

TEACHING TOOLKIT MUSTANGS FC



AUSTRALIAN
CHILDREN'S
TELEVISION
FOUNDATION





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Using this Resource

The *Mustangs FC* Teaching Toolkit aims to support teachers in exploring key themes from the *Mustangs FC* television series: gender, relationships, mental health, leadership, and diversity.

The resource contains five units of work written for upper-primary students, and five units written for lower-secondary students, each made up of three lesson plans. The lesson plans contain discussion starters and learning tasks, and identify relevant clips from the series to illustrate topics. Tasks were designed with an inquiry approach, aiming to foster communication, collaboration, and critical and creative thinking in the classroom.

Teachers are encouraged to use the *Mustangs FC* Teaching Toolkit flexibly. The lessons can be taught in isolation or in any sequence, and all learning tasks can be adapted to suit students' needs. The content is relevant to the Health and Physical Education, English and Media Arts curriculum; it can also be used to build students' understanding of respectful relationships. (See 'Curriculum Alignment' for further information.)

As this resource addresses potentially sensitive issues such as mental health and body image, it is particularly important that the learning environment is safe and supportive. Respectful classroom behaviours such as active listening and 'no put-downs' will allow students to share their ideas, ask questions and express their views openly.





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UNIT 1: GENDER

LESSON 1

Women in Sport

Tuning In

Without providing any prior context, give students 20 seconds to think about and record the five biggest sporting stars that come to mind.

Take a quick class poll about the results. How many were male versus female? What does this say, and why might this be the case?

How do we know that women's sport is taken less seriously than men's sport? In other words, what inequalities currently exist that highlight the divide between both genders represented in sport?



Learning Task 1

In groups, students could research and record comparisons between men and women's sport, according to the following categories.

(Choose a tournament that men and women both participate in and consider data from the preceding year to ensure consistency.)

Discuss the students' findings, and what other factors may contribute to the unequal bias that occurs in sporting coverage and representation. This includes:

- Endorsement and sponsorship deals
- Sporting Interviews – who is given prominence and airtime?
- Commentary teams – predominantly male 'experts' and panellists.

	INTERNATIONAL TENNIS		INTERNATIONAL SOCCER		INTERNATIONAL CRICKET		INTERNATIONAL GOLF	
	MEN'S	WOMEN'S	MEN'S	WOMEN'S	MEN'S	WOMEN'S	MEN'S	WOMEN'S
Tournament prize money								
Live TV broadcast								
TV broadcast time								
TV broadcast channel								
Attendance size / audience								
Other (e.g. print)								





Learning Task 2

Watch the following *Mustangs FC* clips to highlight some of the challenges faced by the girls' team, such as unequal access to uniforms and changing facilities.

- Episode 01: 00:39 – 01:10
- Episode 03: 09:55 – 10:27
- Episode 13: 04:09 – 04:22

In interviews about the series, producers Rachel Davis and Amanda Higgs have discussed a phenomenon affecting female sporting participation that they term 'grass ceiling'. This is a spin on the 'glass ceiling' phenomenon, which is defined as:

An unacknowledged barrier to advancement in a profession, especially affecting women and members of minorities.

Students could discuss these concepts and how they relate to other social realms where minorities are held back, or have needed to overcome extra barriers to achieve higher social hierarchy than other privileged members of society.

For example:

- Women's participation in the workforce, with a focus on the disparity in remuneration;
- Women's participation in executive level roles;
- Ethnic or religious minorities, or refugees.

Learning Task 3

In *Mustangs FC*, the players frequently refer to Peter Schmeichel as an aspirational soccer figure. Peter Schmeichel is a male, Danish, former professional soccer player. Though we do see clips of the Australian international women's team – The Matildas – in the series, their global notoriety is probably less than Schmeichel's.

When discussing women in sport, producer Amanda Higgs referred to a quote by actor and activist Geena Davis: "If you can see it, you can be it". Students could examine this quote in relation to girls and women in sport. They could discuss whether there is a deficit of female sporting role models of Schmeichel's calibre, the negative impact this deficit has on aspiring female sport players, and how this might be changed (See 'Gender: Taking action' lesson).

Students could then work in groups to imagine themselves advertising specialists, such as those seen on the ABC's *Gruen Transfer*. Their task is to use inspirational footage of existing female sporting champions to create a persuasive media advertisement that highlights the grass-ceiling phenomenon of sport.



UNIT 1: GENDER

LESSON 2

Gender Stereotypes

Tuning In

Take students outside for the lesson. Without prior explanation, select a number of students – a mix of boys and girls – to ‘act out’ the following statements:

1. ‘I want you to show me how to run like a girl.’
2. ‘I want you to show me what happens when girls are hit by a ball.’
3. ‘I want you to show me how to kick a ball like a girl.’

Return to the classroom for a discussion and written reflection about the activity. Why did students ‘act’ the way they did? Was there a difference in the way boys versus girls reacted to the statements? Do most people think this way? What motivates individuals to have these perceptions about girls? Is it our intent to insult or humiliate girls?

If time permits, you could later have your students accompany a Foundation or Year 1 class outside and ask the younger students to react to the same statements. Observe and reflect on any differences in their actions.

The idea of doing something ‘like a girl’ highlights an alarming and ubiquitous shift in perception towards the capabilities of girls that seems to occur when individuals near their teenage years.

Ask students to reflect on and discuss:

- What is this shift?
- How can it be explained?
- Who is responsible?
- What other factors contribute to this change in perception?

Learning Task 1

Watch the following *Mustangs FC* clips, asking students to listen for stereotypes and assumptions based on gender.

- Episode 01: 07:21 – 07:35
- Episode 02: 16:04 – 21:03
- Episode 12: 09:44 – 17:59

What are some of the gender stereotypes and assumptions that we hear in the clips?

- Girls are worried about breaking a nail
- Girls don’t like to get muddy or dirty
- Girls are afraid to play ball sports for fear of being hit by one
- Girls muck around and don’t take sporting outcomes seriously
- Girls are not expected to win sporting finals.

Learning Task 2

Mustangs FC producer Rachel Davis has spoken about the predominantly female cast and crew involved in making the series, specifically those working in executive-level and director roles. Why is this significant?

Students could compare the names listed in the closing credits of *Mustangs FC* to the closing credits of two other Australian children’s series, and then draw some conclusions about the composition of male-to-female employees in the television industry. Students could then discuss their findings and the wider applicability to the workplace, and society.



UNIT 1: GENDER

LESSON 3

Taking Action

Tuning In

Watch the following *Mustangs FC* clips, which highlight the various struggles faced by the all-female team. These clips will inform the following prompts for small group or class discussions.

- Episode 02: 02:40 – 08:19
- Episode 02: 11:00 – 15:58
- Episode 12: 13:20 – 16:40

What are the phrases Marnie uses for 'taking action' or enacting change?

- Effect change
- Take a stand
- Make a stand
- Mobilise
- Force change
- Fight for our rights.

Ask students to consider how many of these phrases incorporate movement and action verbs.

What are some other phrases you have heard for taking action? What's so 'active' about taking action?

- It involves doing something about something
- Refusing to be a passive bystander and challenging the status quo
- Standing up on important issues
- Being counted.

Why do we take action? We take action because a worthwhile cause has motivated us. In other words, we take action because we:

- Care about something or someone
- Feel that there is an injustice or inequality surrounding an issue
- Worry about or have concern for an issue
- Want to look after, protect, or conserve something or someone
- Are trying to make things better for everyone
- Have a democratic right
- Are passionate about an issue.

What were the issues that led to Marnie's protest, and what was the underlying cause?

- Lack of access to change rooms
- Having to change in a see-through tent
- Toileting behind a blanket
- Substandard facilities, such as playing on a gravel pitch
- Training under sprinklers
- Unequal treatment of female players / teams compared with male counterparts.





Learning Task 1

Think about your everyday life. In what ways are you already taking action, and on what causes?

How might you categorise these different types of causes? The following table provides some example categories and actions.

ENVIRONMENTAL CAUSE	SOCIAL JUSTICE CAUSE	FINANCIAL CAUSE	HEALTH CAUSE	OTHER CAUSE
Refill a water bottle to save money and reduce waste Ride to school to save on petrol, and to save time for parents	Include others in play and create opportunities for everyone Pass on unwanted clothes or goods to a family who could use them	Bring lunch to school to save money	Ride to school for exercise Start homework early and 'chip away' at it well before the due date to avoid stress	Help with household chores to reduce the workload for other family members Research an issue so that you can be armed with factual information when talking about it



Learning Task 2

Ways to take action can be classified by the following four categories. Ask students to brainstorm actions that would fit into each category. Examples are included below as discussion prompts.

DIRECT ACTION Tangibly impact a cause		INDIRECT ACTION Indirectly, intangibly impact a cause
<p>Donate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • money • food • clothes • toys • resources • materials • blood • organs 	<p>Volunteer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • locally – school working bee • community – clean up the bay • globally –volunteer in developing country • help someone who needs it • visit someone <p>*Direct inaction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refraining from material purchases when they are not needed 	<p>Build awareness about social injustices, erroneous misconceptions, and worthwhile causes by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning more about the world and worthwhile causes • Starting conversations about these messages • Dispelling myths through discussion; correcting others when an issue is misunderstood or misrepresented • Starting a blog to promote a message / cause • Writing an opinion piece and submitting it to the media • Writing a letter to your member of local parliament • Campaigning for or against a cause • Participating in a petition • Participating in a peaceful protest • Being a loyal friend • Offering support when it’s needed <p>*Indirect inaction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declining to participate in an unhelpful or harmful act, such as picking on someone
ADVOCACY ACTION Represent a cause and speak out about it – either ‘for’ or ‘against’		RESEARCH ACTION Devote time, energy or career to better understanding an issue in hopes of changing it
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certain lawyers or legal experts • Individuals who call out issues of importance can be ‘everyday heroes’ • Those who represent the under-represented or silenced minorities, such as Malala, Mandela, Martin Luther King, Ghandi • Starting a campaign, petition or protest • Being the ‘face of’ a campaign 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientists, researchers and medical professionals – research, investigate and build evidence to run clinical trials and develop a cure or treatment • Academics, lecturers, teachers and educators – undertake extensive research to draw conclusions and apply them to society • Advisors – educate the public on an issue, such as road safety, preventative health issues, or domestic violence • Pioneers and ‘experts’ in any field – credible source of information, such as Fiona Wood and Fred Hollows

Using the four-way classification table, next ask students to classify wthe ways in which various characters took action against the inequitable treatment of female soccer players – both in big and small ways – in the clips viewed.

DIRECT ACTION Tangibly impact a cause		INDIRECT ACTION Indirectly, intangibly impact a cause
<p>ADVOCACY ACTION Represent a cause and speak out about it – either ‘for’ or ‘against’</p>		<p>RESEARCH ACTION Devote time, energy or career to better understanding an issue in hopes of changing it</p>

UNIT 2: RELATIONSHIPS

LESSON 1

Friendship

Tuning In

Take a class poll: How many students have a social media account? Of their followers, how many are 'friends'?

Discuss and reflect on what distinguishes a real friend from a peer, acquaintance, or social media follower? What are the qualities of a genuine friendship? This might include:

- Enjoying one another's company
- Shared experiences in time, such as school, work or extra-curricular activities
- Shared histories and memories
- Feeling that the other person knows you and understands you
- Familiarity and trust, meaning that you can be yourselves without fear of judgement.



Learning Task 1

Ask students to survey a number of adults – teachers, parents, other family members – about their current friends. How many friends from their childhood or teenage years do they regularly see face-to-face? Who they would rate as their best friend, and can they recount the circumstances in which they met?

What do the results say about the evolution of friendships over time? Whilst it is hard to see when you are living it, friendships throughout the teen years are often intense, fickle and charged with exaggerated emotion, drama and politics. The BFF acronym refers to 'best friends forever', but forever is a long time. There are so many stages in life, and each stage comes with opportunities for new friendships.

Learning Task 2

Watch the following *Mustangs FC* clips with students, which highlight some of the conflicts that can occur between friends in their school years.

- Episode 03: 03:03 – 05:50
- Episode 04: 07:52 – 10:28
- Episode 05: 08:05 – 13:12

Ask students about common hurdles and conflicts in friendships? Can these examples be categorised into general 'themes'? For example:

- Jealousy – over unequal attention, a rival friend, a 'crush', or a new relationship
- Diverging interests – one person developing new hobbies that the other isn't interested in
- A regrettable act – something which hurts one person, such as posting a cruel social media taunt about them
- Changed feelings – when one person develops unreciprocated romantic feelings towards the other.

Two of the major conflicts in the *Mustangs FC* clips involve Marnie hurting others: she humiliates Liv by ridiculing her XXL sized jersey, and she embarrasses Lara by posting a video to her account without her knowledge or consent. Ask students to discuss in groups which of the above categories these incidents fall into, and why.

Explain to students that ongoing behaviour like Marnie's could also be described as covert bullying, where cruel behaviour is passed off as 'just a joke'. It is described as 'covert' because the perpetrator attempts to justify their unacceptable behaviour by downplaying its intent, rather than taking responsibility for it. The viral video incident also highlights how social media can escalate a regrettable act much faster than in real (non-virtual) time.



UNIT 2: RELATIONSHIPS

LESSON 2

Family



Tuning In

Create a human-sized sliding-scale within the classroom, with a label at one end reading 'Normal' and a label at the other reading 'Different'. Without any prior context, direct students to stand on the line, in the position that they feel best represents their own family. Have students write a private reflection justifying the position they chose.

Ask students who are comfortable doing so to share their reflections, with the teacher simply probing after each share: 'but who says that's normal [or different]?'

Discuss the perceptions surrounding 'a normal family', and encourage examination of this construct by reflecting on:

- Televisions, movies, books and other content that perpetuate the 'myth' of a nuclear family
- Broadcast and print news reports that highlight familial differences in a negative light
- Laws that discriminate which therefore highlight difference (e.g. marriage equality)
- Commonly held societal beliefs and traditional mindsets.

Learning Task 1

Watch the following *Mustangs FC* clips, which highlight some of the diverse family structures in the series.

- Episode 01: 15:34 – 16:32
- Episode 05: 13:13 – 15:15
- Episode 10: 00:37 – 01:42

In *Mustangs FC*, some 'unconventional' but very normal families and their roles are represented:

1. Jen and Marnie, plus Kev and Lara. There appears to be an absent father figure for Marnie, and we see the logistical and emotional complexities around shared custody for Lara.
2. Bella and her dad as 'primary care giver'. Bella's mother works as a GP in a busy medical clinic, and her father is depicted as a stay-at-home dad with his chicken business on the side. Not only does he carry out the menial household chores – washing, cooking, disciplining younger twin brothers – he also expertly handles all the delicate and sensitive conversations with his teen daughter. Bella's dad fosters a relationship of trust and respect, where no subject matter seems to be off limits.
3. Anusha and her demanding mum. Anusha's complete family is not depicted because the focus lies on her intense relationship with her mother, who places extreme pressure on Anusha to achieve and to be 'top banana.'



Learning Task 2

Ask students to reflect on their own family dynamics, roles and responsibilities, using the following table to record who carries out various household and parenting tasks in their family.

Students write each of their family member’s name in a separate column, and tick the household tasks each person is usually responsible for.

Ask students to reflect on their results. Are they surprising? Do they take certain family members and their duties for granted by virtue of their gender and societal expectations? Is it time to change this? How can we change this?

TASK	NAME	NAME	NAME	NAME
Taking rubbish bins in and out				
Gardening				
Washing dishes				
Cleaning				
Cooking				
Preparing school lunches				
Grocery shopping				
Clothes shopping				
Washing, drying and folding of clothes				
Having difficult or sensitive conversations with children, or giving advice				
Assisting with homework and school activities				
Attending extra-curricular activities				
Getting children up in the morning				
Enforcing rules, such as bedtime or screen time				
Disciplining children for choices and behaviour				
Earning income				

Learning Task 3

The narrator of *Mustangs FC* pinpoints the ‘family mantras’ of both Anusha and Bella as:

Anusha: ‘Only do something if you can be the best.’

Bella: ‘Better out than in.’

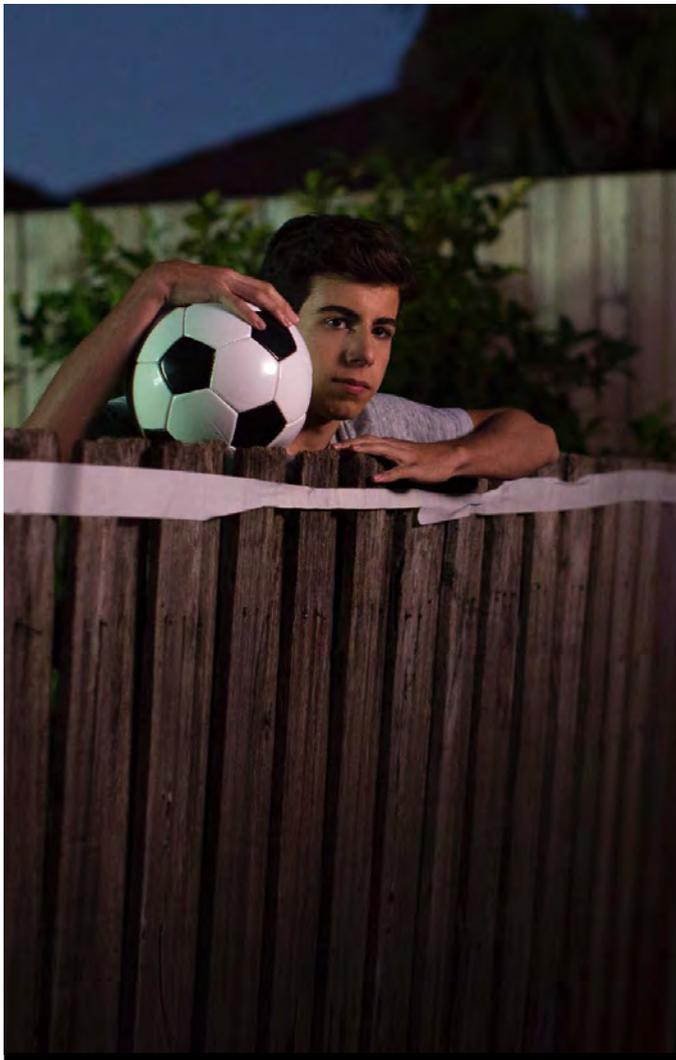
Based on their reflections in the previous task, students could think of their own family mantra. What would they change this mantra to if they could?



UNIT 2: RELATIONSHIPS

LESSON 3

Romantic Relationships



Tuning In

Watch the following *Mustangs FC* clips, which capture a number of the romantic relationships in the series.

- Episode 03: 06:18 – 08:35
- Episode 06: 00:37 – 02:38
- Episode 06: 07:24 – 10:32

As uncomfortable as it is to talk about with adults, puberty brings with it not only physical changes, but a raft of changes to our feelings and behaviours. All of a sudden, we are ‘supposed’ to develop special sorts of connections – romantic ones – with others. Sometimes it is hard to know if romantic feelings are mutual; we might feel pressure to reciprocate a crush. It can also feel like we are being left behind if our peers are more comfortable with their changed romantic feelings and behaviours.

After Marnie ‘friend-zones’ Gabe, the narrator in *Mustangs FC* describes their changed friendship as follows:

“This is not chemistry – make no mistake – but it is a connection. Like those circuitry kits that light up and then short out because you haven’t clicked all the bits in quite right. That’s what these two are: connections that aren’t clicked in quite right.”

Marnie quizzes Liv on what her and Hamit do together, trying to distinguish friendship from a romantic relationship.

So, what is romantic ‘chemistry’ and what is a platonic connection?

Learning Task 1

Students could use a Frayer model to tease apart the concepts of romantic and platonic connections. In small groups, ask students to discuss and reflect on their responses.

ROMANTIC CONNECTION (OR ‘CHEMISTRY’)		PLATONIC CONNECTION	
What it is	What it’s not	What it is	What it’s not



Learning Task 2

After Marnie’s friends point out that Gabe has a crush on her, she feels pressured to go through with her first kiss.

What does Marnie do to comply with the pressure she feels to act on Gabe’s crush?

- Practises kissing on an orange;
- Brushes her teeth profusely, and is advised to avoid smelly foods;
- Motions to go outside alone, with Gabe, to get privacy.

What indicates that Marnie is not so keen?

- Physically avoids contact with Gabe at the party by loitering in the kitchen;
- Dances with Gabe despite appearing to be uncomfortable doing so;
- Creates a distraction by making inane conversation: “Whatever happened to your pet rabbit?”

Introduce concepts of ‘reciprocation’ and ‘mutuality’ through a class discussion.

When someone does not have mutual feelings (or they are not ready to embark on a romantic relationship), it is important to read the subtle signs. They tell us – through their body language, discussion, and behaviour – that there is no reciprocated interest or consent. In a formative life-phase where we feel pressure to try new things, it is important to have respect for all individuals at their various stages of readiness.

Learning Task 3

Lara’s behaviour surrounding romantic relationships causes a stir in a couple of ways.

Firstly, she admits that she “might have put him up to it” by suggesting that Gabe make a move on Marnie. Students could discuss whether Lara’s meddling was ethical. When is it ok for friends to give potential relationships a ‘nudge’? And when should friends let the two parties explore that potential without interference? Ultimately, what was the fall-out from Lara’s meddling? Did she invent romantic feelings that weren’t there, forcing Marnie to ‘friend-zone’ Gabe and hurt his feelings?

Secondly, Lara is accused of being fake, superficial and ultimately an ‘attention seeker’ because of the way she modifies her behaviour to elicit a favourable response from boys.

Using the scale below, students could evaluate the following scenarios from *Mustangs FC* on when it’s okay to modify your behaviours for the romantic attention of others:

- Dressing in a way that is ‘fashionable’ or similar to your peers
- Flirting
- Laughing at a joke that’s not really that funny
- Joining in on a mean joke
- Leading someone on (or giving them the wrong impression) to boost your confidence
- Dancing with someone you like
- Dancing with someone you don’t really like, but who you know likes you.

Students could add their own scenarios, such as using makeup or hair products, or posting provocative selfies.

Is there a consensus among students about what is ‘cool’ or ‘not cool’? What does this say about the way we uniquely approach romantic relationships?

COOL

NOT
COOL



UNIT 3: MENTAL HEALTH

LESSON 1

Depression & Anxiety



Tuning In

Carry out a quick personal quiz, assuring students that they will not be asked to share their responses with anyone. Ask students to quickly jot down three things about their lives that are getting them down or causing them worry. Have them rank the level of worry or dismay they feel about those items, from 1 (least) to 10 (most).

Then repeat the same quiz, asking students to jot down three things about the world that are most getting them down or causing them worry. Rank again according to their level of worry or dismay, from 1 (least) to 10 (most).

Finally, ask students to privately attribute whether the items on their lists are caused by internal or external pressures. It is okay if students don't know what this means; the purpose is to arouse curiosity for the lesson.

Learning Task 1

About half of us will experience depression and/or anxiety over the course of a lifetime. If we feel emotions strongly and have great empathy for the world and all its causes, there's a high probability that depression or anxiety will strike – and its effects can be totally debilitating. Society is getting better at understanding the wide-scale incidence of mental illness, and the way we treat and support individuals living with mental health issues.

Anusha is a central character who we witness experiencing a mental unravelling, or 'wobbly' outbreaks, throughout the series. Her school and extra-curricular life is tightly-scheduled, and she therefore makes a credible candidate for depression and anxiety. There is a great deal of internal and external pressure placed upon her to achieve, which the audience is privy to.

Watch episode 10 of *Mustangs FC* ('R U OK?') or the following short clips, asking students to focus on the internal and external pressures that Anusha is under.

- Episode 07: 13:53 – 15:24
- Episode 10: 14:00 – 17:30
- Episode 13: 09:44 – 11:06

Anusha's internal pressures are largely attributed to her 'Type A' personality, with traits including competitiveness, time urgency, and a tendency toward 'workaholism'. By way of comparison, Type B personality types tend to be less focused on competitiveness and more on enjoying the journey – a character akin to Liv. Some personality types are more susceptible to mental health issues because they don't respond favourably to 'failure', and place expectations upon themselves that are impossible to either fulfil or sustain.

Anusha also has an intense and interesting relationship with her mother. Some might view this relationship as a major source of external pressure contributing to her illness.

To develop their understanding of Anusha's mental illness, students could work in small groups to complete the following table.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS	SIGNS	SUPPORT	COPING STRATEGIES
Internal and external pressures? Other factors?	Signs that her condition was worsening?	Who offered support, and how? Was support always accepted?	'Professional' strategies and other ways of coping?



To reflect on this task, guide students in a group discussion on how to support people suffering with depression and/or anxiety, and coping strategies that could be used by themselves or others.

SUPPORT - BEING THERE:

People who are suffering with mental illness frequently push away offers of support, opting to be 'left alone', often for fear of burdening others. But Bella rightly points out that: "No one wants to be left alone....not really." Have students discuss the importance of 'just being there' for someone in need, no matter how much they try to push you away.

COPING STRATEGIES - HAVING BALANCE:

Anusha's time is consumed by her schedule alerts and opportunities to achieve top marks. When hanging out with Bella, she observes how nice it is to read for pleasure, as opposed to reading for another book report. Bella also suggests that it is important for Anusha to continue with soccer because: "It teaches you to lose, and that losing isn't always the worst thing. It teaches you to move on. And sometimes you'll get better and sometimes you won't, and that's okay because your team will always be there to pick up, even when you don't have the strength."

Bella's dad tells Bella that nothing is wrong with her; that it's fine to be an introvert, but that: "It's about balance....life will be easier if you can find your tribe."

COPING STRATEGIES – PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLING:

Anusha reveals to Bella – and later, her soccer friends – that she has been seeing a counsellor as part of her recovery journey. She says she finds the sessions hard and tiring. Professional help is very difficult because it requires:

- A proactive decision to get better
- A significant commitment of time, energy and money
- Routinely discussing painful memories, triggers and events that invoke further depressive and worrisome thoughts and emotions.

There are many professional terms used in the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness. Anusha mentions 'transference' in reference to her complex relationship with her mother: "When your stuff pushes into my stuff, but I take it on, but I don't know I'm doing it. And I don't even know if you know you're doing it. And then suddenly, I don't know what's you and what's me, and it's just this huge mess! It's a mess!"

Learning Task 2

Depressive and/or anxious thoughts are fundamentally irrational thoughts. When someone is suffering from mental illness, they may have one of the following negative thought patterns, or a combination of these.

- Spiraling thoughts / catastrophising: When one concerning thought leads to another, to another. This results in someone perceiving minor events as catastrophes, and envisioning the worst possible scenario. For example: "She hasn't liked my last three Instagram posts: she hates me!"
- All-or-nothing thinking: Thoughts that involve an 'all-in' mentality, otherwise complete avoidance. This 'black

and white' thinking is limiting, and creates impossible expectations. For example: "If I don't get the goals, I don't deserve to be on the team."

- Defeatist attitude: A negative mindset where failure is considered inevitable. For example: "I'm not going to get into a law degree, so I won't bother trying."

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is a common technique used by mental health professionals which attempts to override unhelpful and irrational thoughts by restructuring them with facts. In the examples below, Anusha's thoughts are restructured so that they become rational.

SPIRALING THOUGHTS:

Initial thought

"Gotta ask: I mean, how can you just give up on the fitness test like that? Tests are how you know how well you are doing. Like, where does it stop?! Fitness tests, then school tests? Aren't you worried that if you fail then you won't get into a good uni and then if you don't get into a good uni, you won't get into a good job and then what?"

Restructured thought

Tests are numerous and varied, and are just one way to evaluate how you are tracking in a given discipline. Tests don't account for individual and unique differences, and the outcome of a test does not determine your destiny.

ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING:

Initial thought

"My schedule alerts: extra-curricular enhancement. See, academically I'm tracking at a 99.8 average, which is fine for getting in to Australia's leading universities. But there's the strategic value-adds of a musical instrument, team sport, artistic expression, scientific endeavour and charitable extension - brings me up to a level where I can vie for Princeton or Oxford. So, to get all that, I do all this."

Restructured thought

There are many lessons to be learnt from life that don't come from extra-curricular learning experiences in the school years. There are many pathways to a successful future and I have lots of time to explore them.

DEFEATIST ATTITUDE:

Initial thought

"Why are you even here? I'm just a big, failure loser and you being here just makes you one too."

Restructured thought

If you choose to hang out with me, that makes you my friend. We don't have to be doing anything exciting in order to hang out.

Students could practise the premise of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy by restructuring these irrational thoughts of Anusha's, so that they become rational:

Students could practise the premise of CBT by identifying and restructuring other irrational thoughts from *Mustangs FC*. They might even like to reflect on and restructure their own worrisome thoughts from the 'Tuning In' task at the beginning of the lesson.



Learning Task 3

Survey students on the following medical conditions. For each condition, ask them:

1. What is the medical treatment or intervention required?
2. How long might recovery take for such a condition?

MEDICAL DIAGNOSIS	MEDICAL TREATMENT / INTERVENTION	ESTIMATED RECOVERY TIME
Chest infection	Rest, hydration, and possibly antibiotics	~ 1-2 weeks
Fractured wrist	Fibreglass cast and splint	~ 6-8 weeks
Diabetes	Diet, exercise, and insulin control	Ongoing management and care
Gash to chin	1-3 stitches and fresh dressings	~ 4 weeks
Reconstructive knee surgery	Surgery, post-operative care, movement rehabilitation, and muscle retraining	~ 1 year
Hypertension (high blood pressure)	Medication and diet monitoring	Ongoing management and care
Depression		
Anxiety		

How do students view the recovery time or ‘treatability’ associated with mental illness?

Examine the following dialogue between Liv and Bella more closely:

Liv: So...Nush?

Bella: Yeah?

Liv: What’s the deal there?

Bella: There’s no deal. She’s...wobbly.
She’ll get there – in her own time.

Liv: How long’s this gonna take? Because I have a very low tolerance for my friend’s sadness.

As a reflection, ask students what Liv’s questions reveal about societal views on mental health ‘treatability’?

Aside from the social stigmas attached to mental illness, there are often unrealistic expectations surrounding expected recovery time for ‘getting over’ mental health issues. What’s more, because mental illness is usually invisible, people can struggle to understand others’ mental health issues because they don’t ‘look’ sick.

Life is complex, and people are living with their own unique set of personal struggles. Most television series do not accurately depict reality, because the traditional story arc requires that the ‘problem’ and ‘resolution’ are contained in just one episode.

In real life, there are rarely neat resolutions for the challenges that lead to mental illness. It is our collective responsibility to recognise that individuals can live with mental health issues – even when they look healthy on the outside. People can commonly live with mental health issues forever, without hope of a full ‘recovery’.



UNIT 3: MENTAL HEALTH

LESSON 2

Body Image



Tuning In

Have students work in pairs to quickly write down responses to the following statement.

Describe the perfect body:

-
-
-

Share sensible responses with the class. Notice that most responses focus on what the body looks like: its form. Why is this? Why is society inclined to evaluate a person's body based on its physical form rather than its function?

Learning Task 1

Watch the following *Mustangs FC* clips, which highlight Liv's perception of her own body.

- Episode 03: 03:01 – 06:31
- Episode 03: 09:48 – 10:54
- Episode 03: 17:54 – 19:01

Consider Ruby's message to Liv:

- Ruby: Girl, you need to work on your goalie knowledge. Like, here: look at her. (She shows Liv a picture of a female goalie.)
- Liv: Woah! Look at her muscles!
- Ruby: Amazing huh?
- Liv: No, really: look at her shoulders! You just....don't see that often, do you?
- Ruby: Yeah: real women are everywhere!
- Liv: Skinny women with unusually small noses are everywhere!
- Ruby: You need to change where you're looking.
- Liv: Maybe.
- Ruby: Do you think these girls are extra, extra small? What, you think they shop at the petite section?? Nah-uh. And if they did, Liv, they wouldn't be doing what they do
- Liv: Easy for you to say.
- Ruby: How my body looks has nothing to do with it. It's what it can do: that's what matters.

Ruby gets to the heart of all body image issues: she highlights that a perfect body is about function, not form.

Have students repeat the 'Tuning In' task, but with a focus on function this time – what the body can do, rather than how it looks. Encourage students to think physiologically, considering evolutionary adaptations. This sort of thinking involves a total paradigm shift about body image, so encourage students to steer away from descriptions about cosmetic standards and appearances. Some examples are listed below.

Describe the perfect body:

- Eyebrows and eyelashes that catch sweat
- Heart that pumps blood around body
- Vital organs that sustain and heal
- Muscles, joints and ligaments that work in perfect synchronicity to facilitate different types of movement
- Skin that sends messages to regulate temperature and pain.

Ask students to share their responses with the class, and point out the paradigm shift that has taken place. Discuss the different sorts of body types that it takes to achieve peak performance across various sports: soccer, weight lifting, swimming, ballet, rugby, or sumo wrestling. This thinking challenges us to recognise the beauty in body diversity, rather than subscribing to the narrow definition of beauty commonly shown on magazine covers.





Learning Task 2

Mustangs FC implies, very subtly, that Lara may be struggling with her own mental health issues surrounding food selectivity and deprivation. Watch the following clips for examples of this behaviour.

- Episode 08: 15:31 – 15:44
- Episode 09: 10:54 – 11:01
- Episode 09: 17:31 – 18:16

Discuss with students why eating disorders such as Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia, and Binge Eating Disorder are classed as mental illnesses. Why might eating disorders be far more prevalent in the teen years?

Consider all the body image issues that occur in *Mustangs FC*. Who is responsible for the way we view body image? What needs to change? How?

Students could use ideas from the 'Gender: Taking Action' lesson to undertake one action which would raise awareness about body image issues – locally, nationally or globally. For example:

- Write to a fashion magazine that promotes impossible beauty standards and hold them accountable for causing mental health problems among adolescents
- Appeal to a professional organisation that deals with body image issues amongst young people, and arrange for them to visit your school
- Write a letter of appreciation to an aspirational figure who promotes healthy body image and inspires young people.



UNIT 3: MENTAL HEALTH

LESSON 3

Resilience

Tuning In

Watch the following *Mustangs FC* clips, which show the closing minutes of two soccer matches.

- Episode 01: 19:14 – 21:44
- Episode 03: 19:01 – 21:13

Clarify and restate the outcome of both matches for students: the clips showed the 6-1 defeat to the Cumquats, and the 3-3 draw against the Gumnuts. Consider the reaction of the Mustangs team following both matches – utter elation and celebration. Have students discuss whether mediocrity or losing is ever worthy of celebration.

Learning Task 1

In a later match – after Anusha has pointed out everyone’s weaknesses – the Mustangs players succumb to self-doubt. Danny poignantly tells Anusha that: “Sometimes, losing is winning.”

Have students reflect on times in their lives where losing was winning. In other words, where a ‘win’ or breakthrough moment was experienced because adversity, hardship or significant challenges were overcome. Students could use the following table to guide their thinking.

Ask students to compare these ‘wins’ with other successes in their lives which came more easily, without any significant challenge. Which wins are more memorable? Which wins are sweeter? Why? Share responses with the class, reiterating that nothing worthwhile ever comes easy.

Students might also like to survey an adult about when ‘losing was winning’ for them, noticing how such memories are often turning points.

CHALLENGE / BARRIER FACED	ACTION TAKEN	OUTCOME / ACHIEVEMENT
•	•	•
•	•	•

Learning Task 2

Watch the following *Mustangs FC* clips, which show how Mustangs players respond to the disappointing result of the season final against the Wildcats.

- Episode 13: 07:38 – 10:04
- Episode 13: 11:31 – 12:56

At a score of 2-2, the final between the Mustangs and the Wildcats is brought to an abrupt end by the referee, leading to an upsetting ruling by the Football Federation. The federation states that, in the event of a draw result in a season final, the team with the highest aggregate points for the season is the winner – meaning that the Wildcats win by default.

Marnie grapples with an overwhelming sense of disappointment with the results and looks for someone to blame. She targets Gabe, who – being the referee – made the difficult decision to call the final to an end, resulting in the Mustangs’ ‘loss’.

Students could discuss why disappointing outcomes are frequently followed up with blaming behaviours. For example:

- “Yeah, but our best player was injured.”
- “Yeah, but I didn’t have time to study.”
- “Yeah, but she did it first.”

Danny calls out Marnie for blaming Gabe, saying that we give up our power when we start blaming people, and that: “We always have a choice. You choose your own story.”

Our reaction to any situation or outcome is always a choice, or a ‘story’ that we write. While we may not possess any power to control the situation, everyone possesses the power to choose their own response.

Ask students to reflect on the last disappointing situation or outcome they experienced. Did they get angry and blame others? Get angry and blame circumstances? Or accept it and move on? Encourage students to reflect on their typical reactions. When we blame others or our circumstances, it is said that we are reactive, instead of proactive.

Encourage students to reflect on their typical reactions. When we blame others or our circumstances, it is said that we are reactive, instead of proactive.

Learning Task 3

Have students draw a circle on their page and list, either inside or outside the circle:



Things that are outside my power to control.

Example responses include:

THINGS THAT ARE WITHIN MY POWER TO CONTROL	THINGS THAT ARE OUTSIDE MY POWER TO CONTROL
How much sleep I get	The weather
How much I exercise	The schedule of my friends
How much preparation and effort I put into study	The mark I get for a school assignment
When I start my homework	A due date
How much money I save, and how I spend my money	The cost of things
How I spend my time today	Things that have happened in the past, and things that will happen in the future

What were the responses of some Mustangs characters to the outcomes they were dealt? Were they reactive or proactive? Do their responses say something about their integrity? For example:

Is integrity determined by an individual's reaction to situations? Examine a student-elected leader, such as a school captain. How do they react to situations? What choices do they make for their decisions and behaviours?

CHARACTER	SITUATION AND OUTCOME	RESPONSE
Marnie	Faces season defeat to the Wildcats	Refuses to accept 'official' decision, rallies her opposition and her team for a 'player only' rematch in the name of pride
Freya	Tackles Ruby and gives away a penalty kick	For the first time, does not apologise for her actions, even when prompted to do so
Liv	Is set to remain in goalie position in penalty decider against former team mate (and friend)	Stays on as goalie, faces the pressure, defends penalty kick
Ruby	Defeated by Mustangs in the rematch	Insists on congratulating the Mustangs on their win, acknowledging that "They beat us fair and square"
Mikayla	Defeated by Mustangs in the rematch	Refuses to congratulate the Mustangs on their win



UNIT 4: LEADERSHIP

LESSON 1

Being a Leader

Tuning In

Ask students for a show of hands:

- Hands up if you had a fidget spinner?
- Hands up if you have Nike, ASICS or Adidas sneakers?
- Hands up if you listen to a pop music station, such as Nova FM or Fox FM?

- Hands up if you're a follower?
- Hands up if you're a leader?

In one or two sentences, have students answer the following questions: What is the job of a leader? What does a leader do? Briefly share responses.

Learning Task 1

Marnie 'falls into' her role as captain because she was ultimately responsible for putting together the Mustangs team. As an inexperienced leader, she has a steep and bumpy learning curve along the way.

Watch the following clips. In these scenes, we see Marnie making difficult decisions that force her to consider her team's needs before her own. This is called 'collective responsibility', because it involves making decisions in the best interests of a group, rather than an individual.

- Episode 04: 12:59 – 15:31
- Episode 10: 09:07 – 13:07
- Episode 11 : 04:46 – 06:53

Have students work in small groups to reflect on the clips, and identify the following information (from Marnie's perspective) for each of the given scenarios.

The following summaries may be helpful in reflecting on Marnie's leadership in each scenario.

Scenario 1:

The Mustangs are desperate for players, so Ruby doesn't think twice about inviting a very fit Lara to join the team. The decision is more complicated for Marnie who is living with Lara in an antagonistic, newly-blended family situation.

Lara adds fuel to the fire by saying that Ruby ought to be captain because she's the best player. This causes confusion among team members who had previously not questioned how Marnie came to be their leader.

Scenario 2:

Anusha's seminar on 'winning' leaves the team feeling divided, and brings out the self-doubt and insecurities of team members. It has a negative impact on everyone, but most of all Marnie, because it was her idea for Anusha to 'coach' the team on strategy.

Ultimately, Marnie doesn't blame Anusha. She fronts up to the team and takes collective responsibility for the impact of the seminar on them: "I stuffed up with the whole 'focus-on-your-weakness' thing." Lara reinforces this by telling Marnie that good leaders don't have to be liked.

SCENARIO 1: LARA JOINS THE MUSTANGS

Problem / challenge:

Individual desire / need:

Collective desire / need:

Collective responsibility taken:

Outcome:

SCENARIO 2: ANUSHA EXAMINES INDIVIDUAL WEAKNESSES

Problem / challenge:

Individual desire / need:

Collective desire / need:

Collective responsibility taken:

Outcome:





Learning Task 2

Revisit the 'Tuning In' task at the start of the lesson:

- What made you buy, or ask your parents to buy, the popular or 'trendy' items?
- What is the fall-out from not having trendy items? Do you care what people think about that?
- What makes you want to listen to a popular music station?

What does this say about you? What does this say about your friends? What does this say about the pressure society places on individuals to conform? Are you a conformist? Are you a leader? Could you make tough decisions that go against the popular majority?

All leaders need to make tough decisions at times – and these tough decisions are frequently unpopular. They might involve unenjoyable short-term consequences, or changes that disturb the status quo. People may not like changes that challenge the majority – at least until they can see the resulting benefits for everyone.

Ask students to privately reflect on whether their elected school leaders are:

1. Popular, but conform to trends
2. Not necessarily popular, and have a strong sense of individuality
3. Popular, but a non-conformist (they manage to retain a unique sense of self).

Are popularity and non-conformism mutually exclusive? Is one the antonym of the other? Does it work best when a leader is both socially popular without conforming to the status quo?

The best leaders aren't simply 'popular'. The best leaders exercise a level of foresight – they might spot an issue, ahead of time, and make risky decisions that only pay off over a long period of time. This is why, historically, the best leaders have been coined 'visionaries'; they envisage a better future, making tough decisions accordingly, even if that means that they will be unpopular for a while.



UNIT 4: LEADERSHIP

LESSON 2

Leadership Styles

Tuning In

Ask students to imagine someone who embodies a real 'leader'. This might be a peer, or someone in public life such as the Prime Minister.

Have them privately jot down the name of this person and three keywords that make them a leader.

Learning Task 1

Watch the following *Mustangs FC* clips, which highlight some of the different leadership styles in the series.

- Episode 04: 14:56 – 15:31
- Episode 10: 09:12 – 13:07
- Episode 12: 05:52 – 07:11
- Episode 12: 14:54 – 17:20

Ask students to consider the characteristics of some of the leaders depicted in *Mustangs FC*. Have them work in small groups to discuss and summarise the characteristics of these leaders in just three keywords, by arriving at a group consensus. Ask students to also discuss whether each of these people are actual leaders: do they fit any sort of criteria for being a leader?

Have groups share their findings with the class to develop an overall, class-constructed 'leadership criteria'. What are the essential characteristics a leader must have? What is the difference between a manager, caretaker and leader?

Ask students to revisit the leader that came to mind in the earlier 'Tuning In' task. Does their leader fit the class-constructed 'leadership criteria'? Do the school's student leaders meet the criteria?

Facilitate a class discussion about the leadership styles exhibited in *Mustangs FC*.

Danny's leadership style is wise and sprinkled with proverbs from what we infer are the culmination of his life experiences. Speaking in riddles makes Danny come across as a bit reticent, preferring to sit back and watch things unfold until there is a teaching opportunity. He doesn't raise his voice and he has a gentle manner. Perhaps these characteristics make his speech on presentation night so much more significant, bold and courageous; because he only speaks out when there is an overwhelmingly important cause.

Marnie, on the other hand, is young and inexperienced, especially in the realm of leadership. She is unofficially mentored by Danny and very much figuring out how to be a good leader as she goes along. How important is it for a leader to have all the answers? What makes up for a lack of knowledge and experience?

Ultimately, like Danny, Marnie is a unifying leader. Anusha's attempts at leadership were, conversely, divisive. Have students identify and discuss which actions were unifying or divisive in the clips shown.

Learning Task 2

Introduce the concept of 'democracy'. Discuss how this term is usually used in reference to governments, but it also applies to leadership in general. Watch the following clip, which shows democracy in action.

- Episode 07: 09:50 – 12:26

What are the benefits to making important decisions through democratic process? Why are leaders more likely to be effective and successful when they are elected this way?

As seen in the clip, what are some of the pitfalls of democratic process? In other words, what doesn't work about democracy? (The focus here is not vote-rigging or corruption, but when individuals are disappointed or disillusioned by the outcome of a democratic process.)

How are student leaders elected at your school? What is the impact of having the student body elect a leader? Would anyone prefer if the teachers simply choose the leaders?



UNIT 4: LEADERSHIP

LESSON 3

Teamwork & Collaboration

Tuning In

Have students play a team building game such as Human Checkers, with the objective of highlighting the need for strong communication and a winning strategy.



Learning Task 1

Across all teams, members are faced with ‘push’ factors and ‘pull’ factors. Push factors are things that push team members apart and result in disunity. Pull factors are things that unite the team, refocusing attentions on a common goal. As a newly formed team, the Mustangs must overcome push factors and harness pull factors in order to win games and truly function as a winning side.

Watch the following *Mustangs FC* clips, which highlight some of the push factors that cause friction for the team.

- Episode 04: 17:35 – 19:02
- Episode 07: 07:52 – 10:26
- Episode 08: 20:12 – 21:48

Have students draw some general conclusions about what pushes teams apart.

Next, ask students to work in small groups to identify the pull factors depicted the following clips. They can then categorise the pull factors according to the categories in the provided table. (Examples are included as discussion starters.)

- Episode 08: 08:18 – 10:15
- Episode 12: 04:16 – 07:11
- Episode 12: 19:20 – 23:21

Marnie seeks Coach Danny’s reassurance and asks him: “What do the Wildcats have that we don’t?” Danny’s response is cryptic but wise as ever: “The cleanest pig doesn’t always give the best bacon.” Have students analyse this proverb and its applicability to the Wildcats compared with the Mustangs.

Are there any other critical elements a team must possess to be effective? Consider willingness, coachability and shared values.

TEAM BONDING RITUALS	SHARED TEAM EXPERIENCES	PHYSICAL BRANDING AND TEAM SIMILARITIES	COMMUNICATION AND STRATEGY
Team song embedded with team values, strengthened through repetition. Team hug after a goal Singing and dancing	Training Changing rooms Weekly soccer matches Soccer camp	Headbands Uniform Team marquees, banners and flags Spectator clothing	Common goal Purposeful and shared strategy An inspiring, uniting leader

Learning Task 2

In *Mustangs FC*, we are exposed to prosocial acts and rituals that occur across all occasions – both in celebration and in commiseration. On winning, there are group hugs, team songs, high fives and acrobatic displays. On losing, there is bobbing down, crying in isolation, and creating space for self-reflection on what went wrong. These demonstrations have wide application to sporting cultures and codes across the world, but also in other non-sporting, team-oriented pursuits.

Have students consider their own school and school community as a unified ‘team’. What branding or bonding rituals are already in place that symbolise their collective values? Are there rituals that are commonly practised, such as a school song sung weekly at an assembly? What else could the school community benefit from, in order for it to be more unified? Identify some existing needs to make the school community stronger, and work together to fill any holes. For example, writing a school mission statement for display, or a verbal student pledge that could be said in all classrooms at the beginning of each day.

UNIT 5: DIVERSITY

LESSON 1

Identity, Personality and Individuality

Tuning In

Set the timer and give students two minutes to sketch a quick 'mud map' of their bedroom, including annotations for favourite belongings, posters, photos and other features. Ask them to summarise in three words what assumptions others might make about them, just by looking in. Finally, have students evaluate whether their room is a true reflection of themselves by giving a mark out of 10 (1 = not at all a reflection, and 10 = absolute and accurate reflection).



Learning Task 1

Our bedrooms usually represent a personal and sacred space which tend to be a physical expression of ourselves. We typically decorate them with things that we like, things that appeal to our senses or to our interests.

Watch the following clips, which show the bedroom spaces of five main *Mustangs FC* characters.

- Episode 05: 07:16 – 07:52
- Episode 09: 01:06 – 01:20
- Episode 10: 06:26 – 06:50

Ask students to complete the provided table by identifying objects in each character's room, and making assumptions about the characters based on these objects.

People will always make quick and often erroneous assumptions about you, your personality and your identity. We sometimes have control over how others see us, but often we don't. If there is a mismatch between how we want to be perceived and how we are actually perceived, it can lead to disappointment.

CHARACTER	OBJECT	ASSUMPTION (IN 3 WORDS OR LESS)
Marnie	E.g. Matilda's poster	Soccer fanatic
Lara	E.g. Pink dressing table	Prissy, girly
Liv	E.g. 'The Internet needs me' poster	Social media enthusiast
Bella	E.g. Stacks of books	Book worm
Anusha	E.g. 'GeNiUS' wall mount	Science geek





Learning Task 2

Watch the following *Mustangs FC* clips

- Episode 09: 22:46 – 23:46
- Episode 10: 09:52 – 10:14

After reflecting on the emoji scene, ask students to select two emoji: one that others would likely assign to their personality, and one they would assign to themselves. Have students reflect on the disparity between the two, and whether this disparity is welcome or not.

Next ask students to consider Anusha’s profiles on her team members, and the subtext overlays stamped on these. Anusha referred to Liv as ‘Fun Addict’, which is interpreted as ‘unfocussed’, while ‘Lone Wolf’ Ruby can be seen as a ‘traitor’.

Any personal trait or characteristic can be interpreted either positively or negatively, depending on the source. This bias is termed ‘modality’, and its use encourages the audience to infer meaning in a particular way. Students could complete the following table to practise using ‘vocabulary modality’ to offer a positive, negative or neutral interpretation of different personality traits.

Guide the class in a reflective discussion about the dangers of pigeon-holing others. The labels we are given are subjective and they are often hurtful, particularly if they ‘stick’ and we don’t agree with them. There is an especially high incidence of labelling behaviours in adolescence, and this is partly why this life stage is challenging when it comes to identity, self-concept and self-esteem.

On the topic of labels, the *Mustangs FC* narrator says: “All we can ever do about our labels is try and outrun them.” If people want to label you a certain way, they will – but we have the power to control our reaction or response to their labelling. (See ‘Mental Health: Resilience’ lesson for further ideas.)



	POSITIVE SUBTEXT	NEGATIVE SUBTEXT	NEUTRAL SUBTEXT
Conversational	Outgoing	Flirtatious	Friendly
Polite	Well-mannered	Dull	
Unpredictable	Spontaneous		
Engaging			

UNIT 5: DIVERSITY

LESSON 2

Diversity in *Mustangs FC*

Tuning In

Have students describe a female protagonist from a popular Australian mainstream television program, such as *Home and Away* or *Neighbours*. What does she look like? What is her family background? What are her interests?

Share the following page of images of the Mustangs team and ask students to describe some of the characters they see.

What is different about these characters? Why is this significant? Do less stereotypical 'Australian' character profiles change our viewing preferences? Is *Mustangs FC* less desirable to watch because it doesn't feature characters that we are accustomed to seeing in the media?

Learning Task 1

Mustangs FC pushes the envelope by projecting a contemporary Australia. Groups of people that have traditionally been television 'minorities' are put centre stage in the series, including:

- People living with disability, including mental health issues
- People who practice varied religions
- People with varied sexual orientations
- A wide range of body types
- Females – who are often underrepresented in the media, and for which there is a long-standing history of repression.

Watch the following *Mustangs FC* clips, which highlight the diversity in the series.

- Episode 01: 16:37 – 16:49
- Episode 08: 12:40 – 16:23
- Episode 10: 16:12 – 17:30
- Episode 13: 12:57 – 15:06

Ask students to identify diverse characters in *Mustangs FC* according to the following categories. (Examples are included as discussion starters.)

Have students write a reflection on one of the following topics.

1. Ethnic diversity: Why does the narrator remark that the Mexican themed party was inappropriate?
2. Diverse abilities: Why might the writers of *Mustangs FC* have written Summer's character as a villain, when we are accustomed to seeing such a character sympathetically?
3. Socioeconomic diversity: Identify and describe how aspects of the series – such as sets, costumes and dialogue – convey information about the financial situation of different characters.

RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY

- Hanifa – Muslim character who wears a hijab and her body is covered whilst playing soccer
- Ruby – Family are expatriates from the USA, but her ethnic background is presumed African
-
-

DISABILITY

- Hanifa – Hearing impaired
- Summer – Has Down syndrome
-
-

SOCIOECONOMIC

- Willow – Her family can't afford soccer registration fees
- Bella / Anusha – Can be inferred that the characters attend a public or private school based on their uniforms
-
-







Learning Task 2

Introduce the concepts of 'homogeneity' or a 'homogenous' group, versus 'heterogeneous' groups. Then, show students the above still image of the Mustangs and the Wildcats, side-by-side.

Episode 13

Which group represents a 'homogenous' group? Which group represents a 'heterogeneous' group? Why might the writers of *Mustangs FC* have chosen to represent the Wildcats in this way? What are the wider implications?

The Wildcats are portrayed as the show's villains, and yet their team composition represents what Australian viewers are typically accustomed to seeing on mainstream television – possibly misleading viewers that this represents the Australian majority.

What is the problem with showing homogenous samples on television? How does it marginalise minority groups that aren't actual 'minorities' in terms of size and presence?

Have students brainstorm and then categorise other samples, groups or populations that are either homogenous or heterogeneous. Encourage them to think on both small and large scales. For example, local sporting groups, classroom groupings, scientific trial samples, world populations, or animal populations.

Learning Task 3

Write a letter (either digitally, or by post) to a mainstream Australian television show, holding them accountable for misrepresenting contemporary Australia. Explain the problems in doing so, and the widespread advantages of using a more heterogeneous cast.



UNIT 5: DIVERSITY

LESSON 3

Valuing Diversity



Tuning In

Guide students in reflecting upon and discussing why differences between people are important, and why they should be valued. Aim to extract more than just the usual responses, such as ‘life is more interesting’. This could include discussing the ways in which the world is changing, and becoming increasingly borderless.

Learning Task 1

Watch the following *Mustangs FC* clip, in which Danny discusses the importance of diversity with Ruby and Liv.

• Episode 03: 15:44 – 17:07

Danny uses the analogy of a goulash, or a stew, to show that: “there is a place for everything and everyone”. By pointing out the different vegetables needed for a tasty stew, he highlights that a range of different skills are needed for an effective team. Here, Danny is alluding to the concept of ‘synergy’; when the whole is greater than the sum of its individual parts.

The following table lists some other examples of synergy. Ask students to distinguish the parts from the whole, and evaluate the end result. Students could then work together to come up with their own examples of synergy.

Learning Task 2

A defining moment of *Mustangs FC* occurs at the club’s annual presentation night, where the girls hope that their inaugural female team will be recognised. Sadly, they are not, and Danny delivers a moving speech that highlights this injustice. Watch the following scene from the presentation night.

• Episode 12: 14:34 – 17:59

Have students discuss the club’s ‘missed opportunity’ in acknowledging their first female side, and therefore failing to take steps towards diversity. What flow on effects could have occurred had the club drawn positive public attention to the female team?

Ask students to identify and analyse the initiatives that are in place at their own school to celebrate and promote diversity. What other initiatives might the school benefit from? How can students go about enacting their ideas? (See lesson on ‘Gender: Taking Action’.)

EXAMPLE	WHAT ARE THE PARTS?	WHAT IS THE WHOLE?	ARE THE PARTS OR THE WHOLE MORE SUCCESSFUL?
A travelling pack of wolves	Alpha males, old and vulnerable wolves, female wolves, one male leader	Successful migration of an animal group that preserves the species and upholds the pack’s hierarchy	The whole – alone, they would be far less safe
An orchestra	Woodwind, brass, percussion, and strings instruments	A musical experience capable of invoking a range of human feelings and emotions	
A sporting team	Respective team roles and positions		



HOME



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UNIT 1: GENDER

LESSON 1

Women in Sport

Time

60 minutes

Class grouping

Whole class

Preparation and Materials:

- Two basketballs
- Two slips of paper for distributing statistics
- Paper and pens, or computers (for design task)
- Whiteboard marker
- Equipment for screening digital content
- *Mustangs FC* clips



Task 1

(20 mins)

Step 1:

Write the number '81' on one piece of paper, and the number '9' on the other.

Select one male-identifying and one female-identifying student from your class to come to the front of the room to participate in a demonstration. The demonstration is intended to highlight the difference in media coverage between women and men's sport.

Step 2:

Give one student the slip of paper with '81' written on it and the other the slip with '9'. Each student should also be given a basketball. Next, ask each student to bounce their basketball the number of times that is written on their piece of paper. You may wish to ask students to bounce their balls simultaneously, or one after the other.

Please note: This activity may be more effective if you allocate the higher number to your male student and the lower number to your female student. You may not need the student with the higher number to complete all of their bounces.

Step 3:

Inform the class that the bouncing of the basketballs represents an Australian sporting statistic. Ask students what they think that statistic might be. Discuss.

Step 4:

Reveal that the number of bounces reflects figures related to media coverage of sports in our country.

Compiled for the Australian Sports Commission (ASC), the 'Towards a Level Playing Field: Sport and Gender in Australian Media' report (last updated in 2014) states that coverage of male sports occupies 81% of television news reports, while coverage of women's sport makes up just 9% of television news reports. This discrepancy occurs despite "the ongoing successes and strong participation levels of women in sport". The report also found that coverage of women's sport had fallen from around 11% over the past decade.

Discuss the difference between these figures with the class. Why do they think there is a lack of coverage of women's sport?

Task 2

(40 mins)

Step 1:

Show students the following *Mustangs FC* clips.

- Episode 02: 02:40 – 08:19
- Episode 02: 11:00 – 15:58
- Episode 12: 13:20 – 16:40

In pairs, ask students to discuss what sorts of issues the clips raised. Select a couple of students to contribute their ideas to the class. Can they think of any other issues that women in sport might face? Discuss.

Step 2:

Write the following quote from Mustangs captain Marnie on the board:

"We're not a cause; we matter just as much as the boys."

Ask students to design a poster or advertisement that reflects some of the issues raised by the class after viewing *Mustangs FC*. The poster/advertisement should feature the quote above as its 'tagline', and may be hand drawn or digital, depending on student preference and availability of resources.

Step 3:

Students share their work with the class.



UNIT 1: GENDER

LESSON 2

Gender Stereotypes

Time

60 minutes

Class grouping

Whole class, pairs, individual

Preparation and Materials:

- Copies of the provided 'Stop Playing Like a Girl' worksheet (one per student, or per pair)
- Whiteboard marker and pens
- Equipment for screening digital content
- *Mustangs FC* clips



Task 1

(20 mins)

Step 1:

Ask students to arrange themselves into a circle.

Begin by asking students to identify one respect in which everyone in the circle is broadly like everyone else (e.g. everyone is human, or everyone has arms etc.). Write responses on the board.

Step 2:

Next, ask students to identify one respect in which both the girls and boys in the circle may be considered to be alike. Ensure that you use inclusive language to acknowledge students who are gender fluid or transgender. You may need to provide students with some examples of similarities (E.g. Both Student A and Student B live in the same area or like a particular author or play the same sport), or provide time for students to think about the question. Add responses to the board.

Step 3:

Add each stereotype to the board and allow the class time to discuss their own experiences as a group.

Step 4:

Keeping the actions of the characters in *Mustangs FC* in mind, encourage students to think about how they may be able to challenge stereotypes that limit their ability to be themselves or to reach their potential. If time allows, ask each student to come up with one simple action that would immediately challenge gendered stereotypes. Students should write their ideas in the space allowed on the bottom of their worksheet.

Task 2

(40 mins)

Step 1:

Show students the following *Mustangs FC* clips.

- Episode 01: 07:21 – 07:35
- Episode 02: 16:04 – 21:03
- Episode 12: 09:44 – 17:59

Step 2:

Provide each student with a copy of the 'Stop Playing Like a Girl' handout. Ask students (either individually or in pairs) to annotate the photograph of Marnie by making a list of the gender stereotypes identified in the clips from *Mustangs FC*.

Ask one student (or one student from each pair) to contribute an idea from their annotated image to the class.

Step 3:

Add each stereotype to the board and allow the class time to discuss their own experiences as a group.

Step 4:

Keeping the actions of the characters in *Mustangs FC* in mind, encourage students to think about how they may be able to challenge stereotypes that limit their ability to be themselves or to reach their potential. If time allows, ask each student to come up with one simple action that would immediately challenge gendered stereotypes. Students should write their ideas in the space allowed on the bottom of their worksheet.



Stop Playing like a Girl



Taking the stereotypes you have identified in Mustangs FC into account, think about the ways that you, your peers and/or your community could challenge those stereotypes in an immediate, practical way. If you have time, you could also think of some ideas that might have a more long-term timeline. Write your ideas below.

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.

UNIT 1: GENDER

LESSON 3

Taking Action



Time

60 minutes

Class grouping

Whole class, pairs

Preparation and Materials:

- Teacher access to a timing device
- Paper and pens
- Equipment for screening digital content
- *Mustangs FC* clips

Task 1

(20 mins)

Step 1:

Watch the following *Mustangs FC* clips with students.

- Episode 02: 02:40 – 08:19
- Episode 02: 11:00 – 15:58
- Episode 12: 13:20 – 16:40

Step 2:

Ask students to select a partner. Whilst students are organising their partners, write the following questions on the board (or if you have a class page, post them there beforehand):

- Do the characters in *Mustangs FC* challenge gender stereotypes? How?
- In what ways did the characters in *Mustangs FC* take action to challenge either gender stereotypes or the issues relating to playing in a female sporting team?
- What were some of the outcomes?
- What's the point of taking action against inequality?
- What is your opinion about the experiences of the *Mustangs FC* team? Have you had similar experiences?

Step 3:

Inform students that they will each have two quick, uninterrupted, 90-second 'rounds' to respond to the questions on the board, while their partner listens to their responses. Partners must listen carefully so as not to repeat ideas. Have a timer ready, and ask each pair to nominate who will speak first. Then allow 90 seconds for the first round and 90 seconds for the second round, alternating between speakers.

Step 4:

Choose a couple of pairs of students and ask them to feed their partner's responses back to the class. Discuss.

Task 2

(40 mins)

Step 1:

Write the following list of issues on the board (or have it posted to your class page). It's important to allow students to add their own examples to the list.

- Lack of access to facilities
- Having one's body or appearance commented upon
- Being told that you do something 'like a girl'
- Being overlooked for a heavy job because you're 'not strong enough'
- Experiencing language that stereotypes the characteristics of the gender you identify with. E.g. 'You kick like a girl'
- Regularly feeling like you have to apologise
- Any other examples provided by the class.

Ask each student (or pair) to choose one issue from the list and to create a hashtag that encourages the community to take action to address the issue. This practice is known as 'hashtivism' (a combination of the words hashtag + activism). The hashtag should be accompanied by a 280-character 'tweet' that explains or illustrates their idea.

You may wish to provide your students with some examples of hashtivism, for example the 2017 #metoo campaign, 2015's #EverydaySexism or 2014's #YesAllWomen.

Step 2:

Ask students to share their hashtags and statements with the class.



UNIT 2: RELATIONSHIPS

LESSON 1

Friendship

Time

60 minutes

Class grouping

Whole class, Individual

Preparation and Materials:

- Whiteboard markers
- Paper and pens
- Blu Tack or other adhesive
- Equipment for screening digital content
- *Mustangs FC* clips



Task

(60 mins)

Step 1:

Watch the following *Mustangs FC* clips with students.

- Episode 03: 03:03 – 05:50
- Episode 04: 07:52 – 10:28
- Episode 05: 08:05 – 13:12

Step 2:

After watching the clips, ask students to reflect on the following questions and then complete a written response:

1. What are some of the qualities that Marnie and Liv exhibit in their friendship?
2. What are some of ways in which they deal with conflict in their relationship?
3. Why did Liv's friendship with Ruby bother Marnie? How do the three of them work things out?
4. What do you notice about the way in which Anusha and Bella interact with each other?
5. What does friendship mean to you?
6. What qualities do you think you could bring to a friendship?

Step 3:

Ask students to look over their responses and circle as many words as they can that capture their thoughts about the friendships featured in the *Mustangs FC* clips, and about friendship in general. For example, if they have said in response to question one that 'Marnie and Liv are able to be honest with each other and to be forgiving', students might circle the words 'honest and 'forgiving'.

Step 4:

Ask students to come up with a list of qualities or words that they associate with being a good friend. They should come up with at least 15-20 words. Allow them to use a thesaurus if that helps.

Step 5:

Ask students to create either a hand-drawn or digital 'Friendship Manifesto' that incorporates some of words they have chosen that relate to the idea of friendship (see following example). Students should put key words into short sentences, with the ideas that are the most important featured in larger text or different font. Once completed, display students' manifestos on the classroom wall.



Sample 'Friendship Manifesto'

FRIENDSHIP

IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT OUR CONVERSATIONS
OR HOW MUCH WE HAVE IN COMMON
OR OUR SIMILAR (AMAZING) TASTE IN THINGS
OR THE WAY WE VIEW
YOU-KNOW-WHO
AND YOU-KNOW-WHAT
IT'S ABOUT HOW GREAT IT IS
JUST TO BE WITH
EACH OTHER



UNIT 2: RELATIONSHIPS

LESSON 2

Family

Time

30 minutes (can be extended)

Class grouping

Individual

Preparation and Materials:

- Paper and pens
- Equipment for screening digital content
- *Mustangs FC* clips

Context

There are many instances in *Mustangs FC* in which the characters experience connection or disconnection from their families. Marnie is dealing with the addition of her mum's new partner and his daughter to her family, Bella is beginning to realise that her dad is a great source of advice and support, and Anusha is forced to negotiate her parent's expectations that 'we only do things if we can be the best'.

Task

(30 mins)

Step 1:

Watch the following *Mustangs FC* clips with students.

- Episode 01: 15:34 – 16:32
- Episode 05: 13:13 – 15:15
- Episode 10: 00:37 – 01:42

Have students choose a conversation between two family members that didn't go well, or that could have gone better. For example, the 'test' that Anusha's mum gives her. Ask students to rewrite the scene to reflect a healthier style of communication, using language that is open, honest, respectful and constructive. Ensure that students adhere to the conventions of scriptwriting as they work.



UNIT 2: RELATIONSHIPS

LESSON 3

Romantic Relationships

Time

60 minutes

Class grouping

Whole class, Individual

Preparation and Materials:

- Paper and pens / laptops
- Equipment for screening digital content
- *Mustangs FC* clips



Task

(60 mins)

Step 1:

Show students the following *Mustangs FC* clips.

- Episode 03: 06:18 – 08:35
- Episode 06: 00:37 – 03:41
- Episode 06: 07:24 – 10:32

As students watch the clips, have them consider (and take notes on) the following questions:

1. Which aspects of the relationships between the *Mustangs FC* characters work?
2. Which aspects of the relationships between the *Mustangs FC* are tricky or need work?
3. How do the characters navigate awkwardness with each other?
4. How do the characters set boundaries in their relationships?
5. Which aspects of the relationships between the *Mustangs FC* characters do you value?
6. What are some of the differences you notice in the relationships we see?
7. What are the benefits of having a healthy relationship with a partner?

Discuss student responses as a group.

Step 2:

Ask students to make a list of the characteristics of a healthy romantic relationship, taking both the scenarios from *Mustangs FC* and the ideas of their peers into account. Prompt your class to consider the emotional, physical and financial aspects of a relationship. Students should make a reasonably detailed list. There are lots of resources about relationships available online should your class require some support to get started with this task.

Step 3:

Ask students to think of a romantic relationship as a brick building. On the ground floor is a foundation, and perhaps some insulation, and then each layer of bricks works towards creating the overall strength of the structure.

Students should now be given the opportunity to create their own 'BAE' building ('Before Anyone Else' - a phrase used in the *Mustangs* clips). They should decide which qualities of a healthy relationship are important at the foundation of a building, which qualities are needed at the lower levels to support the building's core, and which qualities sit at the top, enabled by all of the characteristics beneath.

Ensure that students represent their building as a 'wall' of bricks, roughly in the shape of a pyramid.

Step 4:

Students may not be willing to share their pyramids with the class, but if time allows, (and your class is willing) offer students the opportunity to discuss their ideas by posing specific questions about which qualities are at the top or the base of each building. Discuss similarities and differences, and ask your class if they can identify three main qualities that appear in most of the class's buildings, and why they might be so important to a healthy relationship.



UNIT 3: MENTAL HEALTH

LESSON 1

Depression & Anxiety

Time

60-90 minutes

Class grouping

Whole class, Individual

Preparation and Materials:

- Provided pantoum instructions (write on board or post to class page)
- Whiteboard marker
- Access to the internet and computers
- Equipment for screening digital content
- *Mustangs FC* clips



Task

(60-90 mins)

Through the character of Anusha, *Mustangs FC* explores the subject of mental health, particularly anxiety and depression. Anusha has high expectations of herself, faces pressure from her family to succeed and struggles with feelings of self-worth. In the final four episodes of the series issues relating to friendship and support, communicating with family and resilience are explored, with Anusha eventually disclosing to the team that she is seeing a counsellor.

Step 1:

Watch the following *Mustangs FC* clips with students.

- Episode 07: 13:53 – 15:24
- Episode 10: 14:00 – 17:30
- Episode 13: 09:44 – 11:06

Step 3:

Ask students to identify the issues around mental health that have been explored in the clips you have watched. Write responses on the board.

Step 3:

Ask students to think about a piece of advice they might give to a friend or family member suffering from anxiety or depression. Advice may be drawn from personal experience, but it would also be constructive for students to undertake some research into the variety of techniques recommended for supporting friends experiencing a mental health issue. There are many excellent online resources about anxiety and depression for young people: you may wish to direct your students to particular sites or allow them to undertake independent research.

Step 4:

Next, have students distil one key piece of advice into a single sentence, with a focus on the use of poetic language. Students should then use their sentence as the basis for a pantoum, a poetic form which uses structured repetition. Pantoums are an excellent vehicle for communicating a message.

The structure of a pantoum is simple. The first four lines of the poem are original, and then a process of repetition evolves:

Line 1

Line 2

Line 3

Line 4

Line 5 (repeat of line 2)

Line 6

Line 7 (repeat of line 4)

Line 8

Last stanza:

Line 2 of previous stanza

Line 3 of first stanza

Line 4 of previous stanza

Line 1 of first stanza

Step 5:

If you have time, allow your students an extra class to draft and present their pantoums. If not, ask for volunteers to share their first draft with the class. Completing a final version of the poem may be set as a homework task.



UNIT 3: MENTAL HEALTH

LESSON 2

Body Image



Time

60 minutes

Class grouping

Whole class

Preparation and Materials:

- Whiteboard markers
- Equipment for screening digital content
- *Mustangs FC* clips

Task

(60 mins)

Step 1:

Show students the following *Mustangs FC* clips.

- Episode 03: 03:01 – 06:31
- Episode 03: 09:48 – 10:54
- Episode 03: 17:54 – 19:01

Step 2:

Discuss with students the emotions Liv may have been feeling after both Tom and Marne make comments about her body size.

Write the word 'Overweight' on the board and have students suggest (using *Mustangs FC* as a prompt) what some of the negative assumptions about being overweight in our community might be.

Draw a square around the list of suggestions.

Next, write the words 'Ideal Body' on the board and have students provide suggestions about what this phrase might mean, particularly for girls. Make a separate column for all of the negative connotations students come up with, and draw a box around them.

Explain to students that the walls of the boxes represent the limits we place around girls (and boys) who don't conform

to our ideas of what a 'perfect body' looks like. E.g. If you are considered overweight you are put in a box that might suggest you are 'lazy'. Striving for the 'ideal body' can limit your enjoyment of life and affect your happiness if it leads to unhealthy eating.

Use the examples your class has come up with to illustrate this point most effectively.

Step 3:

Write the following question on the board (or post to your classroom page if you have one) and ask your students to write one or two paragraphs in response.

'How can we avoid judging others based on physical size or appearance, and emphasise internal over external qualities in others?'

Students may wish to begin with how they could change their own behaviour, and move on to discussing the way in which the media, for example, could make changes for the better.

Step 4:

Ask students to share their work with the class, and discuss.



UNIT 3: MENTAL HEALTH

LESSON 3

Resilience



Time

30 minutes (can be extended).

Class grouping

Individual

Preparation and Materials:

- Access to the internet and computers
- Equipment for screening digital content
- *Mustangs FC* clips

Context

The issue of resilience is explored through a wide number of characters and events in *Mustangs FC*. Anusha faces the serious challenge of working her way through anxiety and depression, Liv deals with the pressures on young women to conform to cultural ideals about body size, Bella must work out how to interact with the world as an 'introvert' with a lack of self-belief and Ruby must endure the uncertainty of a long-distant relationship.

Task

(30 mins)

If you have time, watch the following *Mustangs FC* clips with your students.

- Episode 13: 07:38 – 10:04
- Episode 13: 11:31 – 12:56

Instruct students to undertake some research into the techniques that can be used to build resilience. There are many fantastic Australian resources available online relating to this topic. Have students choose a strategy or technique that they think is particularly useful, and ask them to create one page for a class book on building resilience. Students could write an article, prepare a simple instructional guide for mindfulness or meditation, illustrate a health tip or create an advertisement. Have them submit their page and compile your students' work into a digital or hard copy 'book' that can be used a resource for the class.



UNIT 4: LEADERSHIP

LESSON 1

Being a Leader



Time

60 minutes

Class grouping

Whole class, small groups, individual

Preparation and Materials:

- White board markers
- Butchers' paper and markers
- Blu Tack or other adhesive
- Equipment for screening digital content
- *Mustangs FC* clips

Task

(60 mins)

Step 1:

Show students the following *Mustangs FC* clips.

- Episode 04: 12:59 – 15:31
- Episode 10: 09:07 – 13:07
- Episode 11 : 04:46 – 06:53

Step 2:

In small groups, ask students to brainstorm the qualities of an effective leader.

Next, ask the groups to create four columns (two per character) listing the characteristics that Marnie or Anusha have displayed that have made them either an effective or ineffective leader for their team.

Step 3:

Depending on timing, allow students to choose one or two of the following tasks:

1. Create a new 'dossier' for Marnie, giving her a nickname that reflects her abilities as a captain. List her positive

qualities, create a motivating/encouraging slogan for her teammates, outline her goals for the team, and come up with a 'mantra' that reflects her leadership style.

2. Rephrase Anusha's feedback for each *Mustangs* player so that it is delivered in a way that is positive and constructive.
3. Anusha comes with an acronym for the team, 'BWOW' (Banish Weakness, Own Winning) which could be interpreted as being a little harsh. Come up with a positive new maxim or 'saying' for the team that can be shortened to an acronym.
4. Create an advertisement for a coach or captain for a soccer team, listing all of the qualities that you think are important for the role. Look at some examples online to see how an advertisement should be structured.

Step 4:

Ask students to display their work on the walls of the classroom and allow the class time to walk around and look at each other's work. Ask for feedback on which pieces of work are particularly effective and why.



UNIT 4: LEADERSHIP

LESSON 2

Leadership Styles



Time

30 minutes (can be extended).

Class grouping

Individual

Preparation and Materials:

- Paper and pens
- Equipment for screening digital content
- *Mustangs FC* clips

Context

A number of leadership styles are explored in *Mustangs FC*, ranging from Danny's 'tough love with a heart of gold' approach, to Anusha's analytical and personalised feedback, to Marnie's evolution from unassuming head of the team to motivational speaker. The awareness of what it means to be a leader is explored, with the idea of 'putting the team before the individual' emerging as a key theme.

Task

(30 mins)

Depending on the time available, watch one or all of the following *Mustangs FC* clips.

- Episode 04: 14:56 – 15:31
- Episode 10: 09:12 – 13:07
- Episode 12: 05:52 – 07:11
- Episode 12: 14:54 – 17:20

If time is limited, watch the first clip only and focus on the character of Marnie. After viewing, discuss with your class some of the positive leadership qualities displayed by the characters in *Mustangs FC*, and some of the displayed that were not helpful or constructive. Ask your students to come up with a checklist of the qualities that they think epitomise an effective leader. Students should be able explain why they have included each characteristic. If you have the resources available, display the checklists around your classroom on individual clipboards so that students can engage with each other's work.



UNIT 4: LEADERSHIP

LESSON 3

Teamwork & Collaboration



Time

30 minutes (can be extended).

Class grouping

Small groups

Preparation and Materials:

- Recording equipment such as phones (if allowed) or laptops
- Equipment for screening digital content
- *Mustangs FC* clips

Context

Throughout the course of the *Mustangs FC* series, we see numerous examples of teamwork, both effective and ineffective. There are a variety of questions posed about what makes a team 'good'. Is it the Wildcats' unified but combative approach to other teams? Gabe's assertion that sport must be taken 'seriously' (as he suggests is done by the boys) in order for a team to win? Or does the struggle of Marnie and her team to become united tell us more about what works? Questions about what it means to be a team are considered throughout the series, with a focus on the idea that working together may be the key.

Task

(30 mins)

Depending on the time available, watch one or all of the following *Mustangs FC* clips.

- Episode 04: 17:35 – 19:02
- Episode 07: 07:52 – 10:26
- Episode 12: 19:20 – 23:21

Have students identify some of the instances in which the Mustangs worked effectively or ineffectively as a team. What helps to build a sense of cohesion? What makes players feel that they are not part of a team? In small groups, ask students to record a quick 'vox pop' survey amongst their group, using their phones (if allowed), laptops or school audio-visual equipment. Each group member should be allocated 30 seconds to identify one thing that has made them feel part of a team in the past, or one strategy that they think could help to build a team. Depending on time, choose one or two presentations to share, or ask each group to share their work with the class.



UNIT 5: DIVERSITY

LESSON 1

Identity, Personality and Individuality

Time

30 minutes

Class grouping

Individual

Preparation and Materials:

- Small paper squares
- Pens / pencils

Context

The characters in *Mustangs FC* represent a broad spectrum of characteristics, cultures and abilities, with a focus on normalising qualities that are sometimes singled out for being 'special' in a broader media context. The *Mustangs FC* characters are culturally and racially diverse, a spectrum of sexuality is a given, ability and disability are woven into the fabric of the program, and bodies of all shapes and sizes are celebrated. In addition, expressions of individuality are explored through the personalised spaces of the characters' rooms.

Task

(30 mins)

Ask students to think about the 'pieces' that make them who they are. Using paper squares, ask students to construct a paper 'patchwork quilt', with each patch on the quilt representing a part of their identity.

Students could use symbols, photographs or writing to depict the different parts of their identity. Alternatively students could make one 'patch' about themselves, and the patches could be compiled into a class 'quilt'. Allow students to be creative with their designs.

Discuss the importance and value of individuality as a group, using examples from student volunteers. Encourage students to consider how their peers identities and values are different to their own.



UNIT 5: DIVERSITY

LESSON 2

Diversity in *Mustangs FC*

Time

30-45 minutes (can be extended)

Class grouping

Individual

Preparation and Materials:

- Whiteboard marker
- Equipment for screening digital content
- *Mustangs FC* clip

Context

The characters in *Mustangs FC* represent a broad spectrum of characteristics, cultures and abilities, with a focus on normalising qualities that are sometimes singled out for being 'special' in a broader media context. The *Mustangs FC* characters are culturally and racially diverse, a spectrum of sexuality is a given, ability and disability are woven into the fabric of the program and bodies of all shapes and sizes are celebrated.

Task

(30-45 mins)

Watch the following *Mustangs FC* clip with students.

- Episode 12: 14:35 – 17:59

After viewing, write the following quote on the board:
"History has been sitting here all afternoon."

Discuss the quote as a class. What does Danny mean when he says this in the context of the *Mustangs FC* presentation night? How do we know that some of the characters agree with him (e.g. Marnie's mum)? How might this quote apply to the history of our country more broadly?

Using the quote as a prompt, ask students to plan and deliver a five-minute presentation to the class about one element of Australia's diverse history that might not have been adequately or accurately represented in accounts of the country's past. Alternatively, students could choose a current topic or issue that they feel is not being accurately represented in the texts that they view and read. For example, students could look at Australia's Indigenous history, the stereotypes perpetrated about different waves of migrants and refugees, the lack of visibility of people with a disability in Australian television, the dominance of white models in advertising, the lack of representation of women in sport or the public perception of a particular cultural or religious group. Students should consider a variety of viewpoints on their chosen issue when preparing their presentations.



UNIT 5: DIVERSITY

LESSON 3

Valuing Diversity



Time

30 minutes (can be extended)

Class grouping

Group, Individual

Preparation and Materials:

- Workbooks and pens
- Equipment for screening digital content
- *Mustangs FC* clip

Context

The producers of *Mustangs FC* made a deliberate decision to write characters for the series that showcase a variety of cultural, racial, religious and financial backgrounds. They also wanted to ensure that young women of differing abilities and body sizes were present in the narrative. In episode 8 of the series, Marnie holds a Mexican-themed party for the team in an attempt to convince Ruby to continue playing with the Mustangs. Ruby asks whether anyone has told Marnie that 'culture is not a costume'.

Task

(30 mins)

Watch the following *Mustangs FC* clip with your students.

- Episode 8: 12:40 – 14:02

After viewing, ask your student to find a partner, and then give each pair five minutes to discuss the statement that 'culture is not a costume'. Ask a selection of pairs to share their ideas about what Ruby might mean. What clarifying questions would students like to ask Ruby if they had the chance? Can they think of any other examples of the customs of a culture being used in ways that might not be appropriate? Discuss as a class and then ask students to write a short response to the following questions:

If culture is not a costume, what is culture? How do we honour and value diversity without mocking or devaluing it?





Curriculum Links

The *Mustangs FC* Teaching Toolkit explores many issues relevant to upper primary and secondary students.

While these issues generally fall under the Health and Physical Education domain, the content also aligns with additional Learning Areas and General Capabilities.

Please see the following tables for suggested links to the Australian Curriculum.



Primary lesson plans (Year 5/6)

Unit 1 - Gender



THEME	LESSON	LEARNING AREA	GENERAL CAPABILITY
GENDER	Women in Sport	<p>English Understand how ideas can be expanded and sharpened through careful choice of verbs, elaborated tenses and a range of adverb groups/phrases (ACELA1523).</p> <p>Humanities and Social Sciences Examine different viewpoints on actions, events, issues and phenomena in the past and present (ACHASSI099).</p>	<p>Critical and Creative Thinking Analyse, condense and combine relevant information from multiple sources.</p> <p>Information and Communication Technology Use a range of ICT to identify and represent patterns in sets of information and to pose questions to guide searching for, or generating, further information.</p>
	Gender stereotypes	<p>English Use metalanguage to describe the effects of ideas, text structures and language features on particular audiences (ACELT1795).</p> <p>Health and Physical Education Investigate resources and strategies to manage changes and transitions associated with puberty (ACPPS052).</p>	<p>Ethical Understanding Examine values accepted and enacted within various communities.</p> <p>Intercultural understanding Explain the impact of stereotypes and prejudices on individuals and groups within Australia.</p>
	Taking action	<p>English Make connections between students' own experiences and those of characters and events represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts (ACELT1613).</p> <p>Humanities and Social Sciences Reflect on learning to propose personal and/or collective action in response to an issue or challenge, and predict the probable effects (ACHASSI132).</p>	<p>Critical and Creative Thinking Apply knowledge gained from one context to another unrelated context and identify new meaning.</p> <p>Personal and Social Capability Identify a community need or problem and consider ways to take action to address it.</p>



Primary lesson plans (Year 5/6)

Unit 2 - Relationships



THEME	LESSON	LEARNING AREA	GENERAL CAPABILITY
RELATIONSHIPS	Friendships	<p>English Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive print and multimodal texts, choosing text structures, language features, images and sound appropriate to purpose and audience (ACELY1704).</p> <p>Health and Physical Education Examine the influence of emotional responses on behavior and relationships (ACPPS056).</p>	<p>Ethical Understanding Monitor consistency between rights and responsibilities when interacting face-to-face or through social media.</p> <p>Personal and Social Capability Identify the differences between positive and negative relationships and ways of managing these.</p>
	Family	<p>English Use comprehension strategies to analyse information, integrating and linking ideas from a variety of print and digital sources (ACELY1703).</p> <p>Humanities and Social Sciences Locate and collect relevant information and data from primary sources and secondary sources (ACHASSI123).</p>	<p>Critical and Creative Thinking Reflect on assumptions made, consider reasonable criticism and adjust their thinking if necessary.</p> <p>Intercultural understanding Explain what and how they have learnt from a wide range of intercultural interactions and experiences.</p>
	Romantic Relationships	<p>English Clarify understanding of content as it unfolds in formal and informal situations, connecting ideas to students' own experiences and present and justify a point of view (ACELY1699).</p> <p>Health and Physical Education Investigate resources and strategies to manage changes and transitions associated with puberty (ACPPS052).</p>	<p>Ethical Understanding Explain a range of possible interpretations and points of view when thinking about ethical dilemmas.</p> <p>Personal and Social Capability Identify and explain factors that influence effective communication in a variety of situations.</p>



Primary lesson plans (Year 5/6)

Unit 3 - Mental Health



THEME	LESSON	LEARNING AREA	GENERAL CAPABILITY
MENTAL HEALTH	Depression and Anxiety	<p>English Show how ideas and points of view in texts are conveyed through the use of vocabulary, including idiomatic expressions, objective and subjective language, and that these can change according to context (ACELY1698).</p> <p>Health and Physical Education Plan and practise strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing (ACPPS054).</p>	<p>Critical and Creative Thinking Identify situations where current approaches do not work, challenge existing ideas and generate alternative solutions.</p> <p>Personal and Social Capability Explain the influence of emotions on behavior, learning and relationships.</p>
	Body image	<p>English Recognise that ideas in literary texts can be conveyed from different viewpoints, which can lead to different kinds of interpretations and responses (ACELT1610).</p> <p>Health and Physical Education Recognise how media and important people in the community influence personal attitudes, beliefs, decisions and behaviours (ACPPS057).</p>	<p>Critical and Creative Thinking Reflect on assumptions made, consider reasonable criticism and adjust their thinking if necessary.</p> <p>Personal and Social Capability Identify a community need or problem and consider ways to take action to address it.</p>
	Resilience	<p>English Make connections between students' own experiences and those of characters and events represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts (ACELT1613).</p> <p>Humanities and Social Sciences Reflect on learning to propose personal and/or collective action in response to an issue or challenge, and predict the probable effects (ACHASSI132).</p>	<p>Ethical Understanding Evaluate the consequences of actions in familiar and hypothetical scenarios.</p> <p>Personal and Social Capability Devise strategies and formulate plans to assist in the completion of challenging tasks and the maintenance of personal safety.</p>



Primary lesson plans (Year 5/6)

Unit 4 - Leadership



THEME	LESSON	LEARNING AREA	GENERAL CAPABILITY
LEADERSHIP	Being a leader	<p>English</p> <p>Use metalanguage to describe the effects of ideas, text structures and language features on particular audiences (ACELT1795).</p> <p>Humanities and Social Sciences</p> <p>Reflect on learning to propose personal and/or collective action in response to an issue or challenge, and predict the probable effects (ACHASSI104).</p>	<p>Critical and Creative Thinking</p> <p>Identify and justify the thinking behind choices they have made.</p> <p>Personal and Social Capability</p> <p>Identify factors that influence decision making and consider the usefulness of these in making their own decisions.</p>
	Leadership styles	<p>English</p> <p>Participate in and contribute to discussions, clarifying and interrogating ideas, developing and supporting arguments, sharing and evaluating information, experiences and opinions (ACELY1709).</p> <p>Humanities and Social Sciences</p> <p>Use criteria to make decisions and judgements and consider advantages and disadvantages of preferring one decision over others (ACHASSI131).</p>	<p>Ethical Understanding</p> <p>Explain what constitutes an ethically better or worse outcome and how it might be accomplished.</p> <p>Personal and Social Capability</p> <p>Contribute to groups and teams, suggesting improvements in methods used for group investigations and projects.</p>
	Teamwork and Collaboration	<p>English</p> <p>Use comprehension strategies to analyse information, integrating and linking ideas from a variety of print and digital sources (ACELY1703).</p> <p>Health and Physical Education</p> <p>Examine how identities are influenced by people and places (ACPPS051).</p>	<p>Critical and Creative Thinking</p> <p>Identify and clarify relevant information and prioritise ideas.</p> <p>Intercultural Understanding</p> <p>Describe and compare the knowledge, beliefs and practices of various cultural groups in relation to a specific time, event or custom.</p>



Primary lesson plans (Year 5/6)

Unit 5 - Diversity



THEME	LESSON	LEARNING AREA	GENERAL CAPABILITY
DIVERSITY	Identity, Personality and Individuality	<p>English Investigate how vocabulary choices, including evaluative language can express shades of meaning, feeling and opinion (ACELA1525).</p> <p>Health and Physical Education Examine how identities are influenced by people and places (ACPPS051).</p>	<p>Critical and Creative Thinking Reflect on assumptions made, consider reasonable criticism and adjust their thinking if necessary.</p> <p>Personal and Social Capability Identify factors that influence decision making and consider the usefulness of these in making their own decisions.</p>
	Diversity in Mustangs FC	<p>English Identify aspects of literary texts that convey details or information about particular social, cultural and historical contexts (ACELT1608).</p> <p>Humanities and Social Sciences Examine different viewpoints on actions, events, issues and phenomena in the past and present (ACHASSI127).</p>	<p>Intercultural understanding Discuss opportunities that cultural diversity offers within Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.</p> <p>Personal and Social Capability Explain how means of communication differ within and between communities and identify the role these play in helping or hindering understanding of others.</p>
	Valuing Diversity	<p>English Compare texts including media texts that represent ideas and events in different ways, explaining the effects of the different approaches (ACELY1708).</p> <p>Health and Physical Education Identify how valuing diversity positively influences the wellbeing of the community (ACPPS060).</p>	<p>Ethical Understanding Articulate a range of ethical responses to situations in various social contexts.</p> <p>Intercultural understanding Explain what and how they have learnt from a wide range of intercultural interactions and experiences.</p>





Secondary lesson plans (Year 7/8)

Unit 1 - Gender

THEME	LESSON	LEARNING AREA	GENERAL CAPABILITY
GENDER	Women in Sport	<p>English</p> <p>Use prior knowledge and text processing strategies to interpret a range of types of texts (ACELY1722).</p> <p>Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, selecting aspects of subject matter and particular language, visual, and audio features to convey information and ideas (ACELY1725).</p>	<p>Critical and Creative Thinking</p> <p>Identifying and clarifying information and ideas.</p> <p>Ethical Understanding</p> <p>Understanding of ethical concepts and issues.</p>
	Gender stereotypes	<p>English</p> <p>Reflect on ideas and opinions about characters, settings and events in literary texts, identifying areas of agreement and difference with others and justifying a point of view (ACELT1620).</p> <p>Health and Physical Education</p> <p>Practise and apply strategies to seek help for themselves or others (ACPPS072).</p>	<p>Critical and Creative Thinking</p> <p>Finding solutions and putting ideas into action.</p> <p>Identifying, exploring and organising information and ideas.</p>
	Taking action	<p>English</p> <p>Use prior knowledge and text processing strategies to interpret a range of types of texts (ACELY1722).</p> <p>Health and physical education</p> <p>Plan and use health practices, behaviors and resources to enhance health, safety and wellbeing of their communities (ACPPS077).</p>	<p>Critical and Creative Thinking</p> <p>Analysing, synthesising and evaluating reasoning and procedures.</p> <p>Generating ideas, possibilities and actions.</p>



Secondary lesson plans (Year 7/8)

Unit 2 - Relationships

THEME	LESSON	LEARNING AREA	GENERAL CAPABILITY
RELATIONSHIPS	Friendships	<p>Health and Physical Education Investigate the benefits of relationships and examine their impact on their own and others' health and wellbeing (ACPPS074).</p> <p>English Use prior knowledge and text processing strategies to interpret a range of types of texts (ACELY1722).</p>	<p>Critical and Creative Thinking Consider a range of strategies to represent ideas and explain and justify thinking processes to others.</p> <p>Personal and Social Capability Explore their personal values and beliefs and analyse how these values and beliefs might be different or similar to those of others.</p>
	Family	<p>English Create imaginative, informative and persuasive texts that raise issues, report events and advance opinions, using deliberate language and textual choices, and including digital elements as appropriate (ACELY1736). Create literary texts that adapt stylistic features encountered in other texts, for example, narrative viewpoint, structure of stanzas, contrast and juxtaposition (ACELT1625).</p>	<p>Personal And Social Capability Identify ways to be proactive in initiating strategies to prevent and/or accomplish positive resolutions to conflict.</p> <p>Critical and Creative Thinking Generating ideas, possibilities and actions.</p>
	Romantic Relationships	<p>Health and Physical Education Investigate the benefits of relationships and examine their impact on their own and others' health and wellbeing (ACPPS074).</p> <p>English Use prior knowledge and text processing strategies to interpret a range of types of texts (ACELY1722).</p>	<p>Critical and Creative Thinking Synthesise information from multiple sources and use lateral thinking techniques to draw parallels between known and new solutions and ideas when creating original proposals and artefacts.</p> <p>Personal And Social Capability Explore their personal values and beliefs and analyse how these values and beliefs might be different or similar to those of others.</p>



Secondary lesson plans (Year 7/8)

Unit 3 - Mental Health

THEME	LESSON	LEARNING AREA	GENERAL CAPABILITY
MENTAL HEALTH	Depression and Anxiety	<p>English</p> <p>Experiment with text structures and language features and their effects in creating literary texts, for example, using rhythm, sound effects, monologue, layout, navigation and colour (ACELT1805).</p> <p>Health and Physical Education</p> <p>Plan and use health practices, behaviours and resources to enhance the health, safety and wellbeing of their communities (ACPPS077).</p>	<p>Critical and Creative Thinking</p> <p>Generating ideas, possibilities and actions.</p> <p>Personal And Social Capability</p> <p>Analyse personal and social roles and responsibilities in planning and implementing ways of contributing to their communities.</p>
	Body image	<p>Health and Physical Education</p> <p>Investigate the benefits to individuals and communities of valuing diversity and promoting inclusivity (ACPPS079).</p> <p>English</p> <p>Recognise and explain differing viewpoints about the world, cultures, individual people and concerns represented in texts (ACELT1807).</p>	<p>Critical and Creative Thinking</p> <p>Generating ideas, possibilities and actions.</p> <p>Finding solutions and putting ideas into action.</p>
	Resilience	<p>Health and Physical Education</p> <p>Plan and use health practices, behaviours and resources to enhance the health, safety and wellbeing of their communities (ACPPS077).</p> <p>Investigate and select strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing (ACPPS073).</p>	<p>Critical and Creative Thinking</p> <p>Synthesise information from multiple sources and use lateral thinking techniques to draw parallels between known and new solutions and ideas when creating original proposals and artefacts.</p> <p>Generating ideas, possibilities and actions.</p>



Secondary lesson plans (Year 7/8)

Unit 4 - Leadership

THEME	LESSON	LEARNING AREA	GENERAL CAPABILITY
LEADERSHIP	Being a leader	<p>English</p> <p>Create imaginative, informative and persuasive texts that raise issues, report events and advance opinions, using deliberate language and textual choices, and including digital elements as appropriate (ACELY1736).</p> <p>Media (extension)</p> <p>Experiment with the organisation of ideas to structure stories through media conventions and genres to create points of view in images, sounds and text (ACAMAM066).</p>	<p>Personal And Social Capability</p> <p>Identify ways to be proactive in initiating strategies to prevent and/ or accomplish positive resolutions to conflict.</p> <p>Critical and Creative Thinking</p> <p>Inquiring – identifying, exploring and organising information and ideas.</p>
	Leadership styles	<p>English</p> <p>Reflect on ideas and opinions about characters, settings and events in literary texts, identifying areas of agreement and difference with others and justifying a point of view (ACELT1620).</p> <p>Health and Physical Education</p> <p>Investigate the benefits of relationships and examine their impact on their own and others' health and wellbeing (ACPPS074).</p>	<p>Critical and Creative Thinking</p> <p>Analysing, synthesising and evaluating reasoning and procedures.</p> <p>Personal And Social Capability</p> <p>Assess individual and group decision-making processes in challenging situations.</p>
	Teamwork and Collaboration	<p>English</p> <p>Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations, selecting and sequencing appropriate content and multimodal elements to promote a point of view or enable a new way of seeing (ACELY1720).</p> <p>Health and Physical Education</p> <p>Investigate the benefits of relationships and examine their impact on their own and others' health and wellbeing (ACPPS074).</p>	<p>Personal And Social Capability</p> <p>Identify ways to be proactive in initiating strategies to prevent and/ or accomplish positive resolutions to conflict.</p> <p>Assess the extent to which individual roles and responsibilities enhance group cohesion and the achievement of personal and group objectives.</p>



Secondary lesson plans (Year 7/8)

Unit 5 - Leadership

THEME	LESSON	LEARNING AREA	GENERAL CAPABILITY
DIVERSITY	Identity, Personality and Individuality	<p>English</p> <p>Experiment with text structures and language features and their effects in creating literary texts, for example, using rhythm, sound effects, monologue, layout, navigation and colour (ACELT1805).</p> <p>Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, selecting aspects of subject matter and particular language, visual, and audio features to convey information and ideas (ACELY1725).</p>	<p>Critical and Creative Thinking</p> <p>Inquiring – identifying, exploring and organising information and ideas.</p> <p>Personal and Social Capability</p> <p>Explore their personal values and beliefs and analyse how these values and beliefs might be different or similar to those of others.</p>
	Diversity in Mustangs FC	<p>English</p> <p>Analyse how point of view is generated in visual texts by means of choices, for example gaze, angle and social distance (ACELA1764).</p> <p>Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations, selecting and sequencing appropriate content, including multimodal elements, to reflect a diversity of viewpoints (ACELY1731).</p>	<p>Critical and Creative Thinking</p> <p>Synthesise information from multiple sources and use lateral thinking techniques to draw parallels between known and new solutions and ideas when creating original proposals and artefacts.</p> <p>Personal And Social Capability</p> <p>Explore their personal values and beliefs and analyse how these values and beliefs might be different or similar to those of others.</p>
	Valuing Diversity	<p>English</p> <p>Recognise and explain differing viewpoints about the world, cultures, individual people and concerns represented in texts (ACELT1807).</p> <p>Create imaginative, informative and persuasive texts that raise issues, report events and advance opinions, using deliberate language and textual choices, and including digital elements as appropriate (ACELY1736).</p>	<p>Personal and Social Capability</p> <p>Explore and discuss behaviours that demonstrate sensitivity to individual, social and cultural differences.</p> <p>Intercultural Capability</p> <p>Examine how various cultural groups are represented, by whom they are represented, and comment on the purpose and effect of these representations.</p>



Episode Synopses

Episode 1: 'Goals'

It's the beginning of preseason for brand new all-girl soccer team, the Mustangs, and striker Marnie can't wait to get started with her BFF, Liv. But the new team's got problems. They have no uniforms, no dedicated change rooms, can barely field a team and their coach – Marnie's mum, Jen – is clueless about the beautiful game. Things aren't great at home for Marnie either. Jen has got herself a new boyfriend – Kev – and Marnie is feeling the pain of sharing her space.

Episode 2: 'Like a Boss'

Despite acquiring experienced new coach Danny, the Mustangs still have a long way to go. The girls run into conflict with Gabe and the boys over sharing the change rooms and are given a sub-standard gravel pitch to play on. And when they get accused of "playing like girls", it's the last straw for Marnie. It's time to fight back.

Episode 3: 'Can't Even'

The Mustangs are looking forward to the first game of the season proper and Liv is apprehensive about her goalkeeping strategy. But Marnie's got her own problems. Previously used to being the star, she's increasingly jealous of new hotshot Ruby. And after the players kits finally arrive, Marnie draws unnecessary attention to her friend's XXL-sized jersey and Liv gets upset and leaves. Nice one, Marnie... not!

Episode 4: 'Game Changer'

After losing a close and exhausting match, the Mustangs realise they must get fitter if they want to start winning. Marnie tries to work on her fitness at home but is distracted by Lara doing stretches and gymnastic moves outside with Jen. Angry and jealous, she finds Lara's phone and posts an unflattering GIF of her messing up a move. Marnie immediately feels bad but it's too late – Lara's revenge time bomb is definitely ticking...

Episode 5: 'Girl Crush'

Bella is forced to play in a match but when her moment comes, things go horribly wrong and Danny sacks Bella from the Mustangs. To make matters worse, her dad says he's coming to her next game and bringing the whole family in support. How is she going to hide the fact that she's no longer even on the team?

Episode 6: 'OTP'

The girls play a mixed futsal match with the boys and hormones are raging. Now that Liv and Hamit, (of the Mustangs boys team) are officially an item, romance is in the air and Willow lets slip that she thinks Marnie and Gabe are OTP – one true pairing. But Marnie either can't see it or won't admit it. She can't imagine kissing Gabe... can she? Determined to move the budding romance forward, Lara organises a party.

Episode 7: 'Kick it Like a Girl'

The Mustangs are on a road trip, heading off to play in a round robin competition. Anusha's bunking in with Bella but she's still upset after getting snubbed at the party, when Bella got a kiss. She doesn't think she should have been second banana, especially to someone as socially awkward as Bels. The tournament kicks off with Mustangs vs. Wildcats and that rivalry is as fierce as it ever was. But at the end of Day 1, the Mustangs are in last place on the ladder. Gutted.

Episode 8: 'Oh Em Gee'

Marnie enlists Danny's help to work out what's so great about the Wildcats. He suggests she needs to 'know her enemy' so Marnie goes spying at the Wildcats clubhouse and is stunned to see their amazing facilities, fantastic change rooms... and Ruby sitting in the clubhouse for a team talk. Marnie's hunch was right. Ruby is defecting to the enemy.





Episode 9: 'Flawless'

Lara is well and truly infiltrating every aspect of Marnie's life - her bedroom, her home and her team - and Marnie is totally over it. Having previously sucked up to Tom the ref when he embarked on a painful bout of mansplaining on the offside rule, Lara dives like a diva and gets awarded a dubious free-kick by Tom. Marnie is furious at Lara for staging such a dodgy and calculated move, and her inner frustrations and insecurities bubble to the surface.

Episode 10: 'R U OK?'

Anusha is devastated. She's failed her chemistry test - so maybe it's time she gave up the Mustangs to concentrate on more serious academic work. Bella's desperate to ensure she doesn't lose her friend on the team, so she asks Marnie to let Anusha help with tactics. Maybe if Anusha sees how she's the best at soccer strategy, she won't leave. And now that the Mustangs have made it into the top eight, they need all the help they can get.

Episode 11: 'The Feels'

The Mustangs have made it to the final eight, but Marnie's in a slump - Anusha's tactics divided the team, Lara's lecturing her on leadership, Liv is giving her the stink-eye, and even Gabe is sick of being used as a shoulder to cry on when he wants to be so much more. Could life suck any harder?

Episode 12: 'Slay'

You'll never believe it: the Mustangs have gone and won their semi-final! But their celebrations are short-lived when they realise they will have to face their nemesis in the final - the mighty, mighty Wildcats.

Episode 13: 'Mustangs Forever'

The nail biter of the final and the Mustangs are 2-0 up. But Liv is jumpy in goal and in a panic, she concedes two goals to the Wildcats and subs herself off. Under pressure in her first game back, Anusha fouls the opposition. It's a sloppy slide tackle, not intended to be violent, but Gabe (the ref) immediately blows it up. Emotions explode in an already tense match and parents begin arguing furiously on the sidelines. As things get badly out of hand, Gabe is forced to blow his whistle and abandon the game. Disaster!





Behind the scenes with *Mustangs FC* producers, Rachel Davis and Amanda Higgs

1. The characters and cast in *Mustangs FC* represent a diversity we don't always see on Australian screens. What does this bring to the series?

Rachel: It was really important to us through the development of *Mustangs* that we had a diversity of cast in the show – both in terms of their body shapes, and their ethnicities. We really wanted to show a range of girls that reflected Australia as it is today. As a result we have cast girls from a variety of backgrounds, and we really hope that the audience will look at those girls and find at least one to identify with. We auditioned about 350 girls in total because we really wanted to spread the net, and find girls that perhaps maybe hadn't been on screen before.

2. Female friendship and empowerment are key themes running through *Mustangs FC*. Why were these important to capture?

Rachel: Amanda and I really wanted to capture the themes of female empowerment and female friendship in the show – they were both the starting points for us. We felt like it was time to have a show that depicts girls as being strong, in charge of their own stories, and focussing more on female friendships than on romance.

3. Can you tell us why *Mustangs FC* is a unique and ground-breaking series both in front of and behind the camera?

Rachel: We're really proud that *Mustangs* is a unique series. It has six newcomers in front of the camera – none of these girls had really worked in television before.

Amanda and I also felt very passionately about bringing a strong female crew to support the cast. We're incredibly proud that our crew is made up of 61% women, which is a huge achievement on a television crew.

We had predominately female heads of department, most of the episodes were directed by women, and were edited mostly by women. We had a female Director of Photography (Kathy Chambers), Production Designer (Jo Briscoe), and Head of Costume (Penny Dickinson).

Not only did this bring a positive female energy to the show, but it meant that everyone was very invested in making this show for their daughters, and for themselves when they were that age.

Amanda: I think it goes back to the Geena Davis quote: "If you can see it, you can be it." Here we are setting up a show with six young women in lead roles, and therefore you have to have women behind the camera who are also taking the lead. The show is about possibilities for young women, so they have to be able to see these possibilities, and have it reinforced that they can achieve anything.

4. Why is the timing of the *Mustangs FC* release so perfect?

Rachel: The Matildas are doing so fantastically well. The Women's AFL was such a storming success in its first season, and had such great audiences – both attending the games, and at home watching on television. There is a real groundswell behind women's sport, with people recognising that this is something audiences really want to watch, and it's something that should be adequately funded.

Change room facilities and getting adequate support in the clubs for girls' sport is really lacking, so that was something that we wanted to incorporate in the series – as well as showing girls being strong, being athletic, and enjoying sport just as much as the boys.





5. What are the contemporary issues facing teenage girls that *Mustangs FC* tackles head-on?

Rachel: We wanted to focus on some key issues for teenage girls in this series; we wanted to show real girls who are tackling real problems. The series explores body image and mental health, which are increasingly issues for primary school-aged children as well as secondary-aged children, unfortunately. We look at sexuality, and we look at the intensity of female friendships, and how that line between a friendship and a romance can become blurred sometimes.

We wanted to tackle these issues truthfully, and we had a great team of writers to work on this. We didn't want to resolve these issues neatly in the space of one episode. So often in children's television it takes 25 minutes for a character to have a problem, resolve the problem, and live happily ever after. Instead, we wanted to track the progress of these issues throughout the series – because life isn't like that.

6. Why should teachers be excited about the series?

Rachel: We think these characters will really resonate with kids, because they are so honest and truthful, and because hopefully they will recognise themselves in these characters. But I think teachers will also recognise that the issues that we're tackling, we're approaching with a very light touch, with a lot of humour, warmth and understanding. The series gives children a chance to unpack some of their thoughts on these issues, without feeling like they're being preached at by the material.

Amanda: I think we have really struggled with drama and comedy that genuinely reflects the face of current-day Australia. When teachers look at their students, they will see a range of faces, a range of styles and a range of body types, just as we are reflecting in this show. I think that will help teachers talk to their students about the issues that we're raising. We are an inclusive show, and that's been our philosophy since the start.

7. How do you feel about the initial positive response to the series?

Amanda: It is so important to connect with the audience of this show – the audience of young women and young men that we're appealing to. A number of female journalists who have watched *Mustangs FC* have said they wish there had been a show like this around when they were growing up, and I think that is the highest compliment.

Rachel and I are utterly committed to reflecting back to our audience who they are right now, how they're living right now, and what they're dealing with right now.

8. Why was it important to treat sexuality in a contemporary way in the series?

Amanda: I think that regardless of who we love, we deal with the same issues in relationships. It was very important for us that Ruby – a central character in the show – had a different sexuality, so that not all characters were the same, and not all relationships or friendships were the same. It was key that Ruby's character was comfortable with her sexuality, because this contributes to her being a positive role model.



Additional Resources

The Mustangs FC television series and teaching toolkit explore complex issues including mental health, body image, gender and sexuality. This content may elicit an emotional response in some students, or encourage them to disclose personal experiences with a teacher or classmates. A range of national youth services – including free and confidential counselling services – are listed below. These details could be shared with students who need assistance or support.

The Butterfly Foundation: <https://thebutterflyfoundation.org.au>

Support and advocacy for all people affected by eating disorders and negative body image. The Butterfly Foundation operates a National Eating Disorders Support Helpline that offers support by phone, email and online chat.

eheadspace: <https://www.eheadspace.org.au/>

A confidential, free and secure service where young people and their families can speak with qualified mental health professionals by phone, online chat or email.

Headspace: <http://www.headspace.org.au/>

A national youth mental health foundation dedicated to improving the wellbeing of young Australians.

Kids Helpline: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/>

A free, private and confidential phone and online counselling service for young people.

Minus18: <https://www.minus18.org.au/>

A national youth-led organisation that caters to the diverse need of LGBTIQ+ young Australians. Minus18 provides support, advocacy, training, and runs inclusive social events.

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Educational writers: Briony O’Keeffe and Clare Zagorski.

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