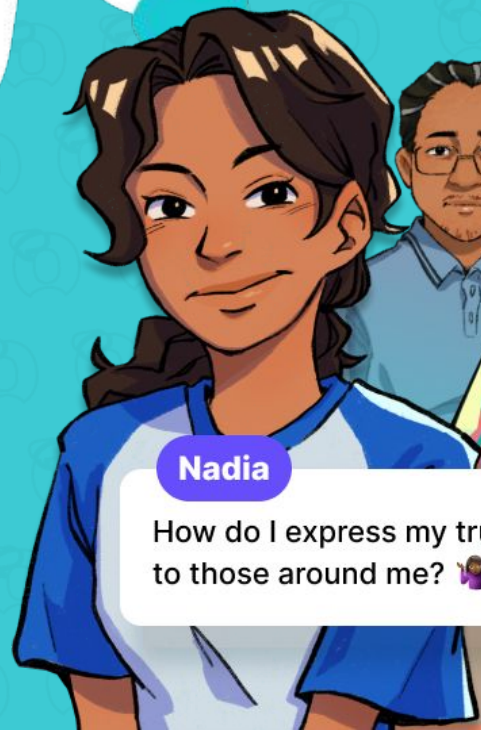


to be you



Nadia

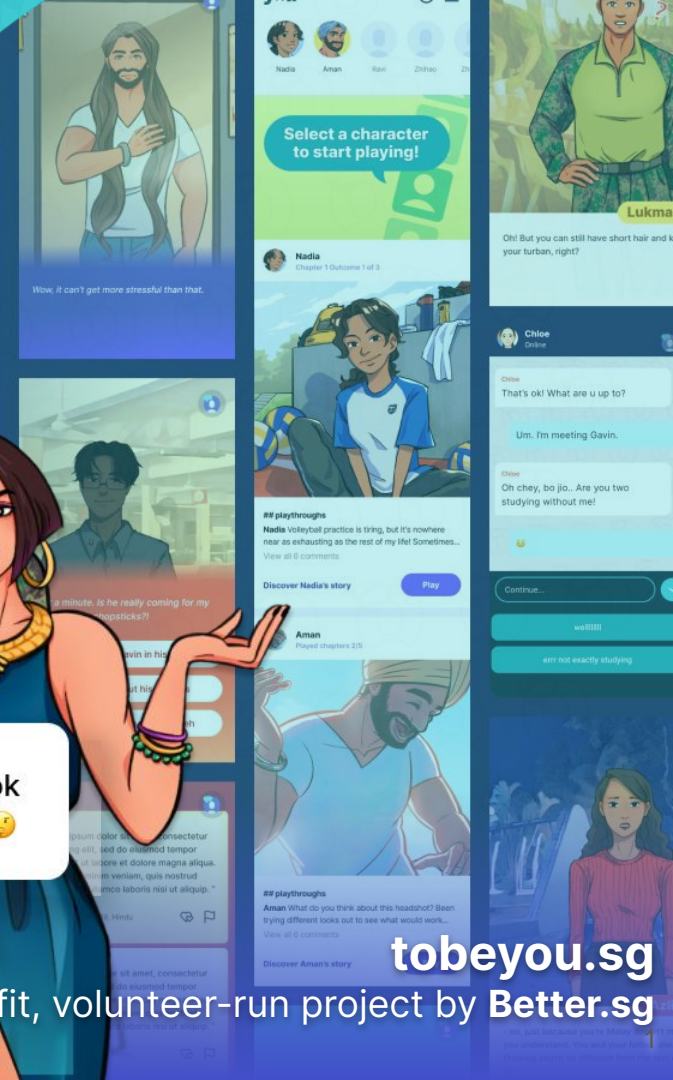
How do I express my true self to those around me? 🙋



Aman

Can I succeed when I look different from the rest? 🤔

375 players have finished the game.



tobeyou.sg

A non-profit, volunteer-run project by **Better.sg**

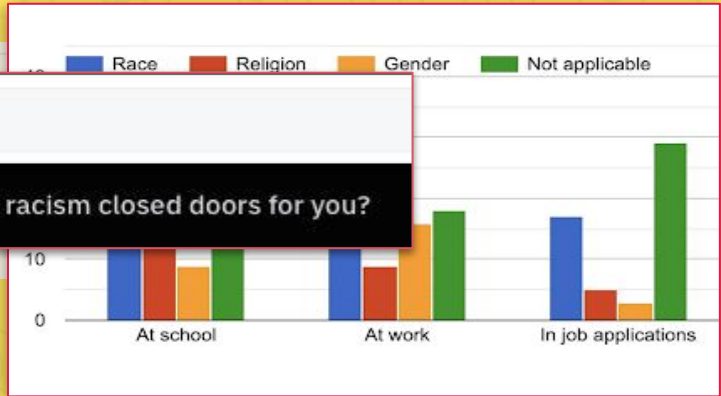
In a multicultural society,
empathy is not optional.

Without empathy,
prejudices will grow, deepen,
and **tear us apart.**

cna
Singapore
Survey finds rise in perception of work-related discrimination among Malays, Indians in Singapore

Search

↑ 245 ↓ | How has racism closed doors for you?



Discrimination on the basis of **race**, **gender**, and **religion** still exists in Singapore. Data shows that it happens in schools, at work, while dating, among friends, in shops, and *even on the bus*.

mothership

S'porean actress highlights "deeply ingrained" racism in S'pore, was asked if she was "ok" kissing Indian actor

Quora Home Following Answer

Sexism Question That Contains Assumptions Singapore

Why is Singapore so sexist?

Our own survey of 60+ people, IPS Survey Data, and discussions across the internet indicate this is a problem.

Getting to the heart of empathy

Facing a divisive social issue with creativity

Detractors are “lured” into the experience.

Individuals who are least likely to participate in a intercultural dialogue are more likely to join an online game, and “unintentionally” learn something about empathy.

Users feel safe exploring a sensitive topic.

A single-player, fictional environment allows users to contemplate difficult issues without being judged by others. There’s no awkwardness or social pressure to open up.

Mobile gaming is highly scalable and can be done anywhere, anytime, by anyone.

Unlike dialogues or real-world activities, a mobile game requires no resources, and chapters can be played in a few minutes while on the way to school/work.



Facilitation is optional for our game.

Dialogues requires skilled facilitators to handle difficult topics, and bad facilitators can be dangerous. Our game has shown emotional impact on players, even on their own.

Gamification makes learning fun!

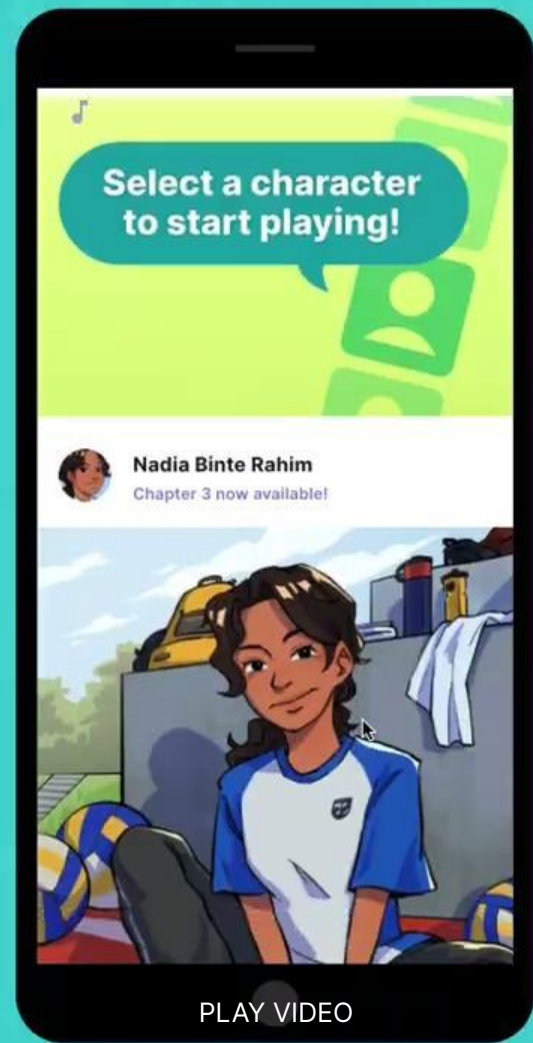
Players are engaged in the immersive and enjoyable storylines, and are incentivised to explore all pathways for the character’s journey, while learning a different lesson each time.

...with a mobile interactive visual novel

What is ToBeYou.sg ?

To Be You, an experiential and interactive mobile game **that seeks to cultivate empathy.**

The immersive fiction game gets to the heart of empathy by letting players **experience "life" as someone else**, make life choices, discover challenges and dilemmas, and connect with the life journeys of people from different backgrounds facing different issues. This is a collection of **short stories about dilemmas and thematic issues**, not an authoritative resource on identity (race, religion, gender).



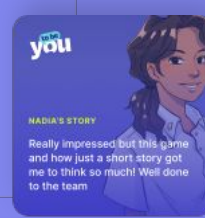
Game Walkthrough



How it works

A cycle of playing, learning and sharing

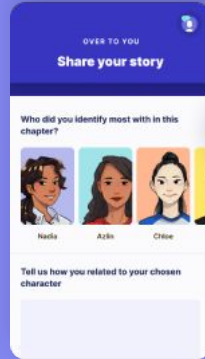
3. Share your learnings, start a new conversation



We believe players can amplify the cause, so we give players momentos from the game to make it easier to share on social media and start conversations.

4. Personal Reflection

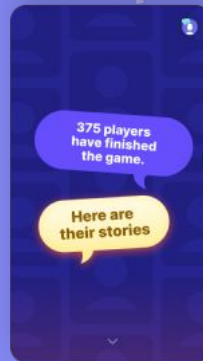
Players are given the option to leave their reflection for other players to read. About 10% of all players do.



5. Connect with others

At the end of a story, players get to see the reflections and stories of other players.

This is a powerful moment that unites many of our players.



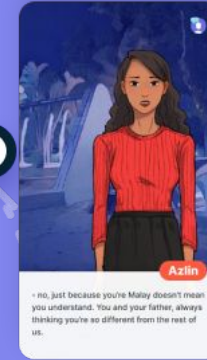
6. Explore other paths

Players have the option to replay to allow them to try out different choices and practice different levels of empathy.



2. Deal with consequences

Stories unfold based on a player's choices. Players get to understand the nuance of issues and the impact of their actions in a relatable way.



1. Make choices as your chosen character

Players are faced with real life dilemmas and decisions and choose how they respond to situations



Our Process

A rigorous system involving multiple stakeholders and checks

Actual people

People are the heart of our product. To ensure we represented them right, we conducted 20+ fgds and 1-1 interviews to understand their issues.

Public Institutions

We paired up with like-minded institutions to support or amplify our cause

Research & Ethics

To conduct research and build an ethical product, we worked with trained facilitators from interfaith groups (e.g. More Than Just) and public policy researchers from IPS.

Production team

From writing, game design, game art to dev and music, we worked with a host of local artists and makers to make the game emerge to reality.

One end product
3 differentiated offerings

Casual gamers

Conversation starter between friends

- ▶ Free-to-play game released on 21 July 2021 (Racial Harmony Day)
- ▶ >2000 players in 48 hours

Schools

Facilitated learning for young adults

- ▶ Teaching tool for Upper secondary and Junior College teachers. 6 teachers from 6 schools have pledged interest
- ▶ Headed by a team of educators hailing from a range of secondary schools, junior colleges, and tertiary education institutions
- ▶ Expansion Plan: Incorporating ToBeYou into the Character and Citizenship Education 2021 (CCE 2021) curriculum

Organisations

Professionals and Organisation impact

- ▶ Paid corporate training tool
- ▶ Current customer lineup: Common ground

Sustenance

We will design our “exit to community” (e.g. work with a social enterprise to sustain user engagement for ~3 years).

Our Impact

Definitely kudos to the team. Deals with poignant issues and questions that we should all work on as a community. Everyone has their own viewpoints, faith and religion, and it's always important to be sensitive to it.

20 Y/O, MALE, CHINESE CHRISTIAN

Wow. So many of these questions I've never considered. I'm glad I get to experience these during the game! I'll definitely will try harder to keep an eye out for them in real life.

16 Y/O, CHINESE FREE-THINKER

I so wish I had this when I was in school. There are so many Chloe's and Gavin's I would've sent this to, so they can understand what it's like to be both in the inner circle, and the odd one out. Gonna send this game to my Chinese friends now!

30 Y/O, FEMALE, MALAY MUSLIM

I like that I can read Nadia's thoughts in the game, really puts me in her shoes.

30 Y/O, FEMALE, CHINESE FREE-THINKER



We were featured on Straits Times on National Day



Halimah Jacob
5 December 2020
Glad to see our youths incorporating digital technology in their hackathon projects. Gaurav shared with me an interactive mobile game which creates safe spaces for people to engage in civic discourse. Through this platform, it hopes to build empathy and promote mutual understanding between people of different races and religions.
MCI Photo by Betty Chua

Other Press Accolades



Player Reflections

>1000
reflections
received

My ex-boyfriend was Catholic and I am Muslim and at the start of the relationship, I was happy with the idea of him not having to convert and did not find religion an issue. But as years went on and I decided to settle in Singapore (instead of overseas), I received more pressure from family members and found it stressful.

As a Chinese Muslim convert, I also need to navigate similar challenges in helping Chinese friends understand some of our practices. Luckily, my parents have been accepting. I did not anticipate the pressure one might face being born in a Muslim family, needing to answer to faith not just to themselves but their families too.

I hope that this story helps others realise how hard it is for some people to go through inter-cultural relationships. Making fun of them, or harassing them in public is NOT cool. Life is hard enough for them!

Interesting to understand from another viewpoint, how lack of understanding of other faith could hurt others. Topic is also useful, i.e. interfaith relationship, something that is very real.

I am currently in an inter-cultural relationship, and this story captures so much of the self-doubt, inter-cultural challenges, and also the potential for positive growth as a couple. Lovely story!

I think is amazing that you are able to play out daily scenarios and how they can trigger such strong reactions. No one seems to have ill intentions, but hurt and confusion is caused. Big congrats to everyone working on this.

This chapter hits hard. Especially being a Malay and how I have come to live with such stereotypes people have against Malays. I feel that there are some Malays who are irresponsible and are just waiting for help, but I can feel Azlin's emotions having to work really hard and sacrifice her dreams to financially help the family. But putting aside the race, I feel that this happens in every race. Hierarchy is inevitable. There are some who are so lucky and irresponsible, but there's also those who are lucky yet very responsible. Same goes throughout the spectrum. When we live and believe with such stereotypes, it won't get any better. As an individual, there has to be ups and downs in life. Some people seem to be getting it easier but they actually don't. Be kind.

Chloe and Azlin have both said things that made Nadia feel hurt, but perhaps we shouldn't attack them for what they said. People in a good place rarely feel the need to say something awful to another. But when they are in a bad place? They both have their own frustrations that are unknown to us (from Nadia's perspective). And if Nadia could meet them with empathy, that would perhaps be the best outcome.

It's easy to make judgements about others "having it easy" or "creating problems for themselves" instead of considering the possibility that their circumstances are difficult, and that there is a more complicated reality underneath what we see. Unfortunately, it's easier not to think and latch onto the immediate reactionary assumption.

Character Overviews

New Chapters and New Characters are on the way.

LIVE

**Nadia binte
Rahim**



Nadia wants to survive JC and become a doctor - but will self-doubt and young love get in the way?

LIVE

Aman Singh



National Service, family expectations, personal dreams, and faith - must Aman give up something he values in order to succeed?

LIVE

**Ravi
Kannasamy**



Ravi dreams of being an aviation engineer - but can he push past the stereotypes and self-doubts?

LIVE

Lim Zhihao



Zhihao might have a future in e-sports, but will it disappear before his eyes? Life is about to get complicated, as a fateful tweet gains a life of its own...

LIVE

**Unaisah
Begum**



Unaisah wants to excel as a new teacher - but can she break the glass ceiling while dealing with things at home?

NEXT

**Marie da
Costa**



Marie wants to open her own cafe - but will her heritage and gender stand in the way of her success?

Character Overviews

Each character deals with different issues for players to experience.

LIVE

Nadia binte Rahim

- Challenges of expressing **religion** “visibly” to others.
- Reconciling secular social norms and religious beliefs.
- Fitting in versus standing out
- Respecting religious practices
- **Interfaith relationships**
- Social-economic status challenges
- Dealing with aspirations vs expectations
- Stereotypes and prejudice

LIVE

Aman Singh

- Challenges of expressing **religion** “visibly” to others.
- Reconciling secular social norms and religious beliefs
- Dealing with **personal, family, and relationship** expectations
- **Family dynamics**
- Fitting in versus standing out
- Navigating decisions with long-term consequences
- Stereotypes and prejudice.

LIVE

Ravi Kannasamy

- **Socioeconomic** status challenges
- Self-doubt issues
- Challenges of a **single parent** environment
- Interethnic relationships
- **Workplace** discrimination
- Managing personal aspirations and family commitments
- Stereotypes and prejudice.

LIVE

Lim Zhihao

- Managing personal aspirations and family commitments
- **Socioeconomic** status challenges
- Non-traditional career paths
- Challenges of a **single parent** environment
- Fitting in and standing out
- **Social Media** toxic behaviour / peer pressure
- Stereotypes and prejudice.

LIVE

Unaisah Begum

- Reconciling racial and religious identifiers
- **Workplace** discrimination and harassment
- Personal aspirations, **marriage pressures**, career aspirations
- Stereotypes and prejudice

NEXT

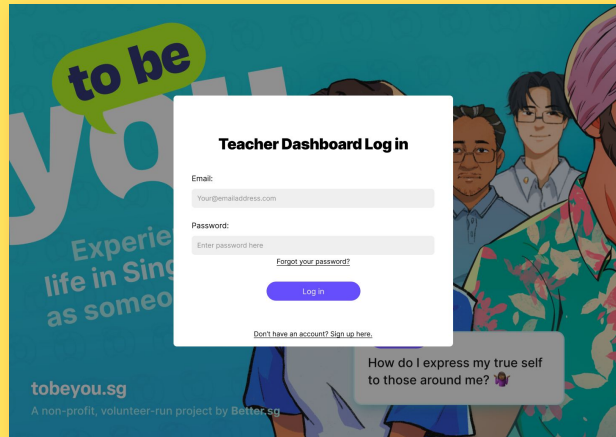
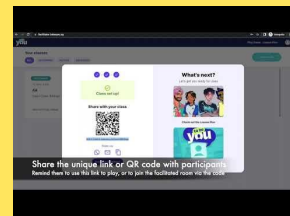
Marie da Costa

- Reconciling **race vs ethnicity, Singaporean vs foreigner** identifiers
- Reconciling personal aspirations and career aspirations
- **Workplace** discrimination and harassment
- Stereotypes and prejudice.

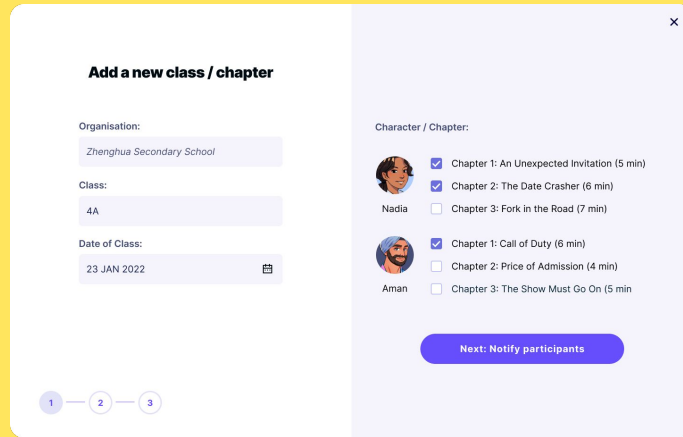
Facilitator Dashboard

A custom-built platform to use ToBeYou to let others learn empathy and understand diversity issues.

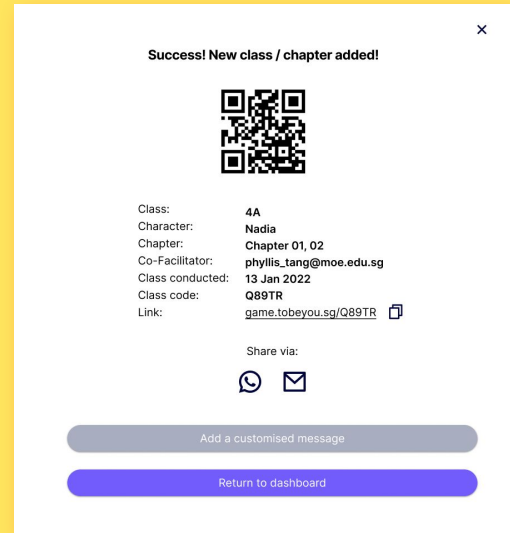
DEMO



Teachers have a special platform custom-designed for their use at <https://facilitator.tobeyou.sg>



Teachers can create a new class and assign students specific chapters (with instructions).



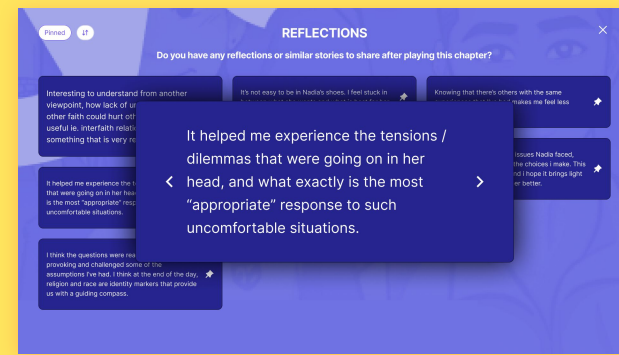
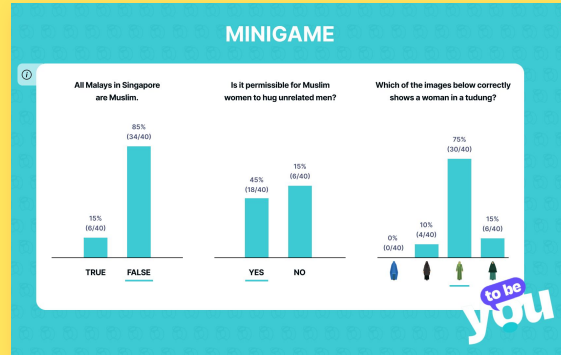
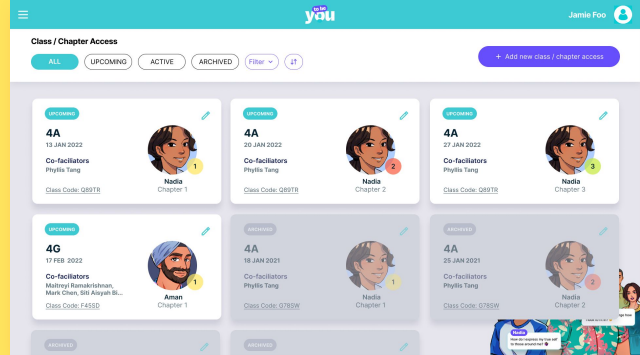
A **unique link** and **QR code** is generated for students to use to login. Students just need to visit the link and play the game normally.

This team is led by an experienced MOE teacher.

Facilitator Dashboard

A custom-built platform to use ToBeYou to let others learn empathy and understand diversity issues.

Feedback from schools that have used the game has been **tremendous!**



The teacher **dashboard** shows all the homework assignments for all their classes.

Gameplay **data** and reflections from students is collected, **analysed**, and presented to the facilitators / teachers.

Teachers can use the platform to present the students' **reflections or choices**, as a discussion prompt.

Learning Outcomes

Getting youths engaged in social issues, exploring diversity with curiosity, and discussing difficult choices in a non-threatening way *(and we even provide the facilitation plan!)*

Segment	Facilitator Actions	Participant Actions
Pre-lesson	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Facilitator to create a “room” and send the link to participants before the event.2. After participants have completed their “homework”, facilitator should prepare for the event by reviewing the Dashboard data (reflections, quiz responses, choices, etc).	Complete assigned Characters / Chapters
Small Group Dialogue	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Divide participants into small groups (of about 5-8 ppl per group). In their respective groups, they should discuss the issues explored in the story, with a focus on the following questions:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you think the character is feeling?• What did you feel about the character’s parents’ reaction?• What would you have done if faced with such a circumstance?• What are some of the issues the character is facing?• What are some of the stereotypes/acts of prejudice faced by the character?• What is the origin/source of these stereotypes?	Participants to discuss and then prepare to present a summary of key insights from the group.
Big Group Sharing	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Facilitator could present the more interesting reflections, quiz responses, or choices on screen, and ask the group which reflections resonated or surprised them the most.2. Possible deep-dive questions:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why did you think that way before? What changed your mind?• How do identities affect the choices made in our daily lives? How do identities affect the way the community is perceived?• Have you ever felt like any of the characters did? What was it like to be you for that incident?	Participants to share their views and personal stories (if comfortable)
Wrap up	Encourage participants to continue the discussions in real life, and to be curious about each others’ stories and identities so as to foster deeper understanding of our diversity.	Students to share key takeaways (e.g. mentimeter)

Transiting from game to the real world: Igniting conversations, driving empathy



Replicating the “**Grades don’t matter**” initiative

In phase 2 of the ToBeYou narrative universe, we want to bridge conversations from the game to real life.

Tell others what it’s like to be you. Listen to what it’s like to be them.

Drive empathy through storytelling and listening.

Make the pledge!

to be you

I pledge to be myself, to let others be themselves, and to take the time to listen to their stories and put myself in their shoes first.

AMAN

Singapore can only be better if every single one of us takes the pledge to be more empathetic towards each other.

Please share your pledge on social media so that others know that you are willing to do your part.

Share

Continue

I now know how it might feel like...

to be you

.. to walk in the shoes of a minority in an inter-cultural relationship.

Are you ready to feel it too?

to be you

Play the game at tobeyou.sg

For questions, feedback,
or partnership
opportunities, contact
tobeyou@better.sg

to be you



tobeyou.sg

A non-profit, volunteer-run project by Better.sg

Our *principles* of designing a serious game

1. We are building something serious (first), which is a game (second).

- a. Plan and design and research in that order of priority. Do not think about the game until you have understood the seriousness of the issue. We spent 6 months researching and 3 months building.
- b. We deliberately do not have points, badges, or leaderboards because this is about empathy and experiencing real life, not about winning.

2. We must bring out the best in people and society, not fuel or feed on the worst.

- a. We deliberately created every character to be flawed but good. There are no heroes or villains. (*Black Panther*)
- b. We deliberately designed every path to be ambiguous. There are no winning outcomes or losing outcomes.

3. We focused on our intended player's experience, not the story.

- a. You are using the plot, characters, sprites, and mechanics as a tool to convey an experience. Initially our writers only focused on the journey of their fictional character.
- b. We tried to be authentic, realistic, and emotionally impactful in our stories. We also had our own strict code of research and writing ethics to follow. It helped us for the Aman incident with SAB.