 Volunteering

Duration: 80 minutes (four activities, 20 minutes each)

The activities are designed to be delivered collectively, or individually to complement other Life Ready content.

Course outcomes

1.1 Assess personal strengths and skills to achieve positive outcomes in a range of challenging and changing situations.

1.3 Build positive thinking, self-belief and a sense of empowerment to take action to promote meaningful futures for self and others.

4.2 Propose, apply and evaluate solutions to take action to lead and contribute to healthy, safe and meaningful lives.

6.1 Assess, adapt and apply skills to develop and maintain respectful relationships and successfully participate in education, work and community contexts.

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What do we want students to know, understand or be able to do?

* Recognise the benefits to the individual and wider community from volunteering and community service
* Develop skills including communication, agency and teamwork to empower their active participation in their community
* Identify opportunities for volunteering or community service, including at school and in the wider community, as an individual or collectively with peers/others.

Required resources and materials for preparation

* Case studies
* Internet and device for screening suggested videos
* Volunteering factsheet and visuals handouts
* Butcher’s paper, markers

Suggested content

| Learning context  | Content |
| --- | --- |
| IndependenceFocus: Preparing for participation in community, education and employment | Building and participating in community* active and informed citizenship, e.g. volunteering and community service
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| IndependenceFocus: Building self-concepts and independence | Personal values and beliefs* influence of values, attitudes and beliefs on decisions and actions in various contexts
* recognising and assessing strengths, aspirations and potential
* self-concepts
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Teaching notes

Schools can support student volunteering activities in the following ways.

* Students may already be actively involved volunteering at school or within the wider community or develop an interest in volunteering as a result of this lesson activities.
* Schools arranging student volunteering activities should apply department procedures for duty of care and where appropriate, policies including school excursions.
* Activities and discussion with students provided prior to an excursion or workplace learning may also help students prepare for volunteering activities for example, health and safety, having confidence to speak up, working with others.
* Volunteering activities organised by a student and/or their parent/carer and undertaken by the student in their own time (that is off site and outside of school hours) are not covered by the department's insurance or indemnity.

Acknowledging student volunteering and community service is important. Students are often encouraged to volunteer when they know their volunteering contributions are appreciated and valued.

Schools can acknowledge and recognise students' volunteering through school newsletter/webpage articles, assemblies, school reports, awards or certificates.

Evidence of volunteering or community service may be valued by potential employers and tertiary groups. Students who volunteer should be encouraged to keep a record of their volunteering experience. For example, school record, certificate or student portfolio (e.g. [NESA Up2Now](https://up2now.net.au/people/login)).

* Useful links
	+ [NSW Volunteering – Shape your Future](https://www.volunteering.nsw.gov.au/stories/shape-your-future-nsw)
	+ [Premier’s Volunteer Recognition Program](file:////http%3A/youth.nsw.gov.au/nominate-for-the-pvrp/)
	+ [NESA - Up2Now](http://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/leaving-school/extra-curricular-activities)
	+ [Department certificate templates](file:///Users/reneewest/Downloads/o%09https%3A/education.nsw.gov.au/inside-the-department/communication-and-engagement/services-and-support/branding-and-design/templates)
	+ [Volunteering Australia – National volunteer Week](https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/nvw/)
	+ [GoVolunteer](https://govolunteer.com.au/) – information about volunteering including rights and responsibilities, as well as search function for volunteering opportunities
	+ [Advocate for Children and Young People](https://www.acyp.nsw.gov.au/)

Creating a safe and supportive learning environment

There are a number of strategies that can be used to create a supportive learning environment which enables students to feel safe to learn and ask questions. They include:

* making students aware at the beginning of Life Ready sessions that disclosing personal information that indicates they may be at risk of harm will be reported to the school principal in all instances. This includes personal disclosures related to instances of abuse, drug use, neglect or sexual activity under the legal age of consent.
* being aware that some parts of Life Ready can be confronting and sensitive for some students.
* enabling students to withdraw if they find issues personally confronting to protect them from making harmful disclosures. Equally, it is important to be prepared for issues that arise as a result of a student making a public disclosure in the classroom.

More information on creating a safe and supportive learning environment can be found on the [Life Ready website](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/pdhpe/life-ready).

Evaluating resources before use

Preview and evaluate all strategies, resources and teaching and learning approaches in full before use with students to determine suitability for student learning needs, stage of development and local school context. Consider the age, maturity, cultural background, sexuality, gender, sex, health and other characteristics of students in your care. Apply professional judgements to all strategies, teaching and learning approaches and resources including audio visual materials (e.g. videos, media clips and YouTube), interactive web-based content (e.g. games, quizzes and websites) and texts.

Use the [resource review flowchart](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/083acd3a-daca-4307-9afe-bc6c888f694a/1/final-resource-flowchart-html5.zip/index.html) to decide about the suitability of teaching and learning resources.

Materials should be reviewed in full and endorsed by the school principal before use in NSW government schools.

Communication with parents and caregivers

Some aspects of Life Ready may be viewed as sensitive or controversial, such as learning about abuse, child protection, drugs, respectful relationships, sexual health, sexuality and violence. Inform parents and carers, prior to the occasion, of the specific details of the Life Ready program, so that parents and caregivers have time to exercise their rights of withdrawing their child from a particular session. In this regard, a parents or caregiver’s wish must be respected.

Establishing how parents and caregivers will be informed about programs and involved in consultation is a school-based decision. Where parents and caregivers indicate they wish to withdraw their child from a program it is useful to negotiate which parts of the Life Ready program they are concerned about. A sample information letter is available on the [Life Ready website](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/pdhpe/life-ready).

Activity one – Why volunteer?

* Choose one of the following videos as a stimulus for group discussion; these are young peoples' stories about why they became a volunteer and what they enjoy from their volunteering experiences.
	+ [NSW SES Volunteer Story](https://youtu.be/-Xp6bHEFs1M): Mark Smith (3mins)
	+ [Mickael’s volunteering story](https://youtu.be/zRWleFXQJb8) with St John (3mins)
	+ [Lakshmi’s volunteering story](https://youtu.be/QNqJ2-BpcwA) with St John (2mins 25 seconds)
* Ask the students to clarify what it means to volunteer. (Note: [Volunteering Australia definition](https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/definition-of-volunteering/): ‘Volunteering is time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain.’
* Have students work with a partner to identify 5 benefits of volunteering. They may suggest benefits for the volunteer, the recipient or the wider community.
* As a class, collate and categorise the benefits under the headers: volunteer; recipient; community.
* Debate: ask students to respond to the statement 'Not all volunteers are equal – some are more important than others'. Students should be encouraged to think widely about the variety of volunteering opportunities and their value to the recipient and community.

Activity two – Get the facts

* Divide students into groups to explore volunteering facts by analysing data about volunteering.
* Students view the sample graphics from the National Volunteer Week theme. Consider and suggest reasons and examples for the following statements:
	+ volunteers are inspired to be involved in volunteering as it allows them to give something back to the community.
	+ volunteers are motivated to volunteer by a personal belief in a cause or issue.
	+ volunteers are driven to volunteer to make a difference.

Activity three - Making a difference in your world

This activity encourages students to explore their personal strengths, talents and interests; to consider how they might work with others, to take action and become involved with their community.

* Review and reflect on either of the following (depending on the group, individual examples can be selected for small groups to review and share with the class)
	+ [10 Youth Movements that are changing the world](https://www.one.org/us/2015/08/11/10-youth-movements-changing-the-world-for-the-better/) or,
	+ [15 young activists that are changing the world](https://www.complex.com/life/young-activists-who-are-changing-the-world/majorey-stoneman-survivors)
* Triple TTT (Talent, Treasure, Time) “graffiti” board activity:

Students move in small groups/pair to each of the graffiti boards and following the heading prompts:

* + identify Talents (strengths, talents, interests) of the group.
	+ look for local or broader Treasures in the community and use as a stimulus for class discussion on how as an individual or group they can make a difference (record under heading 3)
	+ action and opportunities – consider and compare ideas with other groups; perhaps students can change groups to better suit their talents.

Activity four – What’s in it for me!

Students consider the concept that volunteering is all about helping others - or is it? Students reflect on where they are heading in the future and how can volunteering might help them. If appropriate, students could develop an action plan or set some short term goals.

Review the article: [How volunteering can help you get a job](https://www.fya.org.au/2016/04/15/how-volunteering-can-get-you-a-job/) (Foundation for Young Australians)

Students think about their possible future plans. They might like to check websites of universities and other possible pathways and develop an action plan indicating possible volunteering opportunities that will assist in your future career.

Other videos:

[GoVolunteer/SEEKVolunteer](https://youtu.be/UGKxh27JPFw) Volunteer Stories

[Volunteering at the RSCPCA](https://youtu.be/tLs4fX6n6lo): Meet the Volunteers!

[Being an RSPCA Volunteer](https://youtu.be/HK9LGTcituU)