

SEXUAL & GENDER DIVERSITY

GRADE
CALM

LEARNER OUTCOMES¹

Examine aspects of healthy sexuality and responsible sexual behaviour. Examine the definitions of sexual orientation and gender identity. Examine the impact of heterosexism. Develop strategies to deconstruct stereotypes. Identify negative behaviours that reinforce discrimination *and* heterosexism. Develop behaviours that respect sexual and gender diversity.



MATERIALS:

1. **HANDOUT: Role Play Scenarios**
2. **SLIDE: Role Play Starters**



INTRODUCTION:

Sexual minority youth may not make themselves known; but current research indicates that between 2% and 10% of individuals in North American society identify as LGBTQ+.



APPROACHES/STRATEGIES:

A. **GROUND RULES (5-10 min)**

Ensure ground rules are established before beginning this lesson. For classes that have already established ground rules, quickly reviewing them can promote a successful lesson.



A teacher can play a very important role in helping students develop respect for sexual and gender diversity. Teachers should also be sensitive to the fact that there may be students in the class who are in varying stages of awareness and acceptance of their sexual orientation and gender identity or that of family members and friends. Respect confidentiality; failing to respect confidentiality can result in significant risk to the student. Support students by creating a safe space for students to explore and express their sexual diversity.

B. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (10-15 min)

Students begin to examine homophobia and heterosexism. Before the discussion, ensure that everyone understands that the prefix “homo-“ as used in “homophobia” encompasses anyone who is not heterosexual (i.e., gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, asexual)). LGBTQ+ is a commonly used acronym for a constellation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirited, queer and/or questioning identities³.

1. **What are some words that you think of when you hear the words “sexual orientation or gender identity?”**
 - List all words on the board. Use these words to dispel myths as you continue the discussion.
2. **Use the following definitions to discuss the list generated by students:**

Sex Categories (male, female) to which people are typically assigned at birth based on physical sex characteristics (e.g., genitals, chromosomes) and may appear on proof of identity documents unless a person has documentation changed

Asexual A person who does not feel sexual attraction and may or may not experience emotional/romantic attraction.

Cisgender/Cis A person whose gender matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

Gender Expression How a person presents their gender. This can include appearance, name, pronoun and social behaviour.



This topic is mentioned under the **School Act** Teachers should familiarize themselves with [The Guide to Education for](#) information on student exemption.



It is important for teachers to understand the objectives and to be aware of personal biases when discussing sexual orientation. It may be helpful to complete the [Your Values](#) page.

Sexual Orientation A person's emotional and sexual attraction to other people. It can be fluid and may or may not reflect sexual behaviors.

Gay A person who has emotional or sexual attraction to people of the same sex or gender. This term is most often used for a male who has emotional or sexual attraction to males.

Lesbian A female who has emotional and/or sexual attraction to females

Bisexual A person who has emotional and/or sexual attraction to people of any gender or sex. Also, a person who has sexual attraction to males and females.

Transgender/Trans A person whose gender identity, outward appearance, expression and/or anatomy does not fit into conventional expectations of male or female.

Heterosexual (Straight) A person who has emotional and/or sexual attraction to people of the opposite sex or gender.

Coming out Telling people about one's sexual orientation or gender identity. Also known as 'coming out of the closet'.

Questioning A person who is unsure of, or exploring, their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Two-Spirit A cultural term used by some Indigenous people to mean a person who has both a male and female spirit which may include concepts of spirituality, sexual orientation and gender identity.

Heterosexism Discrimination based on the assumption that all people are heterosexual and cisgender and that these are the normal and/or superior sexual orientation and gender identities.



The Public Health Agency of Canada has developed extremely helpful resources for:

Gender Identity in Schools

<http://library.catie.ca/pdf/ATI-20000s/26289E.pdf>

Sexual Orientation in Schools

<http://library.catie.ca/pdf/ATI-20000s/26288E.pdf>



[ATA Diversity, Equity, and Human Rights](#)

website is a great resource to help teachers build inclusive school communities.

Homo/Bi/Trans -phobia Fear and/or hatred of homosexual/bisexual/transgender people shown by prejudice, discrimination or acts of violence.

Gender Identity A person's internal sense of identity as female, male, both, or neither, regardless of their sex assigned at birth.

Gender Queer A person who may identify and express themselves beyond what is typically associated with their sex/gender assigned at birth. People who are gender queer may not identify as transgender. Used to describe individuals who identify their gender to be neither that of a male or female but outside the gender binary.

Pansexual A person who has emotional and/or sexual attraction to people of any gender or sex.

Transition The process of a transgender individual who publicly changes their gender presentation in society is known as "transitioning". Transgender people may choose from a range of changes to express their gender such as:

- Change of name and use of pronouns
- Expression e.g. clothing, jewellery, mannerisms, voice, and vocabulary
- Anatomy and physiology, which can include hormones, surgery, or gender confirming surgery, i.e. male to female or female to male

Gender Confirming Surgery This term refers to doctor-supervised surgical interventions, and is only one small part of transition or expression of their gender. Many transgender people prefer this term to the older term, Sex Reassignment Surgery. Sometimes Gender Affirming Surgery is used.

Ally A person who advocates for the human rights of sexual and gender diverse people by challenging discrimination and heterosexism.

3. Where do "homophobia" and "heterosexism" come from?

- Fear
- Differing values
- Misinformation
- Media

4. What does "homophobia" and "heterosexism" look like in this school?

- Examples of homophobia include name-calling, jokes about sexual orientation, and various forms of harassment (including violence).

- Possible examples of heterosexism may include heterosexually focused greeting cards, posters on the wall, and promotional material for school functions.

5. What have you heard about some of the experiences of youth who “come out”? What may be someone’s experience if they “came out” in this school?

- Common negative experiences include feeling different and alone, being rejected by friends, and being a target of discrimination and violence.
- Positive experiences stem from the improved sense of self-identity experienced by the individual who is able to share such an important aspect of self with supportive friends.

6. What steps can you take to make this a safe, supportive school?

- Identify and address inappropriate behaviour/ harassment.
- Speak out for someone else. Encourage others to do so as well.
- Be supportive of others.
- Role model respectful behaviours.
- Take the initiative to talk to someone you think may be under stress.
- Be a friend to anyone who has decided to tell me they are LGBTQ+ or questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Learn more about the issues.
- Become part of a support group.
- Identify local resources that can provide support.
- Be an ally.

C. DIVERSITY STARTERS (40 min)

Students examine the impact of homophobia and heterosexism and develop behaviours that respect sexual diversity.

1. Form student groups of 3-5 students.
2. Give each group a Role Play **Diversity Scenario** card.
3. Explain that groups must plan and present their scenario to the class as outlined on the card they received. The presentation must provide answers to the questions outlined on the card. Zero tolerance for inappropriate language.
4. Display the slide: **Role Play Starters** to give students ideas for lines that may be used in their responses to their scenario. Give groups 10-15 minutes to plan and answer the questions to their scenario.
5. Instruct the audience to listen carefully to each presentation, and inform them that there will be a discussion based on the questions after each presentation.
6. Have each group begin by reading the scenario and scenario questions. If the presentation becomes homophobic or reinforces negativity, the teacher can stop the presentation and lead a more productive discussion using the questions on each scenario card.
7. After each presentation, use the questions from the scenario card to lead a discussion. Have the class identify how their scenario addressed each question

and if the question was adequately explored. Have the class brainstorm additional appropriate answers or approaches.

8. Once all presentations are complete, conclude the activity with a discussion based on the following questions:

You can choose to have students answer these questions individually without publicly responding:

- What were your feelings as you heard these scenarios?
- What did you feel toward each of the characters? Why?
- What stereotypes emerged? What kinds of homophobia/heterosexism did you observe?
- What characters do you most identify with and why?
- Which character most shared your feelings and values?



LGBTQ+ resources and support:

OUT IS OK Helpline 1-877-OUT-IS-OK (688-4765)

A toll-free, peer and crisis support line operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Youth Safe <http://www.youthsafe.net/>

A guide to Alberta's resources for LBGTQ

Alberta's Bullying Helpline 1-888-456-2323

PFLAG Canada: <http://www.pflagcanada.ca/en/index.html> 1-888-530-6777

PFLAG Canada supports, educates and provides resources to anyone with questions or concerns.



QUESTION BOX (10 min)

Answer questions from last class. Have students fill out questions and address them next class.



SELF REFLECTION

During the lesson, were:

- Ground rules being followed?
- Good practices established regarding group work and discussion?

What will you change for future classes with this group?

What will you change for future use of this lesson?



STUDENT ASSESSMENT

During the lesson, did students:

Knowledge:

- Examine a range of behaviours and choices regarding sexual expression?
- Examine the impact of homophobia and heterosexism?
- Identify negative behaviours that reinforce homophobia and heterosexism?

Skills:

- Develop strategies to deconstruct stereotypes?
- Develop behaviours that respect sexual diversity?

Attitudes:

- Respect diverse points of view and approaches to life?

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1. Alberta Education. (2002). *Career and life management guide to implementation*. Retrieved from <http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/program/health/resources/calmguide.aspx>
 2. Public Health Agency of Canada. (2010). Questions and answers: Sexual orientation in schools. Retrieved from <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/qasos-qose/pdf/qasos-qose-eng.pdf>
 3. Public Health Agency of Canada. (2011). The chief public health officer's report on the state of public health in Canada, 2011: Youth and young adults – life in transition. Retrieved from <http://publichealth.gc.ca/CPHOreport>
 4. Public Health Agency of Canada. (2010). Questions and answers: Gender identity in schools. Retrieved from <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/qagis-qrise/pdf/qagis-qrise-eng.pdf>

Role-Play Scenario One

The star of the senior basketball team is “out” outside of school but not in school. They decided not to “come out” at school after a friend, last year, came out at school and suffered verbal and physical abuse. They have, however, decided to ask for help from people they trust.

Role-play scenarios can include conversations between any combination of the following:

- The student
- Parent or other adult support person
- Teacher/Guidance Counsellor/Principal
- Student leader/friends

Your group must work together to develop a conversation examining the following questions:

- What concerns might this student have about their safety?
 - What happens when someone listens and offers support to the student?
 - What school and community support systems are available to this student?
 - What can students and staff do to make this school a safer place?
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Role-Play Scenario Two

A teacher is greatly loved by students, staff and parents. The teacher is appreciated for the extra effort they have always put into their work. Almost everyone at the school knows the teacher is not a heterosexual but it is never discussed. The teacher is promoted and transferred to a new school. The new parents are really pleased with their continuing great performance. Three months into the school year a parent in the new community learns that this teacher not heterosexual. Suddenly, there is a small but vocal parent’s group that is writing letters to the administration to have the teacher transferred. Some individuals have made threats and the teacher is feeling frightened.

Role-play scenarios can include conversations between any combination of the following:

- The teacher
- Student/group of students
- Parent
- Principal
- Another teacher/group of teachers

Your group must work together to develop a conversation examining the following questions:

- How secure does the teacher feel in the new environment?
- What would happen to encourage the teacher to stay? To go?
- Who are the people in this teacher’s support system?
- What can students and staff do to make this school a safer place?

Role-Play Scenario Three

A student talks easily about their two Moms. Other students call the student insulting names. They tease the student incessantly and harass them in the hallways. They say mean things about the student's parents and about the student. Things become unbearable for this student.

Role-play scenarios can include conversations between any combination of the following:

- The student
- The student's friend
- Two "bullies"
- Two bystanders
- A teacher

Your group must work together to develop a conversation examining the following questions:

- What are the safety and diversity issues faced by the student?
- How does the traditional definition of a family affect this student?
- What are the responsibilities of the role play characters to support this student?
- What can students and staff do to make this school a safer place?

Role-Play Scenario Four

A homophobic slur is written on the locker of a student. No one claims responsibility. Everyone in the school sees the locker because it is right beside the office.

Role-play scenarios can include conversations between any combination of the following:

- The student with the locker
- Staff members (teacher/principal/guidance counsellor)
- Passers by
- The student's friends
- The offender
- Parents

Your group must work together to develop a conversation examining the following questions:

- How does it affect a student to be called homophobic names?
- Does it matter if the owner of the locker is heterosexual or not? Why?
- What approaches can the individual, the school, and parents take?
- What can students and staff do to make this school a safer place?

ROLE PLAY STARTERS

Your group may choose to use one or more of the following lines to get started:

- I always knew something was different.
 - Why is this happening to me?
- Wow. That must be really hard for you.
 - Who else knows about this?
 - What can you tell me about it?
- What matters is that you are still secure.
- How did you keep this secret for so long?