

LYMM HIGH SCHOOL YEAR 11

Pastoral Curriculum
Autumn Term: Attitudes to Sex and
Relationships



Think about and answer the following:

1. What does effective conflict management look like in different types of relationships (e.g. family, friends, partners)?

2. Why might someone manage a conflict situation in a less healthy way?

3. How can someone's emotional wellbeing affect their ability to respond safely and effectively to a conflict situation?

4. How can the way people involved in a family conflict respond, affect the outcome?

5. What indicators might there be that the way someone manages relationship conflict has become unsafe and further support is needed?

Avoidance

Might be useful if someone is feeling threatened, but it will not make a problem go away.

EXAMPLE:

Diffusion

Staying calm, allowing time to be able to think and to try to resolve the problem.

EXAMPLE:

Negotiation

Compromising with each other - nobody gets everything they want, but everyone gets something.

EXAMPLE:

Confrontation

One person might use power over the other person in order to win. This might be physical force, using threats or another type of abuse - some types of confrontation are a criminal offence.

EXAMPLE:

Scenarios



Billy's dad has been depressed since his divorce. Billy has not wanted to speak up about things that were bothering him to avoid upsetting his dad.

Artem's parents have always been very protective. Now he's older, Artem's rebelled by making some poor decisions which have affected his wellbeing and school attainment.

His mum had an accident at work so is currently at home more, so Artem feels under increased scrutiny.

Sofia had a few issues with friendships and family conflicts when she was younger but her adoptive family found her some support. She now has mostly positive and settled relationships plus a supportive keyworker at school.

The family have agreed how they will handle disagreements. However, financial problems at home have led to more rows than usual about things like money for clothes and school trips.

Since Kamila's parents split up, she feels she never gets what she wants, as her mum and stepdad prioritise her new stepsisters. Her mum says she was simply used to being an only child and will adjust.

She spends a lot of time with friends who are quite aggressive in the way they deal with issues – sometimes using violence if people 'disrespect' them. This has started to affect her behaviour and there have been lots of arguments at home.

In David's home, the family often have vocal arguments that clear the air and then everyone gets on well afterwards. But when the family fostered Maisie, these arguments really upset her – she would cry a lot if she felt she was being yelled at and would hide if she heard others argue.



LIFE PROGRAMME

RELATIONSHIPS (HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS): Resolving conflict within our relationships



De-escalation

This is where we look for opportunities step down from conflicts and look for a peaceful resolution.

Look at the list of de-escalation strategies below:

1. Pick your top six and not them in your booklet
2. Given an example of how you could use it
3. Think back to the previous character scenarios, which of the strategies would you recommend for the characters to use?

Agree ground rules for handling disagreements in the future.

Speak quietly and calmly, using "I" statements, (e.g. "I feel scared when you shout" rather than "You always shout...").

Walk away if needed - getting a cold drink can provide time out.

Get help in the moment, before, or after a conflict situation.

Have important conversations when everyone is feeling calmer.

Focus on the situation and the behaviour rather than making statements about the person

Focus on points of agreement and things that would improve the situation.

Try to remain calm using techniques such as counting to ten or deep breathing.

If someone is not being respectful, the other person should explain they will walk away if this continues.

Listen without judgment to what the other person is saying and how they are feeling.

Let the person talk without interrupting.

Using humour can help to lighten the mood (so long as this is not directed at an individual).

Respect personal space and keep body language open.

Respect personal space and keep body language open.

Reflect what was said back to the person to show they are being heard,

Avoid finger-pointing which can seem accusatory, and shoulder shrugs which can seem uncaring.

Empty rectangular box for student response

Empty rectangular box for student response

Empty rectangular box for student response

Empty rectangular box for student response

Empty rectangular box for student response

Empty rectangular box for student response

LIFE
PROGRAMME

RELATIONSHIPS
(HEALTHY
RELATIONSHIPS):
Resolving conflict
within our
relationships

Today we are looking at some challenging topics. Please feel free to access any support you need.



- **Medway domestic abuse services:**
www.choicesdbservice.org.uk/mdas
- **Brook:** www.brook.org.uk 0808 802 1234
- **Childline:** www.childline.org.uk 0800 1111

Key Terms and Ideas

Marriage	A legal union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple (in England, Wales and Scotland and, from January 2020, in Northern Ireland).
Civil partnership	A relationship which can be registered by two people of the same sex (extended to opposite-sex couples in 2020).
Cohabitation	Living together as a couple without being married/civil partners.
Forced marriage	A marriage where one or both people do not consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used.
Arranged marriage	A marriage planned and agreed by the families or guardians of the couple concerned, to which both individuals consent.
Illegal/void	marriage A marriage that is invalid from its inception and cannot be made valid.
Ceremony	A formal religious or public occasion, especially one celebrating a particular event, achievement, or anniversary

What do you already know?

I'm under 18; can I get married?

I recently split up with my fiancée; can I keep the ring?

I want to get married, but I'm not religious. What are my options?

I've been living with my partner for years; do we have the same rights as married couples?

Do I have to have a wedding ceremony to get married?

I want to get married in a ceremony outdoors; is that allowed?

Can someone force me to get married?

Scenarios

Scenario 1

Sam and Alex are getting married. Sam was in a civil partnership for several years but the relationship ended 5 years ago. As Sam is now getting married, not forming another civil partnership, he never legally dissolved his civil partnership.

Q: Will their marriage be legally recognised in the UK?

Scenario 2

Dev and Kiara are excited about getting married. Both of them are very close to their families and were confident in their parents' match-making skills when they were first introduced to each other. They know their wedding day will be a happy event.

Q: Will their marriage be legally recognised in the UK?

Scenario 3

Adeel and Roxanna had a Nikah (a traditional Islamic wedding ceremony). Shortly afterwards, they had a civil marriage ceremony in a register office too.

Q: Is their marriage legally recognised in the UK?

Scenario 4

Jas and her brother went away with their family, for what they thought was a family holiday. When they arrived, Jas was told she was getting married. She was not happy about this but was worried about what her family would do if she tried to say no.

Q: Is their marriage legally recognised in the UK?

Scenario 5

Ella and Tilly were married last week. They had a small civil ceremony at a local hotel, followed by a big party with all their families and friends.

Q: Is their marriage legally recognised in the UK?

Scenario 6

Tom is 17. Li is 18. They really want to get married and although Tom's parents think he's too young they have agreed.

Q: Will their marriage be legally recognised in the UK?

THE LAW

- A marriage/civil partnership will be illegal/void if:
 - ◇ the couple are closely related (a parent, child, brother, sister, niece, nephew, aunt, uncle, grandparent, grandchild)
 - ◇ either person is already married or in a civil partnership
 - ◇ either person is under 18
- Both mixed sex and same-sex couples can form a civil partnership in the UK
- Same sex marriage is legal in all parts of the UK
- Arranged marriage is legal as long as both people give their consent and take part in the marriage freely
- Forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities or reduced capacity, cannot) consent to the marriage as they are pressurised, or abuse is used, to force them to do so.

BRITISH VALUES:
The Rule of Law



Supporting Information

“We just didn’t feel the need to get married. We’ve built a good life together and we know that we are fully committed to each other – marriage just seemed unnecessary.”

“Marriage was important to us – we wanted to make a lifelong commitment and publicly express that in front of our loved ones. We didn’t want a huge wedding, but it was nice to be able to have a celebration with our family and friends, who were all really excited for us too!”

“Getting married is an important part of our religion. It shows that we are committed to one another and are ready to start a life together.”

“My partner and I are both very independent people. We each have our own aspirations, and hope we will each achieve our goals with the support and love of each other, but marriage just feels a bit constraining right now. We don’t want to marry, only to end up divorcing in a year or two.”

“Marriage is something neither of us is interested in. My partner thinks it’s quite an outdated thing to do, and neither of us is religious, so I think it would feel strange to commit to each other in this way. For us, commitment means more than having our relationship made ‘official’.”

“We love each other and are ready to commit to each other – marriage seems like the logical next step to take in our lives.”

“Some of my friends got married before they had children and felt that this was important, but it’s never really bothered me. My partner and I didn’t want to pay to have a wedding – we were more concerned with saving up to buy a house!”

Mind-map 1: Why people get married or form civil partnerships

Mind-map 2: Why people choose not to get married or form civil partnerships

Final Review

LIFE PROGRAMME

RELATIONSHIPS (HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS): Exploring commitment in relationships



Come up five characteristics that you think make up a positive and sustainable long-term commitment.



Today we are looking at some challenging topics. Please feel free to access any support you need.

LIFE PROGRAMME

RELATIONSHIPS (HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS): Exploring commitment in relationships



- A Better Medway: www.abettermedway.co.uk/
- Brook: www.brook.org.uk 0808 802 1234
- Childline: www.childline.org.uk
- The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) fmu@fco.gov.uk 020 7008 0151
- Freedom Charity www.freedomcharity.org.uk 0845 607 0133



LIFE PROGRAMME

RELATIONSHIPS (HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS): Questions around fertility and parenthood



Infertility: "failure to achieve a clinical pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual intercourse" This is medicalised definition.

What do you think some of the factors are that impact on fertility?

For women, these are the most common causes of infertility:

- Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS)
- Other hormonal factors that impact ovulation
- Endometriosis
- STIs, other infections, and growths in the reproductive system
- Unhealthy body weight

For men, these are the most common causes of infertility:

- Abnormal sperm production or quality
- Abnormal function due to undescended testicles
- Genetic defects,
- Health problems such as diabetes, or infections such as chlamydia, gonorrhoea, mumps or HIV.



LIFE PROGRAMME

RELATIONSHIPS (HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS): Questions around fertility and parenthood



Similarly to fertility there are some factors that can impact the healthy development of a pregnancy:

- Age
- STIs
- Smoking
- Alcohol
- Anabolic steroids
- Other drugs or medicines
- Weight
- Environmental factors
- Stress



LIFE PROGRAMME

RELATIONSHIPS (HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS): Questions around fertility and parenthood



Infertility: "failure to achieve a clinical pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual intercourse" This is medicalised definition.

If people are struggling with their fertility then there are other options opens in order to become a parent.

Look over the list below and discuss some of these options. Think about why people may choose one over the others

Issues Surrounding Pregnancy and fertility:

- Medical support for infertility
- Adoption
- Surrogacy



LIFE PROGRAMME

RELATIONSHIPS (HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS): Questions around fertility and parenthood



Infertility: "failure to achieve a clinical pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual intercourse" This is medicalised definition.

Treating Infertility

Fertility treatments include:

- medical treatment** - for lack of regular ovulation
- surgical procedures** - such as treatment for endometriosis, repair of the fallopian tubes, or removal of scarring
- assisted conception** - this may be intrauterine insemination (IUI) or in vitro fertilisation (IVF)

These are not always successful, and treatment on the NHS is limited because of how expensive it is. IVF can be a stressful and challenging process.

Supporting Information: Read this carefully

1. **Decide not to have a child**

2. **Natural conception** – a male and female achieving pregnancy through vaginal sex.

3. **Intrauterine insemination (IUI)** – also known as artificial insemination, this involves inserting sperm into the uterus via a thin plastic tube passed through the cervix. Sperm is collected and the fastest moving sperm are selected.

4. **In vitro fertilisation (IVF)** – fertility medication is taken to encourage the ovaries to produce more eggs than usual. Eggs are then removed from the ovaries and fertilised with sperm in a laboratory. A fertilised egg (embryo) is then returned to the uterus to grow and develop.

5. **Co-parenting** - when two or more people decide to conceive and parent children together. A co-parent will not have sole custody of the child, and there are many details to be worked out, such as what role each parent will take, how financial costs will be split, and the degree of involvement each will have with raising the child.

6. **Adoption** - the legal process by which a child who cannot be brought up within their birth family becomes a full, permanent and legal member of their new family. Adopters become the child's legal parents with the same rights and responsibilities as if the child was born to them.

7. **Fostering** - providing a child with a home while they are unable to live with their own family. Many children in foster care will return home or go to live with family members. A fostered child remains the legal responsibility of the council and/or their birth parents and foster carers receive support from a social worker.

8. **Surrogacy** - when a woman carries a pregnancy for a couple who cannot maintain a pregnancy themselves. In some cases, the eggs of the mother or a donor are used, while in other cases the surrogate's egg is fertilised with the sperm of the father. The baby does not legally become the couple's until a parental order has been issued after the child's birth. Until this order is issued the surrogate has the right to keep the baby.

9. **Egg freezing** – similar to the process of IVF, this involves collecting a female's eggs, freezing them and using them at a later date.

*Whilst many of these routes to parenthood can be successful, they may come with additional challenges. For example, they can be emotionally and/or physically demanding, and costly. They have variable success rates and are not always guaranteed to produce children. So, different routes should be fully researched and explored before a couple or an individual makes their decision.

Scenarios: What advice would you give?

	Route(s) to parenthood
<p>Rachel and Steven</p> <p>Rachel and Steven have been together for many years. They spent their 30s focusing on their careers, spending time socialising with friends and family, and travelling. Now they're both 40, they feel ready to start a family. However, they have been trying to conceive for over a year and have not fallen pregnant.</p>	
<p>Oliver and Zane</p> <p>Oliver and Zane spend a lot of time with their nieces, nephews and friends' children; they love kids of all ages and agree that now is the time to start a family of their own. They just aren't sure where to begin!</p>	
<p>Graham</p> <p>Graham has always wanted children of his own and is keen to start a family. He thought he would have a partner by now, but he has not found someone he would like to have a family with. He has decided to raise a child alone instead.</p>	
<p>Asha and Chidi</p> <p>27-year-old Asha and 25-year-old Chidi want a large family and recently bought a family-sized home together. Although their families keep asking when they are going to get pregnant, they are not sure whether they should wait a few years before they start, as they are both doing really well in their respective jobs.</p>	
<p>Lian</p> <p>Most of Lian's friends have children and she feels like she might be missing out. She knows she won't be fertile forever so thinks she should act now. However, she is not in a relationship and isn't sure children are really for her.</p>	
<p>Mariam and Zara</p> <p>Mariam and Zara would like to have children. Zara has always wanted to carry a child herself and Mariam is very supportive of this, but they are not sure if that's a possibility or what their other options might be.</p>	

Pregnancy Outcomes

LO: Do I understand the potential outcomes for unplanned pregnancy?

DO NOW:

Read the scenario and answer the following questions:

1. How might Amalie be feeling?
2. How might Dan be feeling?
3. What options do they have?
4. What might their next steps be?

How might Amalie be feeling?

How might Dan be feeling?

Dan and Amalie are both 16 years old. Amalie missed her last period, so asked Dan to buy a pregnancy test and bring it round when her parents were out.

She has just taken the pregnancy test and the result is positive.



What options do they have?

What might their next steps be?

Scenarios

Zarah is 18 years old. She has been working really hard to get good A-level results and has a place at a great university in another city for next year. She has been with her boyfriend since Year 11 and they have a strong relationship, although he now works full-time so they don't see each other as regularly.

Louie's girlfriend wants to keep the baby, but he doesn't feel ready to be a father and isn't sure how he will afford to financially support a family either. He knows his parents are going to be really angry – his dad even gave him a lecture about safe sex when he first started dating! He's going to be so disappointed.

Klaudia is 15 years old and doesn't know who to contact about her options – she's never even had to make her own GP appointment before! Her family are very religious and she wasn't supposed to have sex before marriage. She thinks they will ask her to leave home if she tells them that she's pregnant.

Jana's mum had her when she was young and raised her alone. She never wanted Jana to do the same thing. Jana and her ex-boyfriend Darren were dating for a year but broke up three months ago after lots of arguments. Jana is hoping the pregnancy might bring them back together.

Dalia is in a new relationship and doesn't know how her partner will react to the news. They both work full time and have been saving money up, but they want to use this to go on holidays and buy a flat together. Dalia thinks that the wrong decision might end the relationship, but she doesn't know what the right decision is.

Frankie finally feels like their life is coming together; they have found a group of really good, supportive friends at college, they are studying subjects they care about and getting on really well with their parents. Frankie thinks this all might go away if they reveal they are pregnant.

1. _____

2. _____

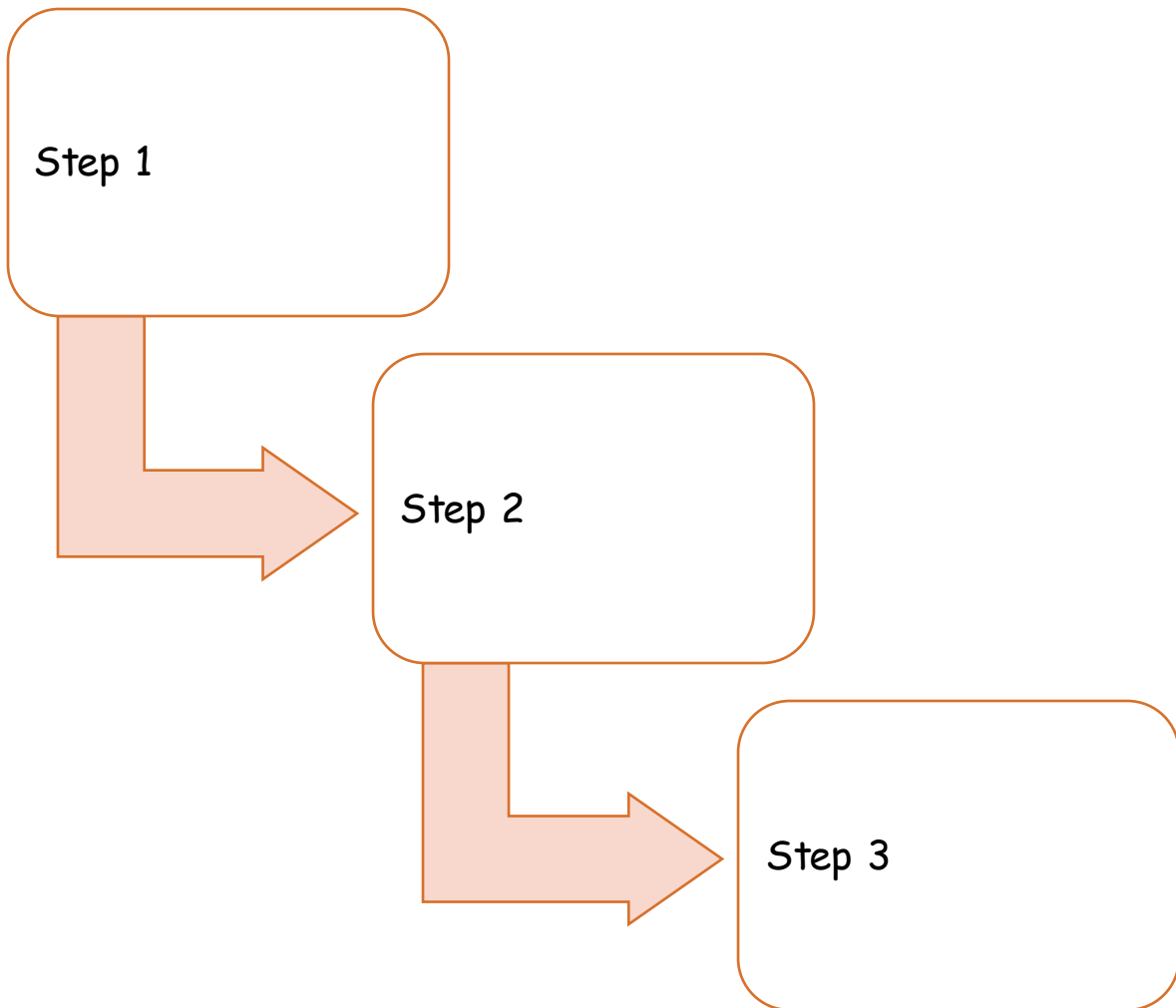
3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

**Pick one of the characters.
Write down a three-point action plan of next steps
that your character might take.**





Today we are looking at some challenging topics. Please feel free to access any support you need.



If you would like further guidance or support, speak to:

- a parent/carer, tutor, head of year
- school nurse/counsellor or other trusted member of staff in the school
- GP

Visit your GP or local sexual health clinic for support regarding a potential unplanned pregnancy.

- **A Better Medway:** www.abettermedway.co.uk
- **Brook:** www.brook.org.uk 0808 802 1234
- **Childline:** www.childline.org.uk

Do I know how to think about my own values on the context of modern society and how they impact on identity?



What did you decide to take with you?

Imagine you are faced with a crisis (a fire, flood or the like) as you leave your home you can only take with you what you can carry.

This can be a real challenge for people to think about. If you took an item it suggests that it has value to you, it could be irreplaceable or hold a special more symbolic meaning to you.

What ever you picked it would probably have come from a sense of your own values

Values are defined as:

Qualities, principles or standards of what is important in life

These **Values** come from your own personal experiences in life and may be different from those of the people around you - they will reflect you as an individual.
You values are:

- You own
- Individual
- Distinctive
- Instinctive
- Learned

What do you understand about each of the above words?

Your Values

Self-Control

Honesty

Responsibility

Friendship

Choice

Justice

Freedom of Speech

Respect

Equality

Rights

Kindness

Tolerance



Values in wider Society

In wider society there are also values that connect us. These have been referred to as "British Values" and they state that school leavers need to have an understanding that:

- Citizens can influence decision making through a democratic process (voting)
- Living under the rule of law protects citizens for their well-being and safety
- There is a separation between parliament and the courts to keep them independent
- Citizens have a freedom to hold other beliefs and faiths (this is protected by law)
- An acceptance that those who have different beliefs or faiths should be accepted and tolerated, and should not cause prejudice or discriminatory behaviour
- You should be able to identify and challenge discriminatory behaviour

DISCUSS:

1. Do you agree with these values/principles? Why/Why not?
2. Do you think these values are uniquely British Values? Why/Why not?
3. Do these values connect to you own core values?



<u>Scenario</u>	<u>Values</u>
Naseem is worried that a child on his street is not being looked after properly. They have not reported this to the authorities	
Jack has broken the law and the police are involved. When asked his siblings lie and tell the police that Jack was at home	
Sophie, a single parent, lives off benefits as she cannot work due to childcare costs	
Sam gets drunk and aggressive towards others when on a night out	
Mr Smith, a boss of a large financial firm, accepts a large bonus despite others in the company being made redundant	
Hannah knows that her partner carries a knife regularly	

Do I know how to think about my own values on the context of modern society and how they impact on identity?

LIFE
PROGRAMMERELATIONSHIPS
(COMMUNICATIO
N IN
RELATIONSHIPS)

Personal values,
assertive
communication
(including in relation
to contraception and
sexual health),
relationship
challenges and abuse



Look at the image below and discuss the following:

1. What does the person speaking value?
2. How have those values helped determine the choices they make?
3. Who will be impacted on by those decision?
4. Where could a conflict arise?
5. Do you agree with how they have prioritised their values?

I value my family, my home life is really important. I never bring work home with me and at the weekends I devote to spending time with my family

LIFE
PROGRAMMERELATIONSHIPS
(COMMUNICATIO
N IN
RELATIONSHIPS)

Personal values,
assertive
communication
(including in relation
to contraception and
sexual health),
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challenges and abuse



Look at the image below of Mark Bryan and discuss the following:

1. What does the person speaking value?
2. How have those values helped determine the choices they make?
3. Who will be impacted on by those decision?
4. Where could a conflict arise?
5. Do you agree with how they have prioritised their values?
6. What about the values of his family?



"I dress like this because I can. Just to be different. I have always admired the women that wore tight skirts and heels. Not sexually, but the power they presented. I don't dress to be sexual, but to dress like any professional woman would. To me, clothes have no gender. I prefer skirts to dresses. Dresses don't allow me to mix the genders. I prefer a 'masculine' look above the waist and a non-gendered look below the waist. It's all about clothes having no gender."

"My wife often makes suggestions on what I should wear. My daughter wishes she could borrow my shoes at times."

How do we act when conflict arises?

- a. Acting on impulse (what you feel like saying or doing then, in the moment)
- b. Consider the consequences of what I say or do
- c. Consider the effects what I say/do will have on others
- d. Doing what everyone else does
- e. Going along with what is easiest
- f. Letting others decide for me
- g. Talking it through with someone I trust first
- h. Trusting my feelings

Being Assertive is not the same as shouting people down:

The Passive Person	The Aggressive Person	The Assertive Person
Is afraid to speak up	Interrupts and 'talks over' others	Speaks openly
Speaks softly	Speaks loudly	Uses a conversational tone
Avoids looking at people	Glares and stares at others	Makes good eye contact
Shows little or no expression	Intimidates by using expressions	Shows expression which matches the message
Slouches and withdraws	Stands rigidly, crosses arms, invades the personal space of others	Relaxes and adopts an open stance and expressions
Isolates self from groups	Controls groups	Participates in Groups
Agrees with others despite personal feelings	Only considers own feelings and/or makes demands of others	Keeps to the point
Values self less than others	Values self more than others	Values self equal to others
Hurts self to avoid hurting others	Hurts others to avoid being hurt	Tries to hurt no one [including self]
Does not reach goals and may not even know goals	Reaches goals but hurts others in the process	Usually reaches goals without hurting others
You're okay, I'm not	I'm okay, you're not	I'm okay, you're okay

How could you develop some of these traits?

Do I know how to think about my own values on the context of modern society and how they impact on identity?



In your booklets you have a glossary to help you better engage with this topic. We want you to have a think about how our values and beliefs help create our sense of self. Consider how your own values can help you make you open to those with differing values.

The government estimates that there are around 200,000-500,000 transgender people living in the UK, however, strong data is hard to come by. There is more robust data on how people in the transgender community are more likely to experience prejudice and discrimination.

Remember that under the rule of law those with different beliefs and values are protected from prejudice and discrimination and should be accepted in society.

How can we make sure that our own values include those of inclusivity and openness?

A report by Stonewall in 2018 found that:

- 30% of trans and non-binary people have experienced a hate crime
- A quarter of trans people have experience abuse from a partner
- 1 in 8 trans employees have been attacked by a colleague or customer
- A quarter of trans people have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives



Glossary when we discuss gender identity:

Agender: Someone who does not experience having a gender

Bigender: Someone who experiences two or more genders either separately or simultaneously.

Gender Fluid: Someone whose gender is in flux and may change over time.

Transgender: Someone who does not identify with the gender they are assigned at birth.

Non-Binary: Someone that does not identify either entirely or exclusively as male or female.

Cisgender: Someone who does identify with the gender they were assigned at birth.

Gender Dysphoria: Discomfort or distress that can be experienced by trans people over their bodies and genders. This can be individual or social.

Pronouns: These are words that refer to someone but not by their name. For example she/her/hers. Pronouns can be gendered but also gender neutral they/them/theirs. It is important to respect how people wish to be referred to.



FORM TIME MATERIALS



PRE-STAGE ONE EXPLORATION

All journeys begin with finding out about the road ahead; your adoption journey starts with reading background information, and speaking to experts and people who've made the journey before.

[LEARN MORE](#)

When you have found an agency you are comfortable with, it's time to start the formal evaluation process, which includes things like references and background checks. This stage will take no longer than 2 months.

[LEARN MORE](#)

STAGE ONE INITIAL CHECKS & REGISTRATION



STAGE TWO TRAINING & ASSESSMENT

This is a four-month stage, where a social worker will work with you and your family, assessing your strengths before presenting it in a report to the Adoption Panel.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Your adoption agency works with local authorities to find the right child for you. They will discuss the suitability of children with you and a matching panel makes the final decision.

[LEARN MORE](#)

STAGE THREE MATCHING WITH THE RIGHT CHILD



STAGE FOUR MOVING IN

Once a match has been made, you spend time getting to know the child with the support of your social workers. A series of visits and short stays lead up to the child moving in. After a while, you can apply to the court to become their legal parent.

[LEARN MORE](#)

FACTSHEET

SURROGACY

Most people who experience problems conceiving can have fertility treatment to help them to get pregnant, but for some, no amount of medical treatment can help. Women who have been born without a womb, or who have had to have a hysterectomy in the past, are among those who may find that surrogacy offers a potential route to parenthood. Same sex couples may also consider surrogacy. Others may venture into surrogacy as it is not medically safe for the woman to carry a baby. More and more couples are considering surrogacy as a real possibility as it may be the only chance for some to have a child.

There are two types of surrogacy - straight or traditional surrogacy

This method uses the egg of the surrogate mother and the sperm of the intended father. This can be performed in an IVF clinic, but more often the technique of artificial insemination happens at home. In this situation, the baby is biologically related to the intended father and the surrogate mother. Although it is the simpler of the two types of surrogacy in as much as conceiving is less complicated, mentally it can be the hardest to accept. Not only for the surrogate mother to give up her own biological child, but also for the intended mother to accept a child which the intended father has fathered with another woman.

In the case of a same sex couple, the intended fathers should decide who should be the biological father. It is not recommended to mix the sperm from both intended fathers - there could be a chance of it "fighting" which can reduce the chances of pregnancy. They could take turns, either within one cycle e.g. do the inseminations on alternate days or alternative cycles. If they do take turns within a cycle they will need to have a DNA test done once the baby has been born as they need to establish who the genetic father is for the parental order process. DNA tests are not performed or covered by the NHS so they'd need to organise this separately and pay for it.

There are now fewer surrogates willing to do straight surrogacy.

Host or gestational surrogacy

This method uses the egg of the intended mother combined with the sperm of the intended father or donor sperm. Alternatively donor eggs may be combined with the sperm of the intended father. In this case an IVF clinic is always required. A baby conceived by this method has no biological connection to the surrogate mother. This is a more difficult way to get pregnant. The chances of it working are the same as for normal IVF, conception may take several cycles of treatment to conceive even with the help of a surrogate mother. It consumes a lot more time and energy to complete. However, many people feel more comfortable knowing the surrogate mother has no biological ties to the surrogate baby she is to carry.

Intended parents undergoing surrogacy in a clinic must be screened as "donors", therefore a number of blood tests will need to be carried out before attempting treatment. Sperm will need to be quarantined for six months. The quarantined sperm can then be used to create fresh embryos. The clinic will also require everyone involved to have counselling. Alternatively embryos can be created with fresh sperm and eggs and quarantined for six months. Some clinics offer nucleic acid tests (NATs) which shortens the quarantine period to just a few weeks.

It is very important to be aware of the law surrounding surrogacy and the voluntary organisations which work in the field will be able to point you in the right direction. They will also advise you about consulting a lawyer who has experience in the field as it is absolutely essential to ensure that surrogacy takes place within the right legal framework.

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The following organisations deal with surrogacy:
 Surrogacy UK: www.surrogacyuk.org
 COTS and Triangle: www.surrogacy.org.uk
 Brilliant Beginnings: www.brilliantbeginnings.co.uk

