

Guidance for teaching a sensitive subject



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Before asking your students to engage in these class activities, establish a safe learning environment. This can be done by asking the class to identify golden rules to ensure that everyone can share ideas and opinions without the worry of being ridiculed or embarrassed.

Teachers need to be sensitive to the fact that the activities in these lessons raise the issues of death and dying. Consider the emotional needs of students within your class. Be mindful that some students may have a personal or family experience with organ and tissue donation and transplantation. Also be aware that some students within your school may need an organ transplant in the future due to an existing illness. Inform the pastoral team in advance so they can provide you with background information about any students. If issues do occur, tutors and the Head of Year (or Pastoral Team Leader) can prepare themselves beforehand so they can deal with questions on organ and tissue donation in tutorial or pastoral time.

Some students may feel cautious about discussing issues relating to organ and tissue donation. It is important to treat this subject area with extra consideration and reassure students that all donors are treated with care, compassion and professionalism. Do not force students to speak if they feel reluctant. Explain to students that they can 'pass' if they do not feel ready or comfortable with providing an answer. The activities within the lesson plans (e.g. the diamond nine student activity in lesson 2) allow students to work in small peer groups and promote dialogue and discussion. When asking for feedback, encourage students to do so as a whole group or through a character via role play.

Talking about death can be difficult for some students and in some cases very personal to them. If you are concerned about a student within the lesson (i.e. they disclose inappropriate personal information), please refer this information to the school's designated Child Protection Officer.

A question box (a simple box with a slit in the lid) placed in the classroom can help if students feel too embarrassed to ask a question in person. At the end of the lesson you can open the box and answer any questions, or if you are not sure of the answers you can inform the class that you will answer the questions during the next lesson.

