

ACTIVITY 5:

DISCRIMINATION AS A BARRIER TO HEALTHCARE (ARTICLES 2 & 23)

AIM: Children explore the idea of how discrimination for many reasons – including discrimination against people with disabilities – prevents people from being able to access healthcare and health systems and denies children their rights. Take a look at this [disability inclusion film](#) together if you'd like.

Preparation:

- Prepare colour cards (or colour items), enough for each child to participate
- Review the role play scenarios
- Make a note of any children in your group who may be sensitive to this exercise from their own experiences with discrimination, and adjust accordingly

Facilitator materials and resources:

- Activity 5 presentation
- [Letter to Aunt Lucy video clip](#) (timestamp 2:45)

Participant materials:

- Colour cards or items to define role play roles

Tips for those working in Early Years settings:

- Introduce the word and concept of diversity. You could use toys, books and/or images to open up a discussion with children about diversity. What makes you different from other people in your family and from your friends? What's good about being different? Ask children to draw pictures of themselves with the title ONLY ONE ME.

Note: This activity could be upsetting for some children, triggering feelings and memories: particularly those who have lived experience of discrimination, or those more aware of the impact of conflict on children (part 3, scenario 2). Please be aware of this and be ready to support them as necessary.

Facilitator introduction

In the last session we explored some of the obstacles that keep people, including children, from accessing healthcare they need. Sometimes these obstacles are physical barriers — for example, in some places there may be no clinic or hospital to go to. Other times people can be excluded from getting the care they need just because of who they are. This is called discrimination.

Discrimination means treating someone differently because of how they look, where they come from, what gender they are, what language they speak, what their religion is, who they love, the colour of their skin or the ethnic group they come from, or if they experience any different abilities. Children are sometimes also treated differently because of who their parents are or even where their parents came from.

Article 2 of the CRC tells us that all children should have their rights respected without discrimination. It says: All children have all these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what language they speak, what their religion is, what they think, what they look like, whatever their gender, if they have a disability, if they are rich or poor, and no matter who their parents or families are or what their parents or families believe or do. No child should be treated unfairly for any reason.

While Article 2 says that children with a disability should not be discriminated against, Article 23 talks more about this specifically. It says: Every child with a disability should enjoy the best possible life in society. Governments should remove all obstacles for children with disabilities to become independent and to participate actively in the community.

In this activity we will explore what discrimination looks like in health systems, and what we can do to help all children be able to experience their rights.



PART 1: WARM-UP LETTER WRITING OR CARD MAKING

1. Through Paddington's story, we know that it was unusual for a bear to be living with a family of humans in London, and there were many times that Paddington felt like he wasn't understood by the humans around him. Paddington often wrote letters to his Aunt Lucy to explain what his experiences were and how he was feeling. Ask the children: can you think of a time in Paddington's story when he felt different or misunderstood? Can you think of a time when you felt different or misunderstood?

2. Invite the children to begin today's activities by creating a card or writing a letter to tell someone that they're important and that they belong. They can create this card or letter for themselves, for a friend, or even for Paddington. Explain that sharing your feelings by writing is a good way to care for your mental health, which is a part of your overall wellbeing.

3. Finish the exercise by reading the text of (or viewing the video clip of) Paddington's last letter to Aunt Lucy where he shares what he learned about being different:

"Mrs. Brown says that in London everyone is different. But that means anyone can fit in. I think she must be right because although I don't look like anyone else, I really do feel at home. I will never be like other people, but that's alright, because I'm a bear. A bear called Paddington."



PART 2: COLOUR CARD ROLE PLAY

1. Prepare enough colour cards (or objects) for the number of children participating in the game as follows:
 - Blank cards with no colour – three cards no matter the size of the group
 - Colour cards: create 1 blue card, 1 green card, 2 red cards, and 4 yellow, until there are enough cards for all group members
2. Randomly hand each child one of the prepared colour cards (or objects) or have them draw the card out of a hat. Invite the three children who have received the blank cards to stand off to the side.
3. Explain to the group that the three children with the blank cards will be playing the role of the health workers. All the other children must follow the instructions of these health workers based on the colour of the card that they hold.
4. Read aloud (or have one child volunteer to read aloud) the narrative of the role play from the resources. Throughout the role play, each child will receive treatment based on the colour of their card rather than on their health need. You may choose to role play only one scenario or complete all three.
5. Invite groups with the same colour card to sit together afterwards and discuss how it felt to be treated a certain way because of the colour card they were given (or to treat others this way).

Explain what each colour represents:

Blue – wealthier groups who may have got a better education.

Red – girls of that same group who may not been seen as equal to the boys.

Green – those with a disability, who may not be able to access care without a strong system to support them.

Yellow – those who are poor, or those from minority groups who are often left out.

How did it feel when one group, who didn't need the care as much, received treatment, when those who needed the care were turned away only because of their card colour? What were some of these reasons why some of the children faced discrimination? Is this something you saw or heard about happening during the COVID-19 pandemic? Can you think of reasons why some children might be in a group (like the yellow cards) where they don't receive the same access to care as others?

6. Using the activity 5 presentation, invite children to read the text aloud for Articles 2 and 23. Ask, "What do you think health systems and health providers might do better to support children with disabilities and those children who may face discrimination for other reasons?"

RESOURCES: **ROLE PLAY NARRATIVES**

Facilitator: For each of the three scenarios, please follow along with the instructions based on the card that you hold. If you have a card with no colour, please come to the front of the room, you represent the health system and your job is to try as hard as you can to provide services to keep all of the children in this room healthy. If you hold a colour card, please listen and follow the instructions.



SCENARIO 1: **GETTING CARE AT THE LOCAL CLINIC**

Imagine that today we are in a remote village and there's no hospital in our town. There's only a small clinic that the doctor visits once a week. Today the doctor is visiting and everyone is very happy.

- If you have a yellow card, you are very sick and need medical care, but you are very poor and do not have money to pay to see the doctor, please get in the queue for the clinic.
- If you have a green card, you have some money to pay to see the doctor, but you have a disability and you cannot get to the clinic without the help of a family member who cannot take you today. Please stay in your seat.
- If you have a red card, you are a child of an educated family in the village, but you are a girl. You may get into the queue in front of the yellow cards, but after the blue cards.
- If you have a blue card, you are a child of an important family in the village and you are a boy. Please go to the front of the queue.
- The doctors visiting the clinic only have time to care for the first five children in the queue, and everyone else gets sent home without treatment. They will have to come back next week to get help.

Who got help and who didn't?

SCENARIO 2: GETTING CARE AT THE REFUGEE CAMP

Now imagine that we are all living together in a refugee camp because we had to leave our homes due to a conflict. There's been a flood at the camp, which has contaminated most of the clean water, and many of the children have fallen ill. The doctors, nurses and other staff at the camp clinic all speak the national language, but there are families in the camp who speak many different dialects because they have come from different parts of the country.

- If you have a blue or red card, you are educated and speak the same language as the clinic staff, understand what to do to get treatment and can speak to the doctors, so you can queue for treatment now. Those with blue cards will be seen first because they are boys, and those with red cards will be seen after if there is time because they are girls.
- If you have a yellow card, you have a hard time to understand the instructions at the clinic because you aren't familiar with the language. You can get in the queue at the clinic, but every day those with the blue and red cards will usually be seen before you since they are quicker to understand the system.
- If you have a green card you will go last every day.
- The clinic only has enough doctors and nurses to treat five children a day, so some children may have to come back another day to get treatment. If you have a blue card how many days will you have to return to wait in the queue? What if you have a red or yellow card?



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SCENARIO 3: IMMUNISATION DAY

Today is immunisation day at your school. Normally there are enough vaccinations for all of the children who need them, but because of delayed productions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there are only enough vaccinations for half of the children.

- If you have a blue card, go to the front of the queue.
- If you have a red card, get in the queue behind the blue cards.
- If you have a yellow card, go to the end of the line.
- If you have a green card, stay seated.
- The healthcare worker will count half of the queue and send the rest of you home.

PART 3: HEALTH EQUITY

- 1.** Introduce the concept of health equity, explaining to the children that **health equity** means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. Explain that while all children have the same right to stay in the best possible health, some children who face discrimination or have a disability might need more access to healthcare. For example, a child who lives in a country where the health system is not strong, may need more support to be able to get the care they need, which is why organisations like UNICEF work to support healthcare for children in their countries. Likewise, a child with a non-preventable health condition may need to visit a health facility more frequently or need more types of healthcare.
- 2.** Invite the children to rethink, then re-enact one of the role plays they experienced in the earlier part of the activity. How would they change the actions of the role play, so that all children – no matter which colour card they hold – receive equitable access to healthcare?
- 3.** Debrief the activity, asking children to describe how they felt in the different parts of this role play. From what you know and have experienced, what ways do you think health systems could change or be stronger to be more inclusive and equitable?
- 4.** To close the activity, consider if your group would like to revisit their letters from part 1 of the activity. Finish the session by sharing some supportive messages of belonging. You may choose to remind the children of Paddington's statement of belonging in his letter to Aunt Lucy, or repeat the breathing exercise from activity 4, part 1 as a cool down.

