

Safe Spaces for Dialogue and Discussion

Centring Students

The learning and discussion activities contained in NFB educational resources depend on positive relationships between students and educators, and rely on a learning climate that promotes positive peer interactions based on respect. Teachers should be aware of how students feel about the issues explored in these learning modules before they begin. Gain a sense of the students' knowledge of the key topics covered in these NFB productions, listed below. Teachers should also ascertain beforehand which students may have had personal experiences related to the issues being explored. In approaching these topics, teachers should pay attention to student responses and use them to inform their approach and pace.

General Note on the Emotional Impact of the Film

Some NFB productions may evoke strong emotions due to viewers' individual experiences with stress, anxiety or other mental health conditions. This can be difficult to admit and discuss. However, these topics and feelings can be acknowledged and worked through if we remember to be respectful of each other's experiences and intentional in how we enter and leave learning spaces like this. Teachers should ensure that adequate preparation time is allotted to plan for these conversations. If students feel the need to speak with someone after watching a production, they can reach out to teachers or school counsellors. It is important to provide opportunities for students to talk through and unpack their feelings.

Warning

Some older NFB films were produced in a context that no longer meets today's standards and may contain terminology, imagery or situations that are considered offensive. The NFB tries to add contextual vignettes for these productions whenever possible, but we recommend that teachers always preview films before showing them to students. We also recommend that you inform students at least one week prior to screening a film that may contain sensitive content.

Give students the option of not participating in the screening and provide them with an alternative activity—in the library or elsewhere—that meets institutional standards.

Source: "General Note on the Emotional Impact of the Film" and "Centring Students" were written by Natasha Henry, in collaboration with the NFB Education team, for the [Exploring Black Communities in Canada through Film](#) guide, produced by NFB Education and available to CAMPUS members.