



Belong To LGBTQ+
Youth Ireland

Senior Cycle SPHE Resource

Senior Cycle Edition – Aligned with the 2024 Specification



Teacher Notes: Pedagogical Approach When Teaching Senior Cycle SPHE

- **Create safety together:** Begin by co-constructing classroom agreements with your students that emphasise safety, respect and confidentiality. This helps everyone feel secure and valued. Display the agreements in the classroom or keep a copy in student journals or copies.
- **Keep an open mind:** Use language that welcomes all identities and experiences, avoiding assumptions about sexuality, gender or family structure.
- **Pause and reflect:** Take time to notice your own comfort levels, possible biases, or areas where you might want to grow your knowledge. This modelling of reflection shows students that learning is ongoing for everyone.
- **Support deeper learning:** Give students opportunities to think quietly, speak when ready, reflect individually and ask questions. A layered approach helps everyone engage at their own pace.
- **Protect student choice:** Encourage participation but never expect or ask students to share personal stories in order to make the learning 'real'. Their voices matter, but their privacy matters too.
- **Shape respectful dialogue:** Debate and discussion can be powerful, but not every issue should be up for debate. Work with your students to agree on safe and respectful boundaries for discussions, so the classroom remains supportive for all.
- **Belong To's e-learning module** is a fantastic resource to learn how to best create a safe inclusive environment at school. (Accessible at: <https://www.belongto.org/training/>)
- **Free speech is not hate speech!** No hateful comments.
- The resources listed here are intended as an aid for schools to help implement their **Bí Cineálta policy**.

Rationale for SPHE at Senior Cycle: Senior Cycle students are navigating life-defining transitions: identity formation, relationships, independence, and future planning. The new SPHE course gives them space to:

- Explore their **values and identities**
- Reflect on **relationships and sexual health**
- Strengthen their **mental and emotional wellbeing**
- Learn to make **informed decisions** around risk and responsibility

Positive co-existence – and peaceful, respectful engagement.

Aligned Learning Outcomes from SPHE that are Inclusion and Equality Related

Strand 1: Understanding Myself and Others

- LO 1.4: Recognise the factors and influences that shape young people's self-identity, such as family, peers, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, race or ethnic background, disabilities, religious beliefs and worldviews
- LO 1.5: Reflect on gender equity and how gender stereotypes impact expectations, behaviour and relationships
- LO 1.6: Discuss experiences and situations of bias, inequality or exclusion and devise ways to actively create more inclusive environments

Strand 2: Relationships and Sexuality

- LO 2.4: Examine how both positive and harmful attitudes around gender are perpetuated in the media, online and in society and discuss strategies for challenging and changing harmful attitudes and narratives

Strand 3: Into Adulthood

Learning outcomes here focus on solidarity, self-advocacy and care for others:

- LO 3.5: Demonstrate the confidence and skills needed to be their own person and be able to advocate for themselves and others even if it means standing out from the crowd
- LO 3.6: Recognise when people are experiencing discrimination and demonstrate the skills needed to express solidarity in a range of situations

Lesson 1: Exploring Identity

5th Year

Pillar: Human Development and Healthy Relationships

Learning Intentions

- Students will reflect on personal identity and values
- Students will understand how identity develops over time
- Students will explore how gender identity and sexual orientation form part of identity

Materials Needed

- Identity shield handouts (template included below)
- Flipchart, digital board or whiteboard

Warm-Up: 'This or That' Identity Spectrum

Students stand on a line to show where they sit on topics (e.g. introvert–extrovert, traditional–non-traditional). Debrief with: *What shapes these aspects of identity?*

This or That suggested questions:

1. TikTok or Instagram?
2. Pizza or pasta?
3. Summer or winter?
4. Netflix or YouTube?
5. Hot drinks or cold drinks?
6. Dogs or cats?
7. Texting or calling?
8. Chocolate or crisps?
9. Morning person or night owl?
10. Be invisible or be able to fly?
11. Save money or spend money?
12. Takeaway or home cooking?
13. Live without music or live without your phone?
14. Work alone or work in a team?
15. Always be 10 minutes late or 20 minutes early?
16. Read minds or time travel?
17. Dress up or dress down?
18. Never use social media again or never watch TV again?
19. Speak every language or play every instrument?
20. FOMO or JOMO? (fear of missing out or joy of missing out)

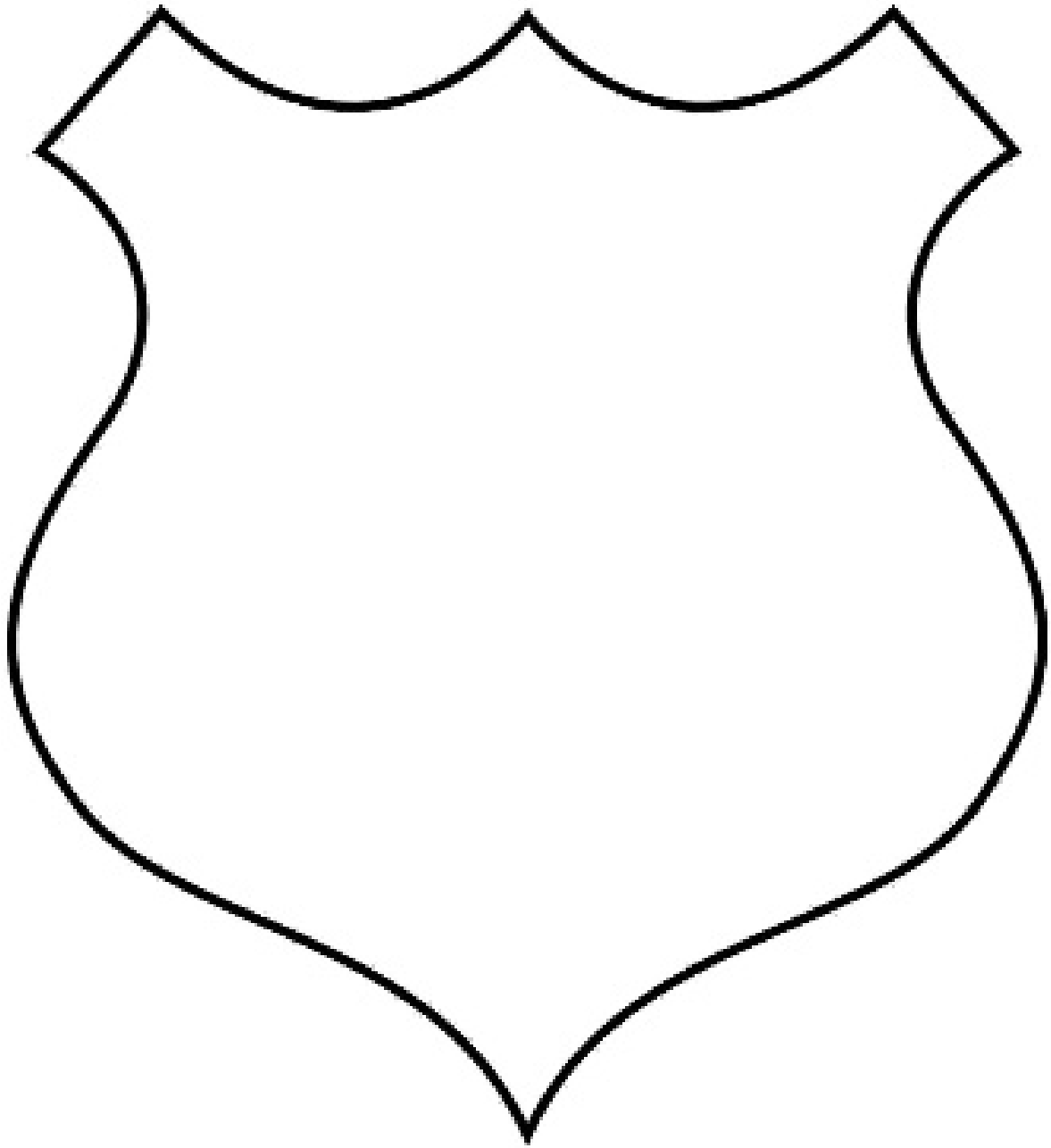
Identity Shield: Students fill in personal identity shield, including elements of their identity such as gender, culture, interests, orientation, language etc.

Think-Pair-share: What parts feel central to who you are right now?

Closing Activities:

- Group Reflection: What surprised or connected with you?
 - Reflective Journal Prompt: One thing I've learned about identity is...

Identity Sheild



Lesson 2: Mental Health Check-In

5th and 6th Year

Pillar: Emotional and Mental Wellbeing

Learning Intentions

- Identify personal mental health warning signs and supports
- Understand the link between thoughts, emotions and behaviours
- Explore stigma and help-seeking behaviour (seeking support)

Materials Needed

- Wellbeing spectrum line (a rope or long piece of tape)
- Coping toolbox template
- Post it notes
- Support cloud template (local and online supports)

Activity 1: Check-In Line

The 'Check-In Line' is a physical activity where students place themselves along a line based on how they are feeling at the present moment. The posters below provide the statements for this activity.

Instructions for the Teacher:

1. Print out the following 'Check-In Line' posters on separate large sheets of paper.
2. Place the posters in a line on the floor, leaving enough space for students to stand along the spectrum from 'I feel great.' to 'I'm not great'.

Inclusion Spectrum Line Posters to be Printed and Placed on Floor

- Poster 1: I feel great.
- Poster 2: I feel okay.
- Poster 3: I feel meh.
- Poster 4: I don't feel good.

Debrief

After this activity, the teacher debriefs using metaphors. Weather is an effective way of doing this. Some might be feeling 'sunny and clear' while others might feel more 'overcast' or 'stormy'. Emphasise that emotions change and that's OK.

The class can then discuss questions like:

- How do we provide support for someone on the lower mood side of the line?
- What might they need?
- What helps when someone is not feeling ok?" (E.g. space, listening, extra check-ins)

Activity 2: Coping Toolbox Design

In pairs design a personalised 'toolbox' of coping strategies (journaling, exercise, support people, grounding). Share ideas in pairs. Students can use the template provided below in this resource.

Activity 3: Support Clouds

Introduce supports: school guidance counsellor, Belong To, SpunOut.ie, Text About It (text 50808). These clouds can be displayed in class. Students can use the template provided below in this resource.

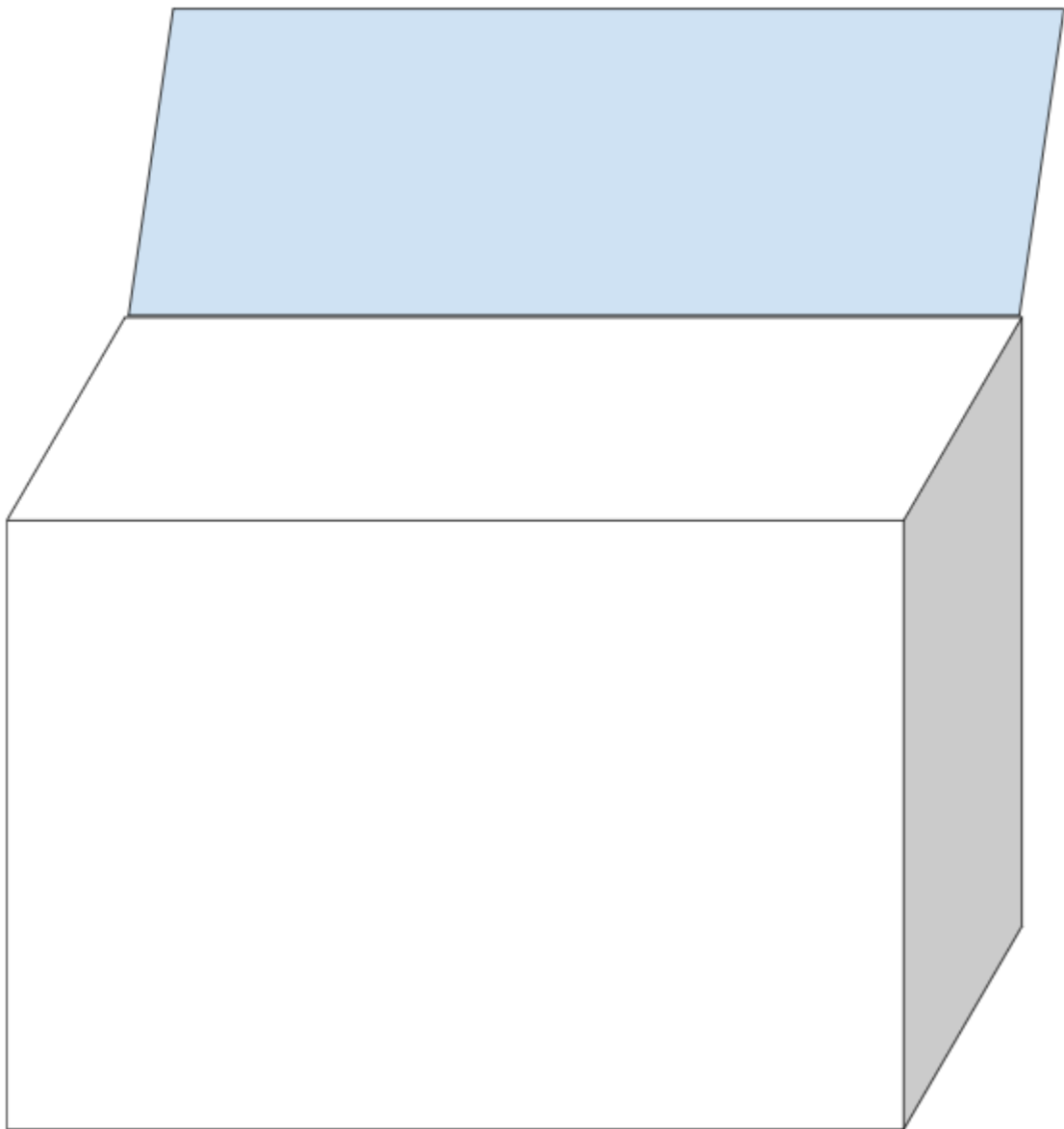
Activity 4: Case Study Discussions

Read about a young person's mental health journey. Discuss: What helped them? What were the barriers? (You can use Belong To videos here or other approved content)

Reflection

- Students choose one mental health or self-care strategy they'll try this week.
- **Traffic light self-assessment:** Red = need more support, Amber = ok, Green = good today.

Coping Toolbox



Support Cloud

