



ONE TEAM

GRADE 8-9

FRIENDSHIP
ACTIVITIES

✓
THERE FOR
THE JOURNEY

Krystina Alogbo, Water-polo



TEACHER OVERVIEW



Eric Radford, figure skater

NADIA POPOV

(<https://olympic.ca/one-team/oneteam-nadia-popov/>)

Nadia competed on the Canadian Women’s rugby team at the Toronto 2015 Pan American Games, helping the team to a gold medal performance. In her blog, she speaks of her struggles with mental health issues and feeling alone. As she explains, “athletes struggling with mental health or their sexuality (or both) often feel immense pressure to keep their struggles hidden due to fears of not being accepted, and how that will impact their athletic dreams.” She shares how she isolated herself during these difficult times, and eventually found peace through the support of friends, teammates and professionals.

ANASTASIA BUCSIS

(<https://olympic.ca/one-team/oneteam-anastasia-bucsis/>)

Anastasia is a two-time Olympian in Long Track Speed Skating. Years prior to the lead up to the Sochi Games, the loneliness she felt was a feeling she didn’t want others to experience. That’s exactly why she came out – “I struggled to accept myself to the point of having very unhealthy and negative thoughts” recalls Anastasia. “Regardless of orientation we all feel lonely; it’s one of the tough things about being human.”

THEMES

- The normalcy of difficult mental and emotional times.
- The value of friendships during difficult times and the virtue of journeying alongside a friend in need.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Students will reflect on the nature and normalcy of internal struggles.
- Students will reflect on how they can support a friend during a struggle.

GRADE 8-9

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

We all go through difficult times and face seasons of feeling alone. These times are normal, but that doesn't make them easy. As you read through the blogs, think about how the athletes went through times of struggle and loneliness, and how friends and allies helped them pull through. Both of these athletes struggled with questions about their sexuality, and felt isolated and troubled as they worked through their feelings. Friends or allies helped them immensely. While these may not be issues that directly affect you, maybe you relate to feeling alone in your troubles. Perhaps you have had a loss, feel different, are dealing with anxiety or depression, or are lonely. Friendship is about journeying together through the ups and downs of life. We all need friends and those around us need our friendship.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

- Maybe you are wrestling with difficult times, feeling accepted, a loss, or questions about who you are. Internal struggles are part of being human, and friends can help you through this journey.
- Perhaps you have a friend that is going through a tough time. Maybe they are dealing with a great loss, or are struggling to fit in. You can help them in their journey. You can be there for them in their time of need.

TALK ABOUT IT!


As a class, discuss how you feel, think, and act when you are going through a difficult time? How did Nadia and/or Anastasia work through their struggles?

WRITE ABOUT IT!

In difficult times, having a good friend can make all the difference. Journal about what it means to be a good friend for those going through a hard time. What do you do to support your friends? What do you need your good friends or family to do to support you? How do you create a sense of safety with your friends so that they can trust you with their challenges?

SHARE ABOUT IT!

Referring to your journal entry, on a poster board write one thing that is necessary for a friend to help in difficult times. Pass the poster board around the class so that everyone can write on it. Contribute something unique and avoid repeating what others have written. Once everyone has contributed, discuss it as a class.



“YOU NEED TO BE PATIENT IN TERMS OF LETTING PEOPLE DEAL WITH THINGS IN THEIR OWN TIME AND BY BEING SUPPORTIVE OF THEIR JOURNEY AND HOW AND WHEN THEY CHOOSE TO SHARE IT.”

—Una Louder, Canoe/Kayak Pan Am Games gold medallist