the story is The Proudest Blue and what Asiya and Faizah's day was like.

#### *During Reading:*

Feel free to pause at any point to discuss what is happening in the story or check for understanding.

#### *After Reading:*

What makes Faizah and Asiya's day so important and special?

What happened to Faizah and Asiya at school?

Why do you think that the children made fun of Asiya?

What connections can you make with the story?

What is the connection between this story and stigmas?

Assign the poster task.



## RED

### *Before Reading:*

What does it mean to be different on the inside?

How is your inside self different from your outside self?

Ask students to quietly think about who they are for a minute; tell them they can close their eyes if they want but really think about who they are. Ask them to think about the two different parts of themselves, their visible self (what people see) and their invisible self (what people don't see).

### *During Reading:*

Feel free to pause at any point to discuss what is happening in the story or check for understanding.

### *After Reading:*

What difficulties did Red face?

What enabled Red to succeed?

What connections can you make with the story?

Have you ever seen someone act in a 'different' way? Something that didn't look normal? Sometimes that makes us judge that person. We often assume that people are just like us. However, when we see and understand why they act the way they do, most people are patient and understanding.

What is the connection between this story and stigmas?

Assign the poster task.

## WE ARE ALL WONDERS

### *Before Reading:*

What does it mean to be ordinary?

Today I am going to read a book about a little boy named Auggie. This book is based on a novel that you may have read or seen a movie about. While I am reading, think about the messages the author is trying to express and why the would author write a picture book if there is already a novel and a movie?

### *During Reading:*

Feel free to pause at any point to discuss what is happening in the story or check for understanding. Here are some guiding questions:

What do you think the author means by "I am a wonder"?





How do you think Auggie feels when the kids laugh and point at him?

Why are the kids laughing at him? Are they laughing at him because he is different? Have you ever laughed when someone or something was unexpected, strange or different?

Have you felt different from others? How did this make you feel? What did it feel like and how did you react?

What message is the author trying to share here? "I cannot change the way I look...people can change the way they see."

What does it mean now to be a wonderer?

### ***After Reading:***

Going back to the questions I asked before I read the story...what messages were included in the story? Why did the author write a picture book when there is already a novel and a movie?

What does it mean to look with kindness?

What connections can you make with the story?

Assign the poster task.

## **MAPLE MOON**

### ***Before Reading:***

What does the front cover of this book tell you about the story?

What do you predict will happen in this story?

### ***During Reading:***

Feel free to pause at any point to discuss what is happening in the story or check for understanding.

### ***After Reading:***

What is the author's message in this text?

What connections did you make to the story? Or did you make any additional connections to the story?

Why do you think I read this story to you if our topic is focused on healthy living?

Assign the poster task.



# Impact of Words & Stopping the Stigma

Read the statement carefully and decide whether it prevents or creates a stigma by placing an x in the correct column. Then, answer the questions.

STATEMENT	Prevents OR Creates Stigma		How does it create a stigma?	How can I help?
	Prevents	Creates		
Someone told me that you can tell by looking at someone whether they have a mental illness.				
Apparently, you can catch a mental illness from someone, I would definitely stay away from them.				
My friend has a mental illness, but it does not define who they are. They are a valued individual just like you or I.				
I heard that mental illness can only happen to certain kinds of people.				

# Unique Me

Make a list using pictures, drawings, words, magazine clippings of what people see on the outside and what people don't see on the inside of you, like an iceberg.

**Above the water** (where you see the iceberg) – qualities and things that contribute to your identity. These are visible qualities and things that contribute to your identity that people can see.

**Below the water** (where you DON'T see the iceberg) – qualities and things that contribute to your identity that people don't see. These are invisible qualities and things that contribute to your identity but people can't see them.

