UNDERSTANDING OBJECT-IFICATION

FITZROY HIGH SCHOOL   GOOD HOOD   FHSFEMINISTCOLLECTIVE

INTRODUCTION &OVERVIEW

What is the 'Fightback: Addressing Everyday Sexism in Australian Schools' resource?

Fightback: Addressing Everyday Sexism in Australian Schools is a teaching resource consisting of three units of work aimed at educating secondary school students about gender inequality, the objectification of young women's bodies and the use of sexist language. The resource also addresses the link between gender inequality and violence against women. The idea for the resource and its contents was generated by the Fitzroy High School Feminist Collective class which formed in 2013 with the intention of identifying and addressing key incidences of 'everyday sexism,' primarily those experiences that young women experience on a daily basis both within a school environment and externally to it.

Why has this resource been created?

Fightback: Addressing Everyday Sexism in Australian Schools aims to provide educators with accessible resources with which to address the issue of gender inequality. The resource is designed to be used as a tool to address negative attitudes towards gender equality – held by both young men and young women – that contribute to high rates of sexism and discrimination, and ultimately to high rates of violence against women in our community. As the National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey (NCAS) notes, 'as long as we all continue to see women as less than equal to men disrespect and violence against women will continue to happen'.[1]

One of the most disturbing aspects of everyday sexism is the well-established connection between negative attitudes towards women and violence against women. Violence against women in Australia is increasingly acknowledged as a serious problem, with recent reports finding that more than one in three women in Australia aged over 18 have experienced violence at the hands of a man since the age of 15[2] and that one woman is killed by her current or former partner in Australia every week[3].

Of particular concern is the NCAS's[4] identification of two groups - younger people of both sexes aged between 16-25 and young men – that are more likely to endorse violence-supportive attitudes. For example, one in five respondents believe a drug

or alcohol affected woman is partly to blame if she's sexually assaulted, one in five believe that men should take control in relationships. In a broader context, more than a quarter of respondents believed that men make better political leaders than women, and 49% of women reported experiencing workplace discrimination. In addition, in research undertaken in 2015 by 'Our Watch', an organisation that was established to 'drive nation-wide change in the culture, behaviours and attitudes that underpin and create violence against women and children' one in four young people surveyed did not think it was serious if a man who was normally gentle slapped his girlfriend when he was drunk, one in six respondents believed women should know their place, and one in four thought it was normal for men to pressure women into sex[5].

Critically, the NCAS report also suggests that *'people with weak support for gender equality tend to be more likely to hold violence-supportive attitudes'* and that 'focusing on shifting the attitudes that support violence is key to turning the tide on violence against women in Australia'[6].

How should I use the resource?

'Fightback' consists of three Units of work, each containing 5-10 lessons, depending on the timing of individual teachers. Though the resource has been designed to develop students' understanding of gender inequality by moving through a sequence of concepts, the units can also be taught independently of each other or out of sequence, except where otherwise recommended. The individual lessons **within** each unit can also be taught consecutively or (in most cases) independently of each other. Each lesson can be run as a 90-minute class, two 45-minute classes, or can be broken down into smaller units of time, depending on the context of the teaching environment. The resource may be integrated into existing education programs, particularly those addressing health and sexuality, personal development or life skills, but works equally well as part of an English or Studies of Society and Environment curriculum. '*Fightback'* would also work well when used in conjunction with other resources addressing similar issues, such as 'Building Respectful Relationships'[7] or 'Be The Hero."[8]

A Note on 'Class Pages'

In some lessons reference is made to uploading materials to a 'class page'. There are many tools available to teachers who wish to create a secure online space for their classes, such as Edmodo[9] or Googledocs. However, the use of these tools is not essential and should be guided by individual preference.

Expectations for a safe & effective learning environment

Setting up a 'safe' space is essential for the delivery of this curriculum. The space should be safe in the sense that students and teachers can share their ideas and opinions and ask questions without fear of judgment or silencing; students can express their views on the issues being discussed without being stigmatised or shut down.

1 VicHealth 2014, Australians' attitudes to violence against women. Findings from the 2013 National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey (NCAS), Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne, Australia.
2 ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2013, Personal Safety Survey, Australia, 2012, cat. no. 4906.0, viewed 4th December 2014, http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4906.0
3 http://www.vicpolicenews.com.au/blogs/93-oursay/1302-ccp-ken-lay-on-family-violence.html
4 See Note 1 above
5 http://www.ourwatch.org.au/Understanding-Violence/Facts-and-figures
6 See Note 1 above

It's likely that many of the students undertaking these units will regularly work together and have experience in developing classroom rules or agreements to ensure their learning environment is safe and that respectful behaviours such as listening and allowing no put-downs are adhered to. However, some classes may be coming together for the first time. For these classes, it is essential to establish ground rules, as they provide a structure that can improve classroom management, keep students and staff feeling safe and supported, and ensure the class works effectively. Students will be dealing with potentially sensitive issues focusing on inequality, discrimination, gendered violence, sexuality and body image, and so a structure that allows discussion of differing opinions is essential to the success of the curriculum[10].

Specific issues with boys and gender inequality[11]

Addressing issues of gender inequality can at times be met with a sense of resistance from students and staff who are concerned that a focus on men's and boys' privilege 'blames the boys'. Data collected from students following the trial of similar materials to those in this resource gave no indication that this was of concern to the boys themselves. It is important that boys have the opportunity to explore the construction of masculinities with regard to sexist behavior and to understand the historical and institutional nature of gender inequality. This understanding can assist in alleviating feelings of individual responsibility. The handouts on 'Reverse Sexism' and 'Violence Against Men' may also be of assistance when addressing this issue.

Disclosure of abuse or sexual preference[12]

This resource includes content that may trigger a traumatic or emotional response in students, or encourage or enable students to disclose personal experiences with sexual harassment and/or sexual assault, family violence, sexuality or issues with disordered eating.

To minimise harmful disclosures, teachers need to make very clear to students prior to undertaking activities that although the activities explore personal values and attitudes around issues of gender, misogyny and violence, they do not require students to disclose their own experiences. Students may choose not to take part in activities and should be supported to manage that choice in an inconspicuous manner.

If teachers feel students may say something inappropriate, they may choose to use the strategy of protective interruption, which means interrupting students before they disclose personal information, while at the same time informing them they can talk privately with their teacher after class.

Contact details for a range of national support services have been included in the appendix of the resource: they may be photocopied and distributed to students. Educators from countries other than Australia should ensure that contact details for similar support services are provided to their students.

7   Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood (2014), Building Respectful Relationships- Stepping Out Against gender-based violence. Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood, Melbourne. Available at
    https://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/content/29a93fbb-0553-4f9c-a382-c30f29afb120/BRR%20full%20document%20110614.pdf
8   http://www.bethehero.com.au/index.php?id=11
9   https://www.edmodo.com/
10 Adapted from Building Respectful Relationships, p11. See Note 7 above
11 Adapted from Building Respectful Relationships, p11. See Note 7 above
12 Adapted from Building Respectful Relationships, p12. See Note 7 above

Sexual preference[13]

As this resource covers issues around gender identity and sexuality, there is also a chance that students may disclose information or concerns they have about their own or a member of their family's sexual orientation. Specifically, teachers may find that students disclose that they or a family member are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.

Teachers need to know how to assist these students. They should identify appropriate procedures, including the use of community resources, to help students in this situation. Where appropriate, teachers are also encouraged to arrange support for the student and for themselves from student welfare staff, such as the student welfare coordinator or the school's student support services officer. Most importantly, teachers and student welfare staff need to be aware that disclosures of sexual orientation should remain confidential unless a student is at risk of harm.

Abuse

In Victoria, teachers are mandated to make a report to Child Protection if they form a reasonable belief that a student is in need of protection because they are at risk of harm or neglect, or if that teacher holds a reasonable belief that a student is being subjected to physical or sexual abuse. Teachers should refer to the 'Child Protection – Mandatory reporting' section of the Victorian Government Schools Policy and Advisory Guide.[14]

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13   Adapted from Building Respectful Relationships, p12. See Note 7 above
14   Adapted from Building Respectful Relationships, p12. See Note 7 above

Links with The Australian Curriculum: AusVels

Issues related to gender and gender inequality generally fall within the Health and Physical Education domain. However, a number of other areas of the AusVels are also addressed in this resource, particularly Health and Physical Education, Interpersonal Development, Personal Learning, Civics and Citizenship and Thinking Processes. The lessons in this resource are pitched primarily at students within **Levels 9 and 10.** Please refer to the AusVels links below for more detailed information.

AUSVELS LINKS

Level	Domain / Dimension	Relevant aspects of the standard	Applicable Unit/Lesson
9	**Domain** Health and Physical Education **Dimension** Health knowledge and promotion	• Knowledge of a specific social and/or cultural influence on the development of personal identity and values • Knowledge of the rights and responsibilities associated with the increasing independence of young people…	**Unit 1** 2. Hairy Armpits: Debunking some myths about feminism 3. What about the boys? 4. "But I didn't ask for it": A lesson on privilege 5. Intersectionality **Unit 2** 1. Understanding Objectification 4. Written on the body **Unit 3** 3. Challenging the Gender Norm 4. Sexism Stings
9	**Domain** Interpersonal Development **Dimensions** Building social relationships Working in Teams	• Understanding of the relationship between values, beliefs and accepted social practices • Empathy in monitoring and responding to the behaviour of others in diverse social contexts • Use of strategies for motivating group members and working towards task completion • Use of strategies when creating ideas and solving problems • Engagement of all team members in group processes	**Unit 1** 1. What is Gender Inequality? 2. Hairy Armpits: Debunking some myths about feminism 3. What about the boys? 4. But I didn't ask for it": A lesson on privilege 5. Intersectionality **Unit 2** 1. Understanding Objectification 2. Subjects and Objects 3. Objectification in Practice 4. Who does it hurt? The connection between objectification and violence **Unit 3** 1. Sticks and Stones 2. Unpacking Sexist Language 3. Challenging the Gender Norm 4. Sexism Stings 5. Fighting Back

Level	Domain / Dimension	Relevant aspects of the standard	Applicable Unit/Lesson
9	**Domain** Personal Learning **Dimensions** The individual learner Managing personal learning	• Flexible use of multiple learning strategies to complete a set task • Understanding that enquiry and research may challenge their own and others' values and beliefs • Recognition of, and respect for, a range of protocols that support learning; for example, rules of discussion in a class forum • Persistence when challenged by conflicting information, values and views • Self-directed time management with a focus on task requirements	**Unit 1** 1. What is Gender Inequality? 2. Hairy Armpits: Debunking some myths about feminism 3. What about the boys? 4. But I didn't ask for it": A lesson on privilege 5. Intersectionality **Unit 2** 2. Subjects and Objects **Unit 3** 1. Sticks and Stones 2. Unpacking Sexist Language 3. Challenging the Gender Norm
9	**Domain** Thinking Processes **Dimensions** Reasoning, processing and inquiry Creativity Reflection, evaluation and metacognition	• Use of information-processing skills in problem solving activities that involve many variables; for example, interpreting data to draw valid conclusions • Synthesis of information when considering various perspectives • Use of a range of self-selected creative thinking strategies when engaging with complex and novel ideas • Justification of their thinking processes and tools, and analysis of changes in their thinking when reviewing information and their own ideas and beliefs • Understanding of their own and others' viewpoints following analysis of those perspectives	**Unit 1** 1. What is Gender Inequality? 2. Hair Armpits: Debunking some myths about feminism 3. What about the boys? 4. But I didn't ask for it": A lesson on privilege 5. Intersectionality **Unit 2** 2. Subjects and Objects 3. Objectification in Practice **Unit 3** 1. Sticks and Stones 2. Unpacking Sexist Language 3. Challenging the Gender Norm

Level	Domain / Dimension	Relevant aspects of the standard	Applicable Unit/Lesson
10	**Domain** Health and Physical Education **Dimension** Health knowledge and promotion	• Describe a range of social and cultural factors that influence the development of personal identity and values. • Analyse the positive and negative health outcomes of a range of personal behaviours and community actions	**Unit 1** 4. But I didn't ask for it": A lesson on privilege 5. Intersectionality **Unit 2** 1. Understanding Objectification 4. Written on the body **Unit 3** 1. Sticks and Stones 2. Unpacking Sexist Language 3. Challenging the Gender Norm 4. Sexism Stings 5. Fighting Back
10 and beyond	**Domain** Interpersonal Development **Dimensions** Building social relationships Working in Teams	• Describe how local and global values and beliefs determine their own and others' social relationships. • Evaluate their own behaviour in relationships, identify potential conflict and employ strategies to avoid and/or resolve it. • Understanding of the many social influences, such as values, culture, gender and power, that may affect relationships • Behaviour that encourages diverse groups in the community to contribute to an inclusive and harmonious environment • Strategic leadership that promotes a socially supportive school environment; for example, peer leadership and restorative strategies such as sharing feelings about an issue or incident • Working with the strengths of a team they achieve agreed goals within set timeframes.	**Unit 1** 1. What is Gender Inequality? 2. Hairy Armpits: Debunking some myths about feminism 3. What about the boys? 4. "But I didn't ask for it": A lesson on privilege 5. Intersectionality **Unit 2** 1. Understanding Objectification 2. Subjects and Objects 3. Objectification in Practice 4. Written on the body **Unit 3** 1. Sticks and Stones 2. Unpacking Sexist Language 3. Challenging the Gender Norm 4. Sexism Stings 5. Fighting Back

Level	Domain / Dimension	Relevant aspects of the standard	Applicable Unit/Lesson
10 and beyond	**Domain** Civics and Citizenship **Dimension** Community engagement	• Draw on a range of resources, including the mass media to articulate and defend their own opinions about political, social and environmental issues in national and global contexts. They contest, where appropriate, the opinions of others.	**Unit 1** 1. What is Gender Inequality? 2. Hairy Armpits: Debunking some myths about feminism 3. What about the boys? 4. "But I didn't ask for it": A lesson on privilege 5. Intersectionality **Unit 3** 2. Unpacking Sexist Language
10	**Domain** Personal Learning **Dimensions** The individual learner	• Students identify the ethical frameworks that underpin their own and others' beliefs and values…	**Unit 1** 4. "But I didn't ask for it": A lesson on privilege 5. Intersectionality **Unit 2** 1. Understanding Objectification 2. Subjects and Objects 3. Objectification in Practice **Unit 3** 1. Sticks and Stones
10	**Domain** Thinking Processes **Dimensions** Creativity Reflection, evaluation and metacognition	• Apply selectively a range of creative thinking strategies to broaden their knowledge and engage with contentious, ambiguous, novel and complex ideas. • When reviewing information and refining ideas and beliefs, students explain conscious changes that may occur in their own and others' thinking and analyse alternative perspectives and perceptions.	**Unit 1** 1. What is Gender Inequality? 2. Hairy Armpits: Debunking some myths about feminism 3. What about the boys? 4. But I didn't ask for it": A lesson on privilege 5. Intersectionality **Unit 2** 1. Understanding Objectification 1. Subjects and Objects **Unit 3** 1. Sticks and Stones 2. Unpacking Sexist Language 3. Challenging the Gender Norm 4. Sexism Stings

UNIT 2
UNDERSTANDING OBJECTIFICATION

WHAT IS OBJECTIFICATION?

GROUP　　　Whole group and Table group
TIME　　　　90 minutes or 2 x 45 minutes

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will develop an understanding of the key term 'objectification'

Students will reflect upon their own attitudes and beliefs with regard to the practice of objectification

Students will think critically about their understanding of the concepts of 'sex' and 'gender'

BACKGROUND

This activity introduces students to the concept of 'objectification'. It encourages students to reflect upon their own knowledge and experience of objectification, and to think about their participation in or experience of the practice. The lesson will establish the groundwork for deeper exploration of the issues related to the concept of objectification.

ACTIVITIES

1. Four Corners Activity: Personal Experiences of Objectification
2. Table Group Discussion

PREPARATION & MATERIALS

- One copy of Handout 1: 'What is?' displayed clearly in the classroom
- One copy of Handout 2: 'Four Corners' statements
- One copy per student of Handout 3: 'Someone as Opposed to Something: What is Objectification?'
- One set of Agree/Disagree cards to be placed in the four corners of the room before commencing the activity
- A3 paper: one sheet per table group

PROCEDURE

1. Explain to students that the activity they are going to be undertaking will require them to think about their personal experience of sex and gender.

2. Begin by drawing your students' attention to the definitions of 'Sex' and Gender' outlined in the 'What is?' cards. Read both definitions to the class and ensure that all students have an understanding of the difference between the two terms. It is important to acknowledge that there is a diversity of experiences of gender and that not all individuals identify with the sex/gender they have been assigned.

3. Explain to students that you will be reading a set of statements out to them. In response to each statement, they must move to the corner of the room that most closely reflects their response to the statement. Students may Agree, Strongly Agree, Disagree or Strongly Disagree. Discourage 'fence sitting' but encourage questions that may help to clarify the statement for the class.

4. Read the first statement and instruct students to move to their preferred corner of the room.

5. Once students have taken a position, ask the following questions, ensuring that you solicit responses from more than one corner of the room, and from more than one student:

> - *Why did you choose to Agree/Disagree with the statement?*
> - *How might the scenario described in the statement make a person feel?*
> - *How might the scenario in the statement make a person act?*
> - *Are there any noticeable similarities or differences amongst the students in each corner?*
> - *Would anyone feel comfortable to elaborate on his or her experience as it relates to this particular statement?*

6. Once you have read through (and students have responded to) the 'Four Corner' statements, instruct students to arrange themselves in table groups of 4-5. Each table should nominate a recorder and a reporter: the reporter will write 1-2 responses from the group up on the board when requested.

   Ask students to discuss and record any key ideas or themes that they think have emerged as a result of the Four Corners activity. Teacher assistance may be required at this step.

7.   Once students have had sufficient time to discuss the activity, ask the speaker from each table to write 1-2 key ideas or themes from their discussion up on the board, using a table like the one below.

THEME	EXAMPLE	WHO DOES IT PRIMARILY AFFECT?
Valuing bodies for the way they look	Catcalling on the street	Mostly the girls in the classroom

8.   Distribute a copy of Handout 3. 'Someone as Opposed to Something: What is Objectification?' to each student and read through the handout with the class. Check for understanding and repeat any key points as necessary.

9.   Conclude the class with a discussion of the following questions:

> - *Can you find examples of objectification in the Four Corners statements we have just used for this activity?*
>
> - *How does each example illustrate the practice of objectification?*

WHAT IS SEX?

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Sex can be understood as the difference in the biological characteristics of females and males, determined by a person's genes. For example, females produce eggs and can become pregnant.

Males have testicles and produce sperm.

Sex is not the same as gender.

In some instances a person may be classified as biologically female or male at birth, but feel very strongly that their sex – female or male – does not match their gender identity.

Population Council's (2009) It's All One Curriculum: Guidelines and Activities for A Unified Approach to Sexuality, Gender, HIV and Human Rights Education.

WHAT IS GENDER?

Gender is not the same as sex. Gender can be understood as socially or culturally defined ideas about femininity (female roles, attributes and behaviours) and masculinity (male roles, attributes and behaviours). Gender roles are learnt. These ideas are not innate or 'natural'.

In every society, gender norms and gender roles influence people's lives, including their sexual lives. Greater equality and more flexible gender roles give everyone more opportunities to develop to their full capacity as human beings. It is important to know that many people do not identify as exclusively 'female' or exclusively 'male' with regard to their gender identity.

Population Council's (2009) It's All One Curriculum: Guidelines and Activities for A Unified Approach to Sexuality, Gender, HIV and Human Rights Education.

AGREE

DISAGREE

STRONGLY AGREE

STRONGLY
DISAGREE

FOUR CORNERS STATEMENTS

I HAVE FELT PRESSURE TO CHANGE THE WAY I LOOK

I HAVE EXPERIENCED 'WOLF-WHISTLING' OR 'CAT CALLING' IN A PUBLIC PLACE

I HAVE HAD SEXUAL COMMENTS CALLED OUT TO ME FROM A VEHICLE

I HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT I SHOULD BE FLATTERED IF PEOPLE MAKE COMMENTS ABOUT MY BODY

I HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT MY CLOTHING WAS PROVOCATIVCE

I HAVE BEEN REFERRED TO OR HAVE HEARD PEOPLE OF THE SAME SEX OR GENDER I IDENTIFY WITH BEING REFERRED TO, AS 'THAT' OR 'IT'

OTHER PEOPLE FEEL THAT IT'S OK TO MAKE COMMENTS ABOUT MY BODY

I OFTEN SEE MYSELF DEPICTED IN THE MEDIA AS A SEXUAL OBJECT

FOUR CORNERS STATEMENTS cont.

I OFTEN SEE MYSELF DEPICTED IN THE MEDIA AS PHYSICALLY STRONG

THE BODIES OF THE SEX OR GENDER I IDENTIFY WITH ARE OTEN DIGITALLY ENHANCED

IF I WERE ABLE TO ACCESS THE INSTIUTION OF MARRIAGE, IT WOULD NOT BE UNUSUAL FOR SOMEONE CLOSE TO ME TO 'GIVE ME AWAY'

IF I WERE IN A POSITION OF POWER - (FOR EXAMPLE, A POLITICIAN) - IT'S LIKELY THAT PEOPLE WOULD COMMENT UPON MY BODY AND THE THINGS I WEAR.

IN VIDEO GAMES I OFTEN SEE MYSELF DEPICTED AS STRONG RATHER THAN 'SEXY'

IF I WERE AN ELITE SPORTSPERSON, I WOULD BE DEPICTED AS FIERCE AND COMPETITIVE

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF MY BODY IS OFTEN REFERRED TO IN THE LYRICS OF THE MUSIC THAT MYSELF AND MY PEERS LISTEN TO

PEOPLE SEE MY CLOTHING AS A STATEMENT ABOUT MY ATTITUDE TOWARDS SEXUAL ACTIVITY

FOUR CORNERS STATEMENTS cont.

I OFTEN SEE MYSELF DEPICTED IN AN ACTIVE WAY IN ADVERTISEMENTS

I OFTEN SEE MYSELF DEPICTED IN A PASSIVE WAY IN ADVERTISEMENTS

THERE IS AN EXPECTATION THAT I WILL REMOVE MOST OF THE HAIR GROWING ON MY BODY FOR COSMETIC PURPOSES

THERE IS A SOCIAL PRESSURE FOR ME TO 'WATCH WHAT I EAT'

I AM COMFORTABLE WITH WOMEN BREASTFEEDING IN PUBLIC

SEXUAL ACTS LIKE INTERCOURSE ARE OFTEN DEPICTED AS BEING DONE 'TO ME' RATHER THAN 'WITH ME'

MY CULTURAL BACKGROUND IS OFTEN RAISED WHEN THE MEDIA DEPICTS MY BODY

MY BODY IS OFTEN TREATED AS IF IT'S WEAK AND INEFFECTIVE

SOME**ONE** AS OPPOSED TO SOME**THING**

WHAT IS OBJECTIFICATION?

——

When you think of the word 'object' it's likely that you think of something that isn't human: a 'thing' that doesn't breathe, talk or think; perhaps a rock or a book or a cup. However, people are sometimes looked at, spoken about or treated like they are objects too.

When a human being is treated or viewed as if they are an object, it is called **object**ification.

Most research on the concept of objectification has shown that, despite an increase in the objectification of males, it is still females who experience the most significant rates of objectification.

 A person may be objectified if:

- She is perceived as existing only for the pleasure or purpose or somebody else
- Her personal or intellectual ability is disregarded, reducing her role to one that is primarily sexual in nature (e.g. Her brain is not relevant and in mediums such as advertising her head will often not be shown)
- She is seen as a 'tool' for another's purposes, for example, to sell a product
- She is depicted or perceived as not having any power that is not connected to her sexuality
- She is depicted in a way that suggests that she is powerless or submissive as opposed to powerful and active
- She is seen as being owned by another person
- She is treated as if she is interchangeable with all other women who 'look like her'
- It is seen as permissible to dominate her or to be violent towards her
- There is no concern for her feelings and experiences (e.g. She is just a body)
- She is referred to using words like 'it' or 'that'

Some of the places you might find objectification are in advertising, media, pornography, art, beauty contests (or 'rate my attractiveness' exercises); in events such as beauty contests, and in public spaces (catcalling, harassment). Objectification is also expressed through the exertion of pressure (often unspoken) to undergo cosmetic surgery, particularly breast enlargement, surgical weight loss procedures and more recently, labiaplasty.

UNDERSTANDING OBJECTIFICATION

GROUP In pairs or triads & Whole class
TIME 90 minutes , 2 x 45 minutes or 3 x 45 minutes

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will explore the ways in which written texts help to construct our understanding of gender

Students will identify and investigate some of their own beliefs with regard to gender norms

Students will develop an understanding of key terms related to the concept of objectification including the terms 'sexualised'; 'active'; passive'; 'object' and 'subject'.

BACKGROUND

This class is intended to provide students with an opportunity to explore the way in which females and males are given (or denied) agency via popular representations of gender. It can be used to establish a basic understanding of some of the key terms associated with objectification, and will help to build on your student's initial understanding of the term, whilst preparing them for exploring the concept further in subsequent classes.

ACTIVITIES

1. Silent Conversations
2. Discussion & categorisation

PREPARATION & MATERIALS

• Stimuli: David Rowe cartoons
• One large piece of A3 or poster paper per pair or triad with a cartoon taped in the middle of the page.
• 1 x set of 'Key Term' cards, printed onto A4 or A3 paper
• 1 x copy per student of: 'Objectification The Tools of the Trade'
• Markers, pens, pencils

PROCEDURE

Ensure that you allow enough time for each component of the activity. It is important that key terms are clarified and explored as part of a group discussion at the end of the class. A suggested guide might be:

PART 1

1. Arrange students into pairs or triads. Provide each group with a cartoon attached to an A3 piece of paper. Inform students that they will each need a different coloured pen, marker or pencil for the activity.

2. Let students know that they are about to engage in a silent learning activity, where all communication must be done in writing: reinforce that once instructions have been given, it is important that students remain silent throughout the exercise. Ensure that all students are aware that after 15 minutes of silent work there will be an opportunity for movement, and that after a further 15 minutes there will be an opportunity for discussion.

3. Tell students that they will be required to view the image on their group's piece of poster paper and then to write a comment beneath it. Initial comments must be given in response to the stimulus, but may broaden to related topic areas as the activity progresses. Provide students with the following prompts as a starting point:

> - *Describe what you can see in the cartoon*
>   - *Characters*
>   - *Setting*
>   - *Colours*
>   - *Layout*
>
> - *What message does the cartoon seem to be communicating?*
>
> - *Does it have any text? What issue might the text be alluding to?*
>
> - *What sorts of facial expressions do the characters in the cartoons have and why might they have them?*
>
> - *What images are prominent in the cartoon and why?*
>
> - *What do you think the cartoon is trying to say?*

4. Now tell students that they are about to engage in a silent, 'written conversation'. Prompt students to read each other's responses to the stimulus and to write any questions they have onto their sheet of A3 paper. Students may wish to write beneath their peers' initial comment or to draw a line connecting their question to the comment: all students should write on the paper at the same time. Another member of the group – it doesn't have to be the student who wrote the initial comment - should then address the question/s that have been asked by writing a response below it/them.

PART 2

1. Instruct students that they are to remain silent, but that they now have the opportunity to walk around the room and read the responses that other groups have made to their cartoons. Students should take their marker or pen with them so that they can write comments or questions on other groups' papers if they wish. You may wish to stipulate that each student must write at least one comment or question on another group's paper.

2. After the class have had an opportunity to look at each other's A3 sheets, let them know that they no longer need to be silent. They should return to their group and to their cartoon and look at any comments written by their classmates. Ask students to discuss the following points:

•   The comments they have made on their own paper
•   The comments they read on other groups' papers
•   Comments made by others on their paper
•   What is the key issue or question that jumps out at them as a result of the discussion of their own or other groups' cartoon?

3. Whilst students are discussing their stimulus, place the A4 or A3 'Key Term Cards' up around the room.

PART 3

1. Conclude the class by facilitating a whole-group discussion related to each cartoon. Allow each table to present one or two key points or questions and then guide students through the 'Objectification The Tools of the Trade' handout. Ask students to make links between the issues raised by their cartoon and the relevant key term/s.

2. Have each group place their A3 piece of paper up on the wall under the 'Key Term' Card that they think is most relevant to their stimulus. This will create a visual example for each key term that can be retained in your classroom for reference in future classes. Give students the opportunity to discuss and clarify the placement of their A3 sheet & cartoon and to identify whether there was an additional 'Key Term' that could have applied to their image.

you throw like a girl..

I'm here for the 5000km service...

SEXUALISED

—

When a person is sexualised, they are seen as a **'thing' for other people's sexual use or viewing pleasure,** rather than as a person who has feelings or is able to act independently or make their own decisions. A sexualised person is often used to present a stereotypical standard of physical attractiveness, which reinforces an ideal of who 'can' and 'can't' be considered sexy or sexual.

People who are sexualised are often portrayed in positions of inferiority, whilst other attributes especially their sexual attributes – are portrayed as their **most important assets,** which is sometimes presented as being liberating and empowering.

ACTIVE

—

The opposite of passive.

A person who is depicted or viewed as being active (or as an active **subject**) is often represented as someone who **acts** rather than being acted upon, whose **primary** purpose is to **look** rather than to be **looked at**.

Active in this sense doesn't necessarily mean physically active; it also means whether a person is depicted as having power, rather than being powerless.

In a forum like advertising, a person may be represented as being **active** because they are assertive (e.g. a fireman) or because they dominate or are more powerful than another person in the same image (e.g. 'damsel in distress' being rescued by the fireman).

PASSIVE

The opposite of active.

A person who is depicted or viewed as being passive (or as a passive subject) is represented as someone who is **acted upon** rather than having any power to act her or himself. They have things done **to them**, as opposed to doing things to someone else. For example, in advertising, a person may be represented as being weak and helpless rather than active and powerful, or as someone whose **primary purpose** is to be looked **at** rather than look**ing**.

OBJECT
—

When a person is seen and/or treated as if they are an **object**, their body, body parts or appearance are seen as the most valuable thing about them. When a person is seen as an object they are treated or viewed as if they have no feelings or emotions, and as if their body or body parts are interchangeable with other objects (either other people or other 'things').

A person who is viewed or treated as if they are an object may also be treated as if they are 'owned' by another person and/or as if they have no personal power or choice. An 'object' as opposed to a 'subject' may be referred to using words like 'that' or 'it'.

SUBJECT

—

In the context of our class, a subject is a person who can observe or look at other people (in contrast to an object, who is observed or looked upon).

A subject is a person who is portrayed as possessing perspectives, experiences, feelings, beliefs, and desires.

A subject is a person who can be considered as having a unique personality and unique experiences.

A subject is a person who is valued for their whole self rather than just their body.

These characteristics may be represented symbolically in mediums such as advertising or cartoons.

SEXUALISED

PASSIVE

ACTIVE

OBJECT

SUBJECT

UNSURE

OBJECTIFICATION IN PRACTICE

GROUP Individual & class
TIME 90 minutes or 2 x 45 minutes

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will build on their understanding of the following key terms: sexualised, active/passive and object/subject

Students will apply the concept of objectification to a variety of visual images

Students will begin to develop an understanding of the role of the media in objectification

BACKGROUND

This class is designed to encourage students to explore the way in which the media and popular culture represent the bodies of women and men. It has also been designed to consolidate students' understanding of the concept of objectification, and to encourage students to engage in a conversation about gendered representations of bodies in popular culture.

ACTIVITIES

1. What are the odds? Patterns of Objectification
2. Ticking the boxes: Objectification Checklist

PREPARATION & MATERIALS

- If using 'Kahoot®' or 'Survey Monkey®' to create an interactive digital survey, you must prepare your survey before the class. Refer to the screenshots in the appendix for examples of how to use Survey Monkey®.
- 10-20 images of women and men taken from popular culture (advertisements work very well) collected before commencing the lesson. Ensure that you have a wide variety of visual stimuli: there are many sites online that list advertisements that implicitly or explicitly condone objectification or violence. It is also important that the images be culturally and racially diverse. Alternatively, if you have time you may choose to have students source the images in class.
- Access to computers or iPads
- 1 x copy per table group of: 'Objectification The Tools of the Trade'
- 1 x copy of 'Objectification The Tools of the Trade' photocopied onto A3 paper and placed around the room
- One copy of the Objectification Checklist per student

PROCEDURE

PART 1

1. 1. Place an Objectification: The Tools of the Trade' handout on each table so that students can refer to the terms as required. In addition, place A3 copies of the handout around the room so that are easily visible. Run through the definitions with students before commencing the class, and clarify understanding as required.

2. Instruct students to draw up the voting table below in their books (see example below) or draw the table up on the board. Alternatively, set up a survey using a site like Kahoot or Survey Monkey to enable students to enter their voting responses online: a visual representation of responses can then be shown anonymously to the whole class, which is a great way of keeping students engaged in the topic.

Figure 1. Results Table

IMAGE	SEX OF PERSON IN THE IMAGE	ACTIVE	PASSIVE	SEXUALISED	NOT SEXUALISED	OBJECT	SUBJECT
Eg. Game Avatar	Male	✓			✓		✓

3. If students are required to source the visual stimulus in class themselves, instruct them to locate at least 5 images of women and men from popular culture; stipulate that the images be culturally diverse but do not stipulate the number of images of females vs. males. Allow students to decide upon the gender breakdown themselves. Students will share their images with the rest of the class.

•   Show one image (that you have prepared or that a student has found) to the class at a time and ask students to think about how the terms below might apply to the individual/s who features in the image. Responses should be recorded in the Results Table (Figure 1.) or, if the images have been collected beforehand, entered into your online survey. Students may refer to the 'Objectification The Tools of the Trade' handout on their table or up on the board/wall to check definitions.

Active	*Non-sexualised*	*Object*
Passive	*Sexualised*	*Subject*

You may find the following prompts useful:

- *What are the eyes of the individuals in the image doing? Are they looking at the audience? Do they look submissive? Are they challenging or confident?*

- *What sort of facial expressions do the individuals in the images have? What might they be intended to communicate?*

- *What sort of physical stance do the individuals in the images have? What does this stance suggest to you or what might it be intended to suggest?*

- *What sort of clothing are the individuals in the images wearing? What might their clothing be intended to communicate or suggest to the audience?*

---

4.   Follow the same process for 5-10 images, depending on individual class timing.

5.   Add up the votes as they relate to each sex.

For example, how many males vs. females are portrayed as active, how many females are portrayed as passive?
Facilitate a discussion focusing on the following questions:

- How are females and males depicted differently in these images?
- What sorts of patterns emerge when we look at these images?
- Are there any exceptions to the pattern?
- Do we see these exceptions regularly?
- How might these sorts of depictions make people feel?

PART 2

1.   Provide students with a copy of the Objectification Checklist.
Ask them to look at the images that have received the most votes by the class in the categories of passive/sexualised/object. Alternatively, you could have students choose two of the images that they found the most interesting, and

focus on those images. For each image, instruct the students to check the boxes on the 'Objectification Checklist' that apply to the image.

2. Revisit the discussion questions from Part I (above). E.g. how are females and males depicted differently in these images?

3. Conclude the class by providing a summary of the ideas students came up with and discussing the patterns they identified with regard to the representation of women and men in popular culture. What conclusions can students draw from this exercise?

OBJECTIFICATION CHECKLIST

___

☐   Is the person perceived or depicted as existing only for the pleasure or purpose or some body else?

☐   Is the person depicted primarily as being sexual, with their personal or intellectual ability disregarded? (E.g. the person's brain is not relevant and in images their head will often not be shown).

☐   Is the person depicted as a 'tool' for another's purposes, for example, to sell a product?

☐   Is the person depicted or perceived as not having any power that is not connected to their sexuality?

☐   Is the person depicted in a way that suggests that they are powerless or submissive as opposed to powerful and active?

☐   Could the person be seen as being "owned" by another person?

☐   Is the person treated as if they are interchangeable with all other people who 'look like them'?

☐   Is it seen as "OK" to dominate the person, to be in a position of power in relation to them or to be violent towards them?

☐   Are the person's feelings and experiences disregarded (e.g. They are just a 'body')?

☐   Is the person referred to using words like 'it' or 'that' or is their body referred as an object to be 'used'?

☐   Is the person's appearance the most important thing about them?

☐   Is the person used in the place of another object (e.g. a rug or a table)

WRITTEN ON THE BODY

GROUP   Whole group & Individual
TIME   90 minutes or 2 x 45 minutes

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will explore the physical and psychological affects related to objectification

Students will think critically about the impact of visual images and the message they construct about what characteristics constitute 'beauty'

Students will be able to reflect upon and challenge the idea that the standards of beauty encoded in objectifying images are not 'natural' but culturally constructed

BACKGROUND

This lesson is intended to enable students to explore the relationship between 'objectification' and the physical and psychological effects associated with unrealistic representation of the body in popular culture. It encourages students to reflect upon their own knowledge, experience of and involvement in the process of objectification, and prompts them to consider the health implications related to the concept and its practice.

Important: Contact details for support agencies related to disordered eating can be found in the appendix of this resource and should be made available to students in the class.

ACTIVITIES

1. Visual analysis
2. Discussion
3. Re-advertising task

PREPARATION & MATERIALS

- 1 x A3 colour copy of Fitzroy High School Feminist Collective's Poster "How Objectification Affects the Body: An Illustrated Chart" or a digitally projected copy of the poster
- One A4 copy of "How Objectification Affects the Body: An Illustrated Chart" per student (optional)
- Access to internet
- 1 x copy per student of 'Eating Disorders: Further Information'
- One copy of 'Re-advertised' activity handout per student

The FHS Feminist Collective poster focuses on the harm done to young women through the process of objectification, because Victorian and Australian statistics still show that young women are the single largest group affected by eating disorders. However, it is critical to acknowledge the increasing numbers of young men affected by eating disorders and to allow students to focus on male subjects when undertaking the 'Re-advertised' activity in Step 4 of the lesson, if that is where their interest lies.

PROCEDURE

PART 1

1. Ensure that all students in the class can see the 'How Objectification Affects the Body: An Illustrated Chart' poster. You may want to consider using a screen that the whole class can see, or projecting the image onto the board or wall.

2. Give students some time to look at the poster carefully, and then consider the following questions as a whole group:

> *   *What is the first thing that you notice about the poster?*
>
> *   *What might the heading or tagline refer to? Why was this heading/ tagline chosen?*
>
> *   *Why have two parts of the 'skin' of the anatomical model been pulled back? What do they reveal? Why?*
>
> *   *What is the connection between the statistics featured on the poster and the concept of objectification?*
>
> *   *Why do the statistics chosen relate to young women?*
>
> *   *Who is the poster targeting?*
>
> *   *What message is the poster trying to communicate?*

PART 2 (10 MINS)

1. Read through the 'Eating Disorders: Further Information' handout with students to provide some clarification about the prevalence of eating disorders. Though the statistics show that eating disorders still primarily affect young women, it's important to acknowledge that the incidence of young men experiencing eating disorders in Australia is also on the rise.

2. Give students time to ask questions and to express how they feel about the statistics. You may wish to use the following prompts:

PROCEDUREcont

> • *Do the images we see every day in the media, online, in films etc. have an impact on how we think we should look?*
>
> • *What other sorts of factors might lead to a person developing an eating disorder?*
>
> • *How might both of these factors relate to the statistics about eating disorders we've just read through?*

PART 3 (35 MINS)

1. Give students a copy of the 'Re-advertised' activity handout. Read through the instructions with students and then allow time for them to create an advertisement for one of the products listed (or another product, to be negotiated with you) that focuses on representing a healthy body image.

2. Allow time at the end of the class for the sharing of images and a brief discussion of how the 're-advertised' product differs from 'mainstream' advertising and its representation of bodies. The focus should be on clarifying how our daily exposure to images of bodies that fit a stereotypical mould of 'beauty' contributes to negative body image and to illnesses such as eating disorders.

HOW OBJECTIFICATION AFFECTS THE BODY

AN ILLUSTRATED CHART

1 90% OF CASES OF ANOREXIA AND BULIMIA OCCUR IN FEMALES

2 THE RISK OF DEATH FROM ANOREXIA IS 12 TIMES HIGHER THAN THE ANNUAL DEATH RATE FROM ALL CAUSES IN FEMALES AGED 15 TO 24 YEARS OF AGE

3 EATING DISORDERS ARE THE 3RD MOST COMMON CHRONIC ILLNESS IN YOUNG WOMEN

4 BULLYING AND TEASING RELATED TO APPEARANCE IS A RISK FACTOR IN DEVELOPING AN EATING DISORDER

5 THE PRESSURE TO ACHIEVE THE 'IDEAL BODY' INCREASES LOW SELF-ESTEEM AND BODY DISSATISFACTION IN GIRLS

6 EATING DISORDERS AFFECT EVERY MAJOR ORGAN IN THE BODY

EATING DISORDERS
FURTHER INFORMATION

An eating disorder is a mental illness, not a lifestyle choice, a diet gone wrong or a fad. An eating disorder is characterised when eating, exercise and body weight/shape become an unhealthy preoccupation of someone's life. There are a variety of eating disorders that can affect a person, with different characteristics and causes. However in general, eating disorder cases can be linked to low self esteem and an attempt to deal with underlying psychological issues through practising an unhealthy relationship with food.

Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia are two of the most common eating disorders that affect our community.

SOME STATISTICS ON EATING DISORDERS IN AUSTRALIA

- Between 1995 and 2005 the prevalence of disordered eating behaviours doubled among both males and females
- Eating disorders occur in both females and males before puberty, however, the ratio of males to females is approximately 1 male to every 10 females during adolescence and decreases to 1 male in every 20 females during young adulthood
- Eating disorders are increasing in both younger and older age groups 1
- At the end of 2012 it was estimated that eating disorders affected nearly 1 million Australians 1
- Prevalence of eating disorders is increasing amongst boys and men but 90% of cases of anorexia nervosa (AN) and bulimia nervosa (BN) occur in females
- Approximately 15% of women experience an eating disorder at some point during their life. Australia's female population in 2014 is 50.23 million.
- An estimated 20% of females have an undiagnosed eating disorder
- Eating disorders are the 3rd most common chronic illness in young females
- Risk of premature death from an eating disorder is 6-12 times higher than the general population
- Eating disorders are ranked 12th among the leading causes of hospitalisation costs due to mental health
- Depression is experienced by approximately 45% to 86% of individuals with an eating disorder 6
- Anxiety disorder is experienced by approximately 64% of individuals with an eating disorder 7
- In 1998, 38 months after television first came to Nadroga, Fiji, 15% of girls, aged 17 on the average, admitted to vomiting to control weight. 74% of girls reported feeling "too big and fat" at least sometimes. Fiji has only one TV channel, which broadcasts mostly American, Australian, and British programs
- The Longitudinal Study on Women's Health, found that only 22% of women within a normal healthy weight range reported being happy with their weight. Almost three quarters (74%) desired to weigh less, including 68% of healthy weight and 25% underweight women
- A recent survey of 600 Australian children found that increasingly, children are disturbed by the relentless pressure of marketing aimed at them. A large majority (88%) believed that companies tried to sell them things that they do not really need
- Beyond Stereotypes, the 2005 study commissioned by Dove surveyed 3,300 girls and women between the ages of 15 and 64 in 10 countries. They found that 67% of all women 15 to 64 withdraw from life-engaging activities due to feeling badly about their looks

RE-ADVERTISED
PROMOTING A PRODUCT USING POSITIVE BODY IMAGE

This task requires you to create a print advertisement that uses positive images of bodies to promote a product. You will 're-advertise' the product by changing the way it is marketed or sold to its audience. Depending on your classroom resources, you may wish to draw the poster with textas or pencils, or to create the poster as a digital file.

1. Begin by choosing one of the following products to sell in your advertisement: a hair removal product; underwear; men's deodorant; make up; perfume, or another product negotiated with your teacher. The product must be one that routinely features people's bodies in its advertising campaigns.

2. Once you have chosen a product, select one of the statistics from the 6 boxes on the 'How Objectification Affects the Body' poster.

3. Next, your task is to create an advertisement that addresses the statistic you have chosen, by making the ad's audience feel more positive about their body and their appearance. E.g. If you chose the box that contains the text 'Eating disorders are the most common illness in young women', you'll need to consider what sorts of images of women's bodies might help your audience to feel more accepted or more positive about their body.

4. Once you have finished your advertisement, write 2-3 dot points explaining how your advertisement differs from 'mainstream' advertising, which often uses stereotypical and unobtainable images of bodies to sell its products.

5. Share your ad, and your thoughts, with your class.

RE-ADVERTISED

PROMOTING A PRODUCT USING POSITIVE BODY IMAGE

Before you start drawing, try to think laterally about how you might present your product. Write down any ideas that come to you, even if they seem silly. This process will help you to come up with some thoughts and ideas that you might be able to turn into an original, creative advertisement. If you're stuck, a good starting point might be looking at an ad that already exists for your product and working out what you would like to do differently.

This task requires you to create a print advertisement that uses positive images of bodies to promote a product. You will 're-advertise' the product by changing the way it is marketed or sold to its audience. Depending on your classroom resources, you may wish to draw the poster with textas or pencils, or to create the poster as a digital file.
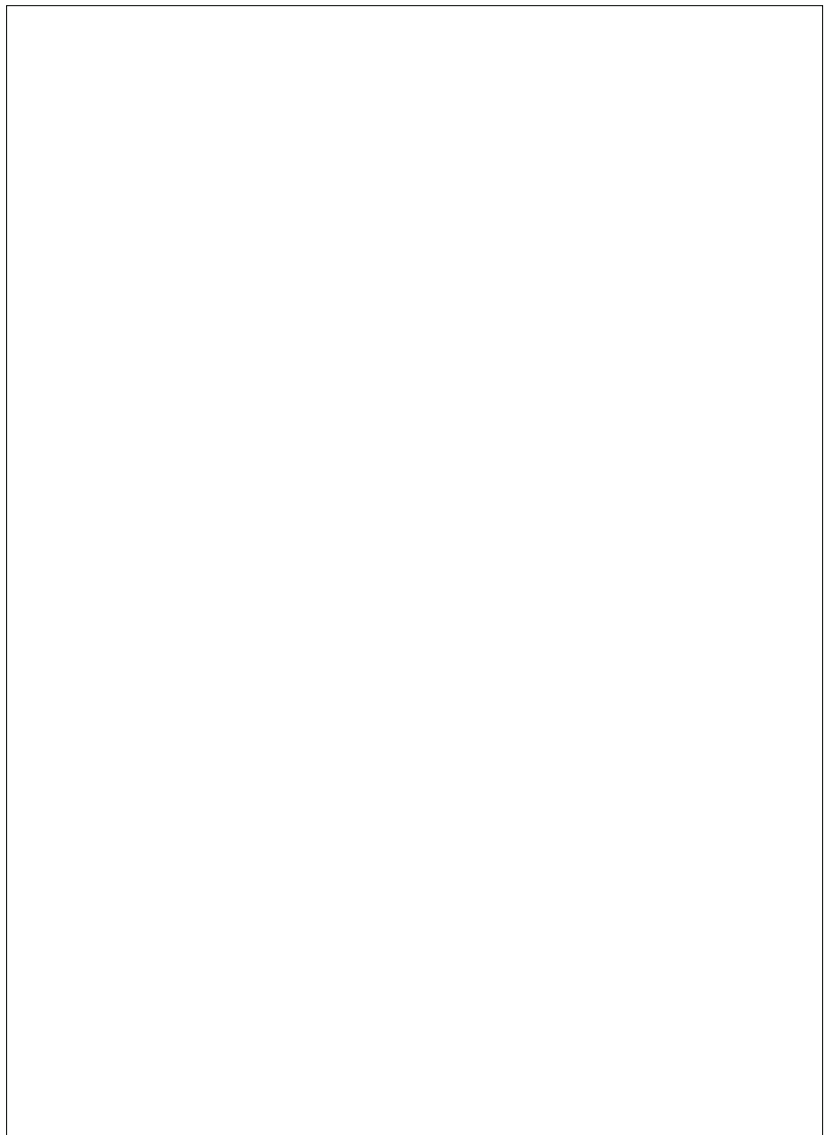
WHO DOES IT HURT?

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN OBJECTIFICATION AND VIOLENCE

GROUP   Whole group & Individual
TIME   90 minutes or 2 x 45 minutes

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will explore the link between objectification and violence

Students will think critically about the way in which objectification enables and reinforces violence against women

Students will understand and apply the concept of a continuum

Students will develop strategies to address objectifying behaviour

Important Note: As this class covers the subject of family violence and violence against women, it is important to inform students about the content before commencing the class. Such a 'warning' is designed to prevent people from experiencing a traumatic response to the subject matter by encountering it without advance notice. Students who do not wish to participate in the class should be allowed to withdraw, and may require support to do so inconspicuously.

BACKGROUND

This class is intended to introduce students to the link between the practice of objectification and 'family violence'. The lesson builds on the understanding of objectification gained in lessons 1-4, and encourages students to think critically about the way in which 'everyday sexism' forms part of a continuum of greater harm.

ACTIVITIES

1. Read & Discuss
2. Sex & Violence Continuum

PREPARATION & MATERIALS

• Internet access required: *Take a Stand. Say 'no' to family violence* available via **www.fhsfemco.com**
• 1 x copy of *Ken Lay On Family Violence* per student
• 1 x *Family Violence Excerpt* per group
• 1 x teacher copy or 1 x copy per student of *Reverse Sexism* and *Violence Towards Men*
• 1 x copy per student of *What Is A Continuum* handout
• 1 x teacher copy or 5 x group copies of the *Continuum Activity* handout

PART 1 : READING & VIEWING

1. Organise students into 5 small groups and ensure that each student has a copy of the article "Ken Lay On Family Violence".

2. Taking your time, read the article out to the class, asking students to follow along on their copy of the article. You may wish to have students read as well. It may be helpful to go through the boxed vocabulary words before reading the article.

3. Give one excerpt from the article to each table group, and ask them to discuss the associated questions, with one student taking on the role of scribe. The group will also need to nominate a member to feed their answers back to the class.

    Provide time for feedback and discussion of group responses.

4. Show the clip "Take a Stand. Say No To Family Violence" found under the 'resources' tab at **www.fhsfemco.com.** After watching the clip, pose the following question to enable students to clarify the key argument from the clip:

> *Ken Lay says that some guys think that groping women or abusing them with sexist insults is OK, and that it is not connected to domestic violence.*
>
> *But he says, 'I have news for your. It is all connected'.*
>
> **What does he mean when he says this?**

Try to draw out the connections made between 'everyday sexism' and violence against women in both the article and the clip.

PART 2 : SORTING & ACTING

1. Read through the 'What is a Continuum' handout with students, clarifying understanding where necessary. Then, either as a class or in small groups, complete the 'Continuum Activity', discussing and then creating a continuum using the examples of sexist and violent behaviour provided.

    Provide an opportunity for students to discuss why they have located particular behaviours at different points on the continuum.

…BUT NOT ALL MEN

This class has the potential to make young men feel that they are being 'targeted' by its focus on the violence perpetrated by men against women because 'not all men' commit acts of violence.

This is an important consideration and a potential stumbling block for learning. It is therefore suggested that teachers utilise the 'Reverse Sexism and Violence Against Men' handout to facilitate discussion of this issue.

Additional information about patterns of violence can be found on the facts and figures page of the **Our Watch** website, specifically the section titled: What *About Violence Against Men?*

http://www.ourwatch.org.au/ Understanding-Violence/Facts-and-figures

The focus should be on clarifying and reinforcing the connection between behaviours that might be placed at the 'least serious' end of the continuum, like 'wolf whistling' and those that might be placed at the most serious end, like assault. Treating women like objects or like they are less valuable than men contributes to a culture where gender-based violence is enabled, ignored and even condoned.

2. Read students the following statement:

> *"That's my challenge to you: be that circuit breaker. Be that person that says something – again and again and again."*
>
> *Ken Lay*

3. Instruct students to create their own 'circuit breaking' continuum of behaviours that might challenge sexist and violent behaviour, beginning at one end with the 'least effective strategy' and concluding at the other end with the 'most effective'. Allow time for students to share, reflect upon and discuss their strategies at the end of the class.

KEN LAY
ON FAMILY VIOLENCE

I want you all to imagine something with me. Imagine that each week an Australian is murdered at a train station. That each week, someone's brother or sister; mother or father is violently killed getting on or off a train.

Picture it?

Now picture the public response. It would be a front-page news story in each of our capital cities. Police would flood our stations, while people would avoid public transport in favour of private cars. Congestion would quickly become a major problem, as the number of cars on the roads increased. The word "crisis" would pepper our talkback. Can you imagine it?

Okay.

Now I have another figure—a real figure—that I think is just as horrific. A figure that is just as worthy of galvanising our sympathy and outrage. But it doesn't. The figure is this: every week a woman is murdered by her partner or ex-partner.

Every week this happens. Now, our public response isn't at all like we imagined it would be if those victims died not in their family rooms but at train stations. Why do you think that is? I'll tell you why I think it is. Because what happens in someone else's home doesn't affect us. And because we are constantly misapprehending the nature of violence. We do this because we want to feel safer—so we apportion complicity to those who die violently. In our heads, we make them somehow responsible for the wickedness that befell them.

When we do this, we feel better. We feel safer. And it's also much, much easier to do this when the crimes are domestic—when they're behind closed doors. When it happens we might think "Well, why did she marry him?" just as we might think of a rape victim, "Well, why was she wearing a short skirt?" When we imagine this sort of complicity for the victim—when we essentially blame them—we are congratulating ourselves for our superior judgement, a judgement that will ensure it never happens to us. But when we do this we are injuring our imaginations, which is the lifeblood of our sympathy. When we do this, we come up with the wrong answers about why violence happens.

And when we do this, we make it less likely anybody will care enough to do anything. In blaming victims, we create a lot of myths about family violence. Here's some of them:

- *that the victim must have incited the abuse;*
- *that the victim is guilty of awful judgement;*
- *that if the woman's life was endangered, she would simply leave.*

No, no and no. These are myths and they're getting in the way of honesty. In order to discard these myths, I'm going to broaden our story a little.

The theme of tonight's forum is obviously family violence, but I place that in a long continuum of violence against women. I place family violence in a wider culture where vulgar and violent attitudes to women are common. So as I try to correct

VOCABULARY

Complicity
Partnership or involvement in wrongdoing (even if you don't think that you are directly involved)

Incited
To have stirred, encouraged, or urged on

Continuum
a continuous sequence in which adjacent elements are not perceptibly different from each other, but the extremes are quite distinct

Entitlement
Feeling that you have a right to something

Misspent
To spend one's time foolishly, wastefully or unproductively

Endorsement
To give approval to someone or something

some myths tonight—and as I explain the urgency of this problem—let me begin at one end of the continuum. In July, I wrote a piece on violence against women as part of the Herald Sun's "Take a Stand" campaign that Minister Wooldridge generously noted earlier.

At the beginning of my piece I introduced a fictional—but unfortunately realistic—scenario.

Susie is 21. She's just finished uni exams and decides to head out for a night with friends. Within the first two hours she's been groped twice. The first from a leering drunk. The second happens from behind, anonymously, as Susie's making her way through a crowd. Susie feels a lot of things—saddened, humiliated and a little frightened. But she's not surprised. This, she knows, happens every single day. Some women plan their evenings around avoiding it. As men, how often—if ever—do we do that?

Now, if you're wondering what this has to do with tonight's theme, what it has to do with the drunk belting teeth from his wife's mouth, I'll tell you: Our culture is filled with men who hold an indecent sense of entitlement towards women. Our culture is heavy with warped and misspent masculinity. And every single day the casual groping and lewd comments that go unchallenged erode our standards. And if none of us are saying anything, then this feral atmosphere gets worse, until it becomes an endorsement of violence against women.

If you think I'm exaggerating, consider the recent World Health Organisation's report that found that violence against women had reached "a global health problem of epidemic proportions." And yes, that includes Australia. The Organisation's report found that a third of the world's women had been assaulted. If you think I'm exaggerating, consider Victoria's crime statistics for the previous financial year.

During 2012/13, there were 60,829 incidents where police submitted family incidence reports. This is a rise of 21.6% on the 50,000 reports submitted the previous year. 60,000 incidents in Victoria alone. Grim statistics can be found all over the world. In the United States, between 2000 and 2006, 3,200 US soldiers were killed. In that same time in the US, three times as many people were killed in domestic homicides. If you still think I'm exaggerating, consider the almost total absence in our culture of men writing about the casual molestation of women.

Violence against women—in whatever form—is not solely a feminist issue. It's a social issue... It's a blokes' issue. And if you still need to be convinced that this is a public matter,

just wonder where you think the 8-year-old boy who watches his Mum gurgle on her own blood ends up. Think about the kids.

So I've now explained to you some of our misapprehensions and myths about violence— that it's a private matter or that the victims are to blame somehow. And I've now explained to you the urgency. Now let me give you my challenges.

Men, I need your help in making any form of indecency against women deeply shameful. I want you to use the full measure of your profession and your passion to try to correct

KEN LAY : ON FAMILY VIOLENCE

this. I want you to use radio and newspaper and TV; I want you to use boardroom and community meetings; I want you to talk about it with colleagues and children. Men, when an estimated 20% of Australian women have been sexually assaulted—and when we know that sexual assault is massively underreported—we can't say we don't have a problem. I want you to consider what shallow sense of masculinity validates abuse. I want you to consider what twisted sense of entitlement compels a man to grab a woman in a bar or call her a slut.

Men, I want you to consider why blokes are so quiet on these issues. Then I need you to correct that silence.

To all of you, I ask that you help repel a callousness that has crept into our society. Callousness and complacency. What I want to leave you with is a sense of the complacency we must battle. And a sense of the prevailing, damaging attitudes towards women. We must all stand up to these things wherever they occur. Not just at community forums. But on trams and trains and streets. In the workplace and our sporting clubs. With our children.

I talk a lot about ethical leadership in my position, and how I frame it for my audiences—how I explain why people fail to act—is often with what psychologists call the bystander effect. A famous case-study of this phenomenon comes from 1968, when a young New Yorker called Kitty Genovese was murdered in front of her apartment. About 40 witnesses did nothing. The bystander effect looks at why there is less likelihood of bystanders responding when there are more people around.

Now what psychologists have found is that people don't fail to intervene because of malice or indifference. What they found is that most people fail to intervene because of simple social anxiety. People become self-conscious: what if no-one else helps? What if my appraisal of the situation is wrong? What if my help isn't wanted? What if people think I'm a busybody? There's also the assumption that somebody else will help—an assumption that increases with a larger number of bystanders.

So what happens is there's a collective reluctance to act until somebody else has acted. Once somebody has, it becomes the normal thing to do—the barrier to action has been broken.

And that's my challenge to you: be that circuit-breaker. Be that person that says something—again and again and again. Because if we shrug our shoulders when a sex worker is murdered—or a wife is battered to death—then we're diminished as a community.

Ken Lay
Chief Commissioner of Police

KEN LAY ON FAMILY VIOLENCE - EXCERPTS

EXCERPT 1

I want you all to imagine something with me. Imagine that each week an Australian is murdered at a train station. That each week, someone's brother or sister; mother or father is violently killed getting on or off a train. Picture it?

Now picture the public response. It would be a front-page news story in each of our capital cities. Police would flood our stations, while people would avoid public transport in favour of private cars. Congestion would quickly become a major problem, as the number of cars on the roads increased. The word "crisis" would pepper our talkback. Can you imagine it?

Okay.

Now I have another figure—a real figure—that I think is just as horrific. A figure that is just as worthy of galvanising our sympathy and outrage. But it doesn't.

The figure is this: every week a woman is murdered by her partner or ex-partner.

Every week this happens. Now, our public response isn't at all like we imagined it would be if those victims died not in their family rooms but at train stations.

Why do you think that is?

EXCERPT 2

In our heads, we make them somehow responsible for the wickedness that befell them.

When we do this, we feel better. We feel safer. And it's also much, much easier to do this when the crimes are domestic—when they're behind closed doors.

When it happens we might think "Well, why did she marry him?" just as we might think of a rape victim, "Well, why was she wearing a short skirt?" When we imagine this sort of complicity for the victim—when we essentially blame them—we are congratulating ourselves for our superior judgement, a judgement that will ensure it never happens to us. But when we do this we are injuring our imaginations, which is the lifeblood of our sympathy. When we do this, we come up with the wrong answers about why violence happens.

EXCERPT 3

Now, if you're wondering what this has to do with tonight's theme, what it has to do with the drunk belting teeth from his wife's mouth, I'll tell you: Our culture is filled with men who hold an indecent sense of entitlement towards women. Our culture is heavy with warped and misspent masculinity. And every single day the casual groping and lewd comments that go unchallenged erode our standards. And if none of us are saying anything, then this feral atmosphere gets worse, until it becomes an endorsement of violence against women.

EXCERPT 4

Now let me give you my challenges.

Men, I need your help in making any form of indecency against women deeply shameful. I want you to use the full measure of your profession and your passion to try to correct this. I want you to use radio and newspaper and TV; I want you to use boardroom and community meetings; I want you to talk about it with colleagues and children. Men, when an estimated 20% of Australian women have been sexually assaulted—and when we know that sexual assault is massively underreported—we can't say we don't have a problem. I want you to consider what shallow sense of masculinity validates abuse. I want you to consider what twisted sense of entitlement compels a man to grab a woman in a bar or call her a slut.

Men, I want you to consider why blokes are so quiet on these issues. Then I need you to correct that silence.

EXCERPT 5

A famous case-study of this phenomenon comes from 1968, when a young New Yorker called Kitty Genovese was murdered in front of her apartment. About 40 witnesses did nothing. The bystander effect looks at why there is less likelihood of bystanders responding when there are more people around.

Now what psychologists have found is that people don't fail to intervene because of malice or indifference. What they found is that most people fail to intervene because of simple social anxiety. People become self-conscious: what if no-one else helps? What if my appraisal of the situation is wrong? What if my help isn't wanted? What if people think I'm a busybody? There's also the assumption that somebody else will help—an assumption that increases with a larger number of bystanders. So what happens is there's a collective reluctance to act until somebody else has acted. Once somebody has, it becomes the normal thing to do—the barrier to action has been broken.

And that's my challenge to you: be that circuit-breaker. Be that person that says something—again and again and again. Because if we shrug our shoulders when a sex worker is murdered—or a wife is battered to death—then we're diminished as a community.

EXCERPT 1

What does Ken Lay say the public response would be to someone's brother, sister, mother or father being violently killed getting on or off a train, every week of the year?

What does he say about the public response (or lack of response) to the most recent Victorian statistics, which tell us that one woman a week is murdered by her husband or partner?

Why do you think the public response would be different?

EXCERPT 2

What does Ken Lay mean when he says that 'we are congratulating ourselves for our superior judgment', a judgment that will ensure it never happens to us' when he talks about victim blaming?

What does Lay mean when he says that when we victim-blame we are 'injuring our imaginations, which is the lifeblood of our sympathy'?

EXCERPT 3

What does Ken Lay mean when he says that 'men hold an indecent sense of entitlement towards women'?

How does 'none of us saying anything' about women being groped or about women having to plan their evenings around avoiding sexual harassment become an 'endorsement of violence against women'?

KEN LAY ON FAMILY VIOLENCE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

EXCERPT 4

Why does Ken Lay specifically target men and not women by saying 'Men, I need your help…?'

*What does he want men to do about violence against women?*

What does he mean when he says that a 'shallow sense of masculinity validates abuse.'

EXCERPT 5

What is the bystander effect?

What does Lay mean by challenging us to be a 'circuit breaker'?

What sorts of actions – or words - do you think Lay would like members of the community to take in regard to violence against women?

C	O	N	T	I	N	U	U	M
Least Green				Moderately Green				Most Green
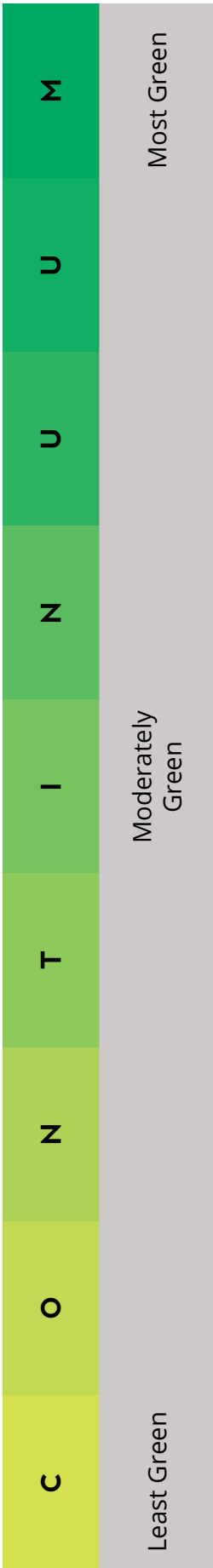
A continuum (pronounced "kon-TIN-yoo-um") is a tool used to represent a range of characteristics that are connected to one another. A continuum often uses a scale that progresses from 'least' to 'most', and represents subtly changing shades of difference. The order in which items are placed on a continuum involves an element of subjectivity, so there is not necessarily a 'right' answer in terms of how an item is ranked.

It is important to note that a continuum related to violence does not suggest that the experience of a person at the 'most serious' end of the scale is more traumatic than the experience of the person at the 'least serious' end of the scale, because each person's experience of violence is highly personal and depends on their individual circumstances.

A CONTINUUM OF SEXIST & VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR

Either with your class or with your group, you will be asked to place the following behaviours on a continuum, with the number '1' indicating 'least serious' and the number '10' indicating 'most serious.'

GRABBING A WOMAN'S BREAST ON A CROWDED TRAM	**REACHING UP A WOMAN'S SKIRT AT A BAR**
PUTTING SEXUALLY SUGGESTIVE POSTERS OF WOMEN UP IN THE WORKPLACE	**CALLING A WOMAN A 'SLUT' AS SHE WALKS DOWN THE STREET**
MAKING A SEXIST JOKE	**SEXUAL ASSAULT**
PHYSICAL ASSUALT	**GROPING WOMEN WITHOUT THEIR CONSENT**
MURDER	**WOLF-WHISTLING AT A WOMAN**

A CONTINUUM OF SEXIST & VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR

Cut the numbers out and lay them in order on the floor or table

1
LEAST SERIOUS

2

3

4

5
MODERATELY SERIOUS
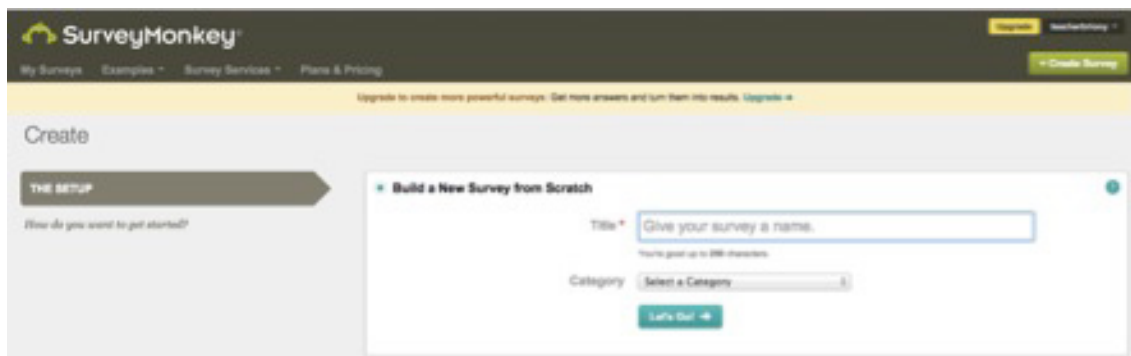
6

7

8

9

10
MOST SERIOUS

APPENDIX

Survey Monkey®
Unit 2: Lesson Three - Objectification in Practice

An example of how 'Survey Monkey®' might be used to set up an interactive, online survey for recording and displaying student responses.

1. Name and categorise your survey.
   E.g. Title: 'Checking in on Objectification'
   Category: Education.

2. Create the questions. E.g.

3. Viewing a breakdown of student responses

Answer Choices		Responses	
▾	Active	20.00%	4
▾	Passive	70.00%	14
▾	Sexualised	90.00%	18
▾	Not sexualised	0.00%	0
▾	Depicted as an object	85.00%	17
▾	Not depicted as an object	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 20			

4. Visual representation of student responses

Q34

Which of the following labels apply to the person/people being depicted?

Answered: 17   Skipped: 4
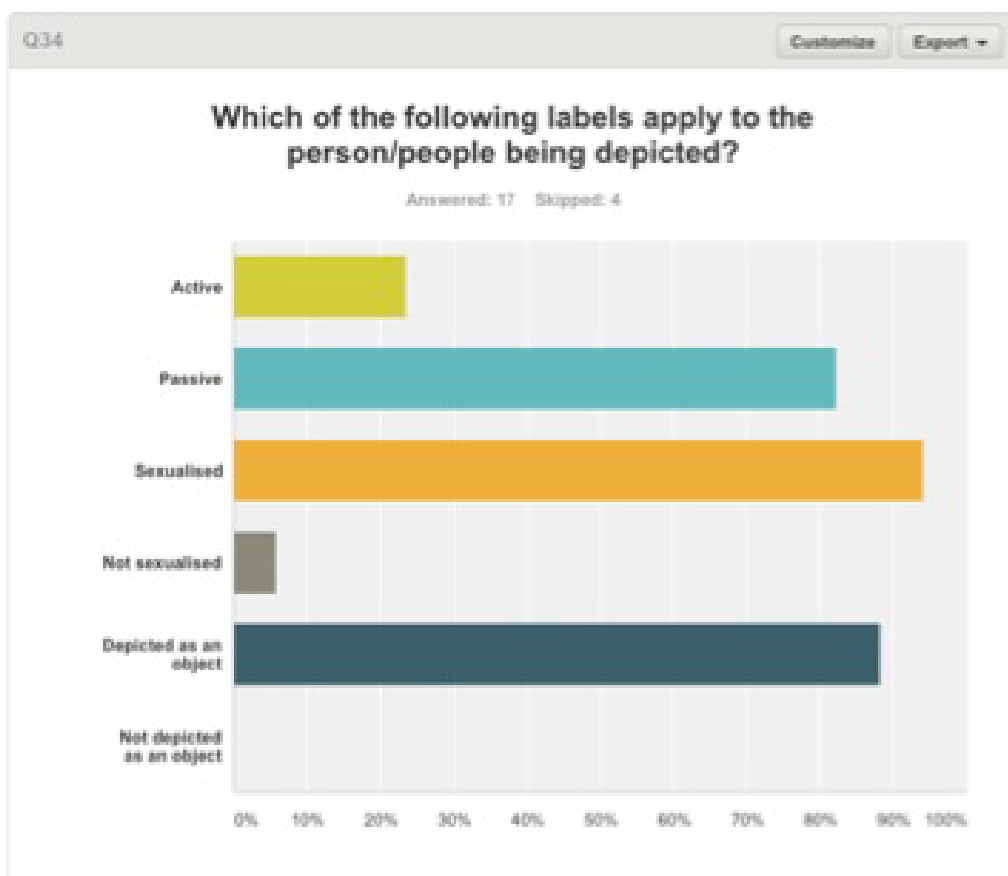
NATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Violence and Sexual Assault
Sexual Assault & Domestic Violence National Help Line
24 hour phone: 1800 RESPECT
www.1800respect.org.au
1800 Respect (1800 737 732)

The Women's Services Network (WESNET)
wesnet.org.au

Men's Referral Service
1300 766 491

Sexuality
Rainbow Network
http://www.rainbownetwork.com.au/

Eating Disorders
Butterfly National Support Line and Web Counselling Service
www.thebutterflyfoundation.org.au/web-counselling
1800 ED HOPE / 1800 33 4673

General Support Services
Headspace
http://www.headspace.org.au/

Eheadspace
https://www.eheadspace.org.au/

Lifeline Australia
13 11 14

Kids Helpline
1800 55 1800

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