

I Am Who I Am

A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum

Fostering responsibility by respecting young people's rights to honest sexuality education.

NSES ALIGNMENT:

By the end of 8th grade, students will be able to:

ID.8.CC.1 – Differentiate between gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation.

ID.8.IC.1 – Communicate respectfully with and about people of all gender identities, gender expressions and sexual orientations.

TARGET GRADE: Grade 7
Lesson 6

TIME: 50 Minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Laptop or desktop computer with PowerPoint on it
- PowerPoint presentation titled: "Understanding Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation"
- Regular letter-sized envelopes, one per student
- 8 ½ x 11 sheets of blank paper, one per student
- LCD Projector and screen
- Myth/Fact Quiz – one per student
- Myth/Fact Answer Key – one copy for the teacher
- Homework: "Fix This" – one per student
- Whiteboard
- White board markers
- Pencils in case students do not have their own

STEP 2:

Let students know that now we are going to watch two short videos about pronouns and then have a group discussion about them. The first video will explain what pronouns are, the second will show how to ask someone's pronouns.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Define the terms sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. [Knowledge]
2. Describe how each term is different from the others. [Knowledge]
3. Name at least two factual statements and two incorrect statements about sexual orientation and gender. [Knowledge]
4. List at least two respectful ways of communicating with or about LGBTQ individuals. [Knowledge]

A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE:

Language is really important and we've intentionally been very careful about our language throughout this curriculum. You may notice language throughout the curriculum that seems less familiar - using the pronoun "they" instead of "her" or "him", using gender neutral names in scenarios and role-plays and referring to "someone with a vulva" vs. a girl or woman. This is intended to make the curriculum inclusive of all genders and gender identities. You will need to determine for yourself how much and how often you can do this in your own school and classroom, and should make adjustments accordingly.

PROCEDURE:

STEP 1: Begin the class by explaining that you are going to be talking today about identity. Say, "Identity has to do with who we are – I am a teacher; that's part of my identity. Because we are talking about human sexuality, our class is going to be looking at parts of our sexual identity, including our sexual orientation and our gender identity."
(2 minutes)

Play the videos in this order:

1. What are pronouns (5 minutes 18 seconds)
2. Pronouns: How do you ask? (1 minutes 50 seconds)

After the videos are shown, facilitate a brief large group conversation. You can use any of these questions to start or build on the group conversation:

- What stood out to you in the videos?
- What felt like the most important points in the videos?
- Have you ever asked someone what their pronouns are?
- Can you share an example of how to respectfully ask for someone's pronouns?

Be sure to add the following highlights if not shared by students:

- Pronouns are ways we refer to people when we don't use their name
- Pronouns can refer to genders and can be gender neutral
- Never assume you know someone's pronouns
- Asking about pronouns can be really easy and simple, even if it feels like a new question to ask for some people
- Getting someone's pronouns right is respectful
- If you get someone's pronouns wrong, offer a really short apology and then use the correct one!

STEP 3: Go through the PowerPoint, "Understanding Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation." (12 minutes)

***Note to the Teacher:** This PowerPoint provides very basic information, so you may wish to allow additional time for questions. If these topics are newer or less familiar for you, you may wish to use your anonymous question box throughout class so you can look up any answers you don't know and provide them during the next class.*

STEP 4: Say, "Now that you've gotten a bit of an overview, let's see what you remember – as well as what else you know – about these topics." Distribute the worksheet, "Myth vs. Fact: Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation" to each student. Instruct them to complete all the questions on their own without asking for any help. After a few minutes (or when all the students have finished), ask them to turn to a student sitting near them so the two can compare their answers. Tell them that they do not have to agree, but that they can feel free to change any of their answers as they wish. (12 minutes)

STEP 5: Using the "Myth v. Fact Answer Key", go through the answers with the students, ask for volunteers to read each statement and provide their answer. As you go through these, ask whether there was any disagreement on the various questions and whether they ended up changing their answers, and why. (12 minutes)

***Note to the Teacher:** This is another place where using the anonymous question box may be useful, as students may have more questions than class time will allow you to answer in the moment.*

STEP 6: Ask the students to think about all of the terms and examples you have just gone through, and to open their own envelope. Ask the class, "How many of you wrote down something about sexual orientation or gender identity that was correct?" After students have raised their hands, ask, "How many of you wrote down something that ended up to be incorrect, but that you now know the correct information about?" After students have raised their hands, praise their work and distribute the homework assignment. (4 minutes)

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON:

Each of the in-class activities is intended to provide and reinforce the content taught, including the differentiation between the terms. The last activity in which students check their own perceptions of sexual orientation and gender identity from the beginning of class will help the teacher determine whether the objectives have been achieved. The homework assignment is designed to achieve the fourth learning objective.

Myth vs. Fact: Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

Quiz

Name: _____

Date: _____

Instructions: Please read the following statements and indicate whether you think each is a myth or a fact by circling the appropriate answer.

1. People can choose their sexual orientation.

MYTH

FACT

2. People can choose their gender identity.

MYTH

FACT

3. People can choose their gender expression.

MYTH

FACT

4. You can usually tell a person's sexual orientation just by looking at them.

MYTH

FACT

5. A girl who is really athletic is either a lesbian or transgender.

MYTH

FACT

6. A person can look like a boy or a man and feel on the inside like they are a girl or a woman.

MYTH

FACT

Myth vs. Fact: Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

Answer Key

Instructions: Please read the following statements and indicate whether you think each is a myth or a fact by circling the appropriate answer.

1. People can choose their sexual orientation.

MYTH

FACT

Sexual orientation has to do with the gender(s) of the people we're attracted to, physically and romantically. We don't choose our feelings just like we don't choose who we find attractive. What we CAN choose is whether to act on those feelings, as well as what we call ourselves based on those feelings (our identity).

2. People can choose their gender identity.

MYTH

FACT

Just like sexual orientation, a person doesn't choose to feel male, female or a combination of both. What we CAN choose is what we call ourselves, even if it doesn't match our physical body (male, female, transgender, etc.).

3. People can choose their gender expression.

MYTH

FACT

A person can choose to let people know their gender in whatever way feels comfortable or right to them. That includes girls who wear dresses and are stereotypically "feminine," and girls who wear jeans and t-shirts and work boots and present as more stereotypically "masculine." There are lots of ways to express ourselves, and that includes how we express our gender. No one has the right to tell us how we do this is right or wrong, it just has to be right to us.

4. You can usually tell a person's sexual orientation just by looking at them.

MYTH

FACT

Some people will stereotype another person based on their gender expression. Based on what they see, they will think they know that person's sexual orientation. For example, they will see a masculine guy and assume he is heterosexual. He may be, but he may not be. And while some people do fulfill stereotypes – that guy may very well be heterosexual – it does not mean, for example, that all masculine guys or all feminine girls are heterosexual. Sexual orientation has to do with who a person is attracted to; gender expression is separate from that.

5. A girl who is really athletic is either a lesbian or transgender.

MYTH

FACT

This is another example of stereotyping. Athleticism is a talent and a skill that a person of any gender can have. Some people who are athletic are heterosexual, some are lesbian or gay, and some are bisexual; similarly, some are female, some are male and some are transgender.

6. A person can look like a boy or a man and feel on the inside like they are a girl or a woman.

MYTH

FACT

Some people find the idea of being transgender easier to understand when what they see matches what they are being told. For example, when Caitlyn Jenner, who was assigned male at birth, announced she was transgender, many people struggled with understanding this because Bruce Jenner was a very masculine Olympic champion. Once she transitioned and looked like a woman, many people saw the connection. Another good example is Laverne Cox, who is a transgender actress. She is often accepted because she "looks feminine."

At the same time, however, it's important to remember that the outside doesn't always have to match the inside. Even before Caitlyn, for example, started altering her appearance, when she was still known as Bruce, she felt on the inside that she was a woman. We can look one way, and feel totally different. How we feel on the inside – our identity – always takes priority over what is on the outside.

HANDOUT

Recommended Websites: Gender and Gender Identity

Trans Student Educational Resources

transstudent.org

Trans Student Educational Resources is a youth-led organization dedicated to transforming the educational environment for trans and gender nonconforming students through advocacy and empowerment. In addition to our focus on creating a more trans-friendly education system, our mission is to educate the public and teach trans activists how to be effective organizers.

Trans Lifeline

translifeline.org

Trans Lifeline is run by and for trans people. It is a grassroots hotline and non-profit organization offering direct emotional and financial support to trans people in crisis – for the trans community, by the trans community.

National Center for Transgender Equality

transequality.org

The National Center for Transgender Equality advocates to change policies and society to increase understanding and acceptance of transgender people. NCTE works to replace disrespect, discrimination, and violence with empathy, opportunity, and justice.

The Trans Youth Equality Foundation

transyouthequality.org/

The Trans Youth Equality Foundation is a national nonprofit foundation that advocates for transgender, gender non-conforming, and intersex youth ages 2–18.

GLAAD

glaad.org

GLAAD rewrites the script for LGBTQ acceptance. As a dynamic media force, GLAAD tackles tough issues to shape the narrative and provoke dialogue that leads to cultural change. GLAAD protects all that has been accomplished and creates a world where everyone can live the life they love.

The Trevor Project

thetrevorproject.org

The Trevor Project is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer & questioning (LGBTQ) young people under 25.

Gender Spectrum

genderspectrum.org/stories

Gender Spectrum works to create gender sensitive and inclusive environments for all children and teens. Their “Stories” webpage shares videos of first person stories from youth, families, and teachers.

Minus18: Changing the lives of lgbtqia+ youth in Australia

www.minus18.org.au

We’re leading change, building social inclusion, and advocating for an Australia where all young people are safe, empowered, and surrounded by people that support them.