

Balancing Competing Human Rights: TEACHER CHEAT SHEET

Before the session:

- Print & prep Worksheet A; instruction on sheet (if online, students can drag and drop into order instead)
- Print Worksheet B – one per student (can be filled in on Word if online)
- Have a copy of Teacher Sheet 1 ready, and select the scenarios you are going to use. The session asks you to play a short video – you might want to load this in advance of the session (Equality & Human Rights Commission – Your Human Rights: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VO7oS8PqkJY>)
- Make sure that your students all have access to pens
- Put one post it note each desk

TEACHER LED EXERCISE – stand up/sit down activity:

- Find the instructions on **Teacher Sheet 1**.

WORKSHEET A:

- The groups should put these rights in order of priority – i.e. they need to decide which is most important, down to which is least.
- Give the students 3 minutes or so to put the rights in order of priority – as they see it. Then give them another two minutes to consider whether they would change their order of priority if they approached the task imagining that they are a gay woman who is a practicing Hindu. Then give them another minute to consider the issue from the perspective of a very famous and politically engaged celebrity.
- It is important that this is done in pairs or small groups, as getting students to see that other people might have a different view on the order of the rights is really important.

WORKSHEET B:

- To be done individually by the students: Read the scenarios and identify the different rights which each person has. Write these down, connecting them to the facts of the scenario that make you think about that particular right.
- Think about the ways in which some of the different rights held by different people in the scenario compete with each other.
- There are two scenarios on this worksheet but it is likely that most or all of the students will only get through one in time. **Please make sure that they all start with Scenario A as this forms the basis of the next exercise.**

NB: students could use the bundle of rights that they were given for Worksheet A to help them identify the rights within these examples. It has been designed so these coincide.

'Answers' – I put this in inverted commas because the important thing is not that students identify every single thing that is listed here, but rather that they have grasped the idea that there are different rights contained within these problems which might come into contrast with each other. At this point, we are just aiming to identify the tensions which exist.

1. Ella and Nadiya want to get married. They have been in a relationship for ten years, they have a daughter and they are very happy – so they want to celebrate this with their family and friends. Ella grew up in a religious household and so they decide that they would like to get married in a church. They decide they want to get married in the church where they first met, when they both attended a carol service there during University. However, the minister says that while he hopes they live a long and happy life he believes that under God, marriage is only acceptable between a man and a woman, and therefore he is unable to perform their ceremony. Ella and Nadiya decide to protest against this, standing outside the church on Sunday morning holding banners which include swear words, and call the minister insulting names. The minister asks them to leave, saying they are intimating his people and stopping them attending church. A local newspaper takes a photo of the minister as he talks to Ella and Nadiya at the protest which they plan to print alongside a story about the challenges gay people still face when getting married. He asks them not to print it, as he is worried that he will receive a lot of (negative) attention as a result.

- Right to be treated equally
- Right to act according to your religious beliefs
- Right to protest
- Right to freedom of expression/to express your opinion
- The right to freedom of the press
- The right to privacy

2. One morning at the school parents are talking about how well each of their children reacted to being taken for their pre-school vaccines. Sebastian says that in his religion, vaccines are not considered acceptable; as it is not permitted to interfere with the body in that way. Mirella – whose daughter is unable to get the vaccines due to a medical condition – argues that Sebastian's son is putting her daughter's health at risk, and that he should be banned from the school unless he gets the vaccine. The school argue that they need to treat everyone equally and let them all attend class, and that as teachers represent the school they must go along with the line. However, one teacher feels so strongly about the issue that she talks to a local newspaper about why she thinks that school has taken the wrong approach. As a result she is suspended from the school.

- Right to religion/to manifest your religion
- Right to health
- Right to education
- Right to be treated equally
- Right to freedom of expression & free press

GROUP DISCUSSION TASK:

- Take **SCENARIO 1** from Worksheet B and facilitate a group discussion about whose rights should prevail.
- Start by asking students which competing rights they identified – you can see the answer above; then move on to a discussion about how these rights should be balanced in this particular situation.
- Some good questions/prompts which could help get the discussion going include – (but try and let this be as student led as possible)
 - Put your hand up if you think the minister should have to let Ella and Nadiya get married in the church.
 - Do you think it would make a difference if they protested using polite banners rather than rude ones?
 - Can you think of any solutions which would allow for a **compromise** to be reached? EG.
 - another minister who is willing to perform the ceremony being allowed to do it in that church
 - the newspaper prints the story and the ministers name, but not the photo