



A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

Session One



Session aims

- Reflect on what it means to have a visible difference and its impact on the child, the family and the school.
- Learn about unconscious (implicit) bias and have greater awareness of how this impacts our behaviour.
- Understand more about living with a visible difference by listening to children with a visible difference and their parents.

Visible difference/disfigurement

- What do you understand by the terms visible difference and disfigurement?
- Why do you think there is a move towards using the phrase 'visible difference' rather than 'disfigurement'?
- Discuss these in your groups and make notes, so we can take feedback.

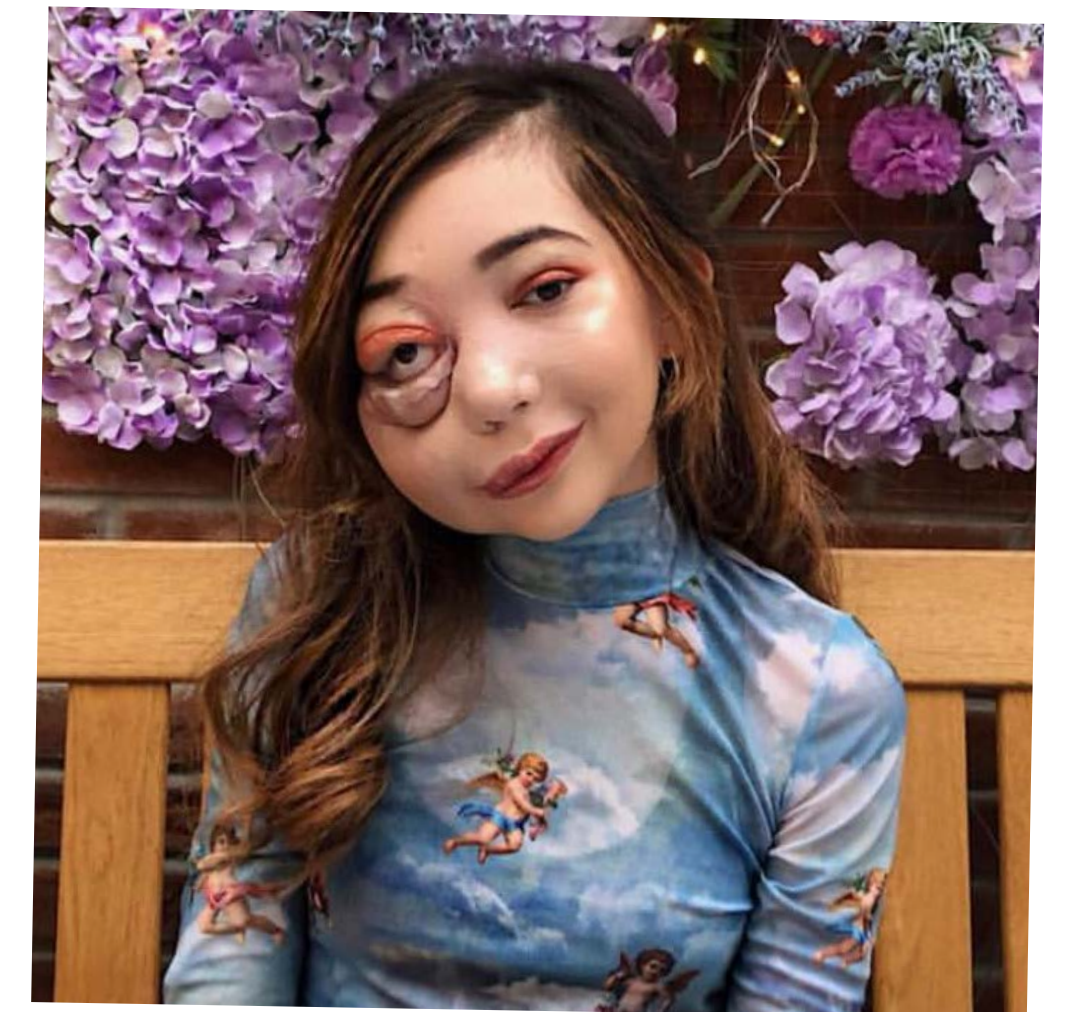




Some causes of visible difference:

- Skin conditions like eczema, acne, or vitiligo
- Burns
- Birthmarks
- Craniofacial conditions, affecting the growth and development of the skull and face
- Cleft lip/palate (a gap or split in the upper lip and/or roof of the mouth)
- Cancer

There are many types of visible difference



Wonder trailer



GROUP DISCUSSION

When you see the clip of Wonder for the second time, reflect on the following questions and then discuss them in your groups.

- 1 What do you think the filmmaker wanted you to think and feel when Auggie takes off his helmet for the first time?
- 2 What did you notice as Auggie walked through the playground for the first time?
- 3 If you were Auggie, how would you feel walking through the playground for the first time?
- 4 What do you think Auggie's parents were thinking as they watched him go into the playground for the first time?
- 5 What do you think the other children were thinking as they watched Auggie walk through the playground for the first time?

Wonder trailer



- 1 What do you think the filmmaker wanted you to think and feel when Auggie takes off his helmet for the first time?
- 2 What did you notice as Auggie walked through the playground for the first time?
- 3 If you were Auggie, how would you feel walking through the playground for the first time?
- 4 What do you think Auggie's parents were thinking as they watched him go into the playground for the first time?
- 5 What do you think the other children were thinking as they watched Auggie walk through the playground for the first time?

GROUP DISCUSSION

If you had a child like Auggie joining your class,
what would you want to know and what do think
some of the **challenges** might be?

Equality Act (2010): Severe disfigurement

An impairment which consists of a severe disfigurement is to be treated as having a substantial adverse effect on the ability of the person concerned to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Why do you think the Equality Act includes 'severe disfigurement' as a disability that has an adverse effect on the ability of a person to carry out normal day-to-day activities?



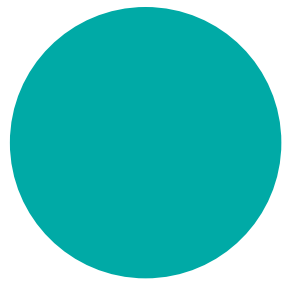
United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Under articles 7 and 24 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the UK Government is committed to inclusive education of disabled children and young people and the removal of barriers to learning and participation in mainstream education.

With this commitment comes a responsibility for schools to ensure that children with a visible difference are given their right to participate fully.

GROUP DISCUSSION

What do you think unconscious
(or implicit) bias means?



Unconscious (or implicit) biases

Unlike conscious biases, unconscious (or implicit) biases are the views and opinions that we are unaware of; they are automatically activated and frequently operate outside conscious awareness and affect our everyday behaviour and decision making. Our unconscious biases are influenced by our background, culture, context and personal experiences.

Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2018, pp.4-5

Unconscious Bias



Note the things that surprise you in this film about the impact of unconscious (or implicit) bias in the classroom.



Reaction and response

Our initial reaction to a situation or event is instinctive and is not something we have control over.

Our reaction to disfigurement/visible difference might be discomfort and avoidance, due to repeated associations of disfigurement/visible difference with negative qualities that we see presented within popular culture.

By reflecting on such reactions, we can ensure that when we respond, we make the unconscious conscious. This can help us overcome our unconscious biases and unlearn our negative stereotypes.

66% of people
held negative attitudes towards
people with a visible difference.

Changing Faces 2017

Perceptions of visible difference

There are a number of persistent myths and assumptions, which affect how people with a visible difference are viewed by society, such as not being very clever or being characterised as evil.

Stone (2017) found that people with a visible difference/disfigurement are viewed much less favourably than people with other disabilities that are easily identified, such as wheelchair users.

When participants in a study compared photos of people with a facial visible difference with those without, they judged them be:

- **Less out-going**
- **Less competitive**
- **Less assertive**
- **More sensitive and emotional**
- **Followers rather than leaders**

Stone (2017)

86,000

**children of school age in the
UK have a visible difference:
A mark, scar or condition that
makes them look different.**

Childwise 2018

Children's voices

While watching the video, ask yourself:

- When a child has a visible difference, what are the implications to their social inclusion and well-being?
- What do you think schools should do to support inclusion of children with a visible difference?

Children and young people's voices



Parents' Voices

While watching the video think about:

- Whether the children and their parents have different priorities and views.
- The challenges that parents face when negotiating with schools and what you think schools could do to initiate and maintain an honest and open dialogue with parents and their children.

Parents' voices



GROUP DISCUSSION

Identify three key points that you will take away from today's session and make a note of them.

Taking this forward

When you are in school, keep a record of how having a better understanding of the impact of difference and unconscious (implicit) bias has influenced your practice.

In our next session, you will have a chance to discuss your experiences and have a look at some resources you can use with your students.

Face

BY HANNAH LINDFIELD

See past the scars, I can laugh and smile too
See past the disability, I have a brain too

Do you really care
Or is that a hard question to ask?
With each stare or with each comment
You will always open old wounds

If you see me wobble, or if I stutter
Will you help me or will you let me suffer?

After reading this poem, I hope you know
Why normal is a place where I have no wish to go!

