

Sexual Diversity

Lesson 1

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LEARNER OUTCOMES:¹

- Examine aspects of health sexuality, sexual wellness, and responsible sexual behaviour.
- Examine a range of behaviours and choices regarding sexual expression.
- Examine the impact of homophobia and heterosexism.
- Develop strategies to deconstruct stereotypes.
- Identify negative behaviours that reinforce homophobia *and heterosexism*.
- Develop behaviours that respect sexual diversity.



MATERIALS:

1. HANDOUT: [Diversity Scenarios](#)
2. SLIDE: [Scenario Starters](#)
3. SIGNS: [Value Statements for Dot Activity](#)
4. Blank sheets of paper.
5. Green, red and yellow stickers: 12 of each color for each student



INTRODUCTION:

Sexual minority youth are attending Canadian schools. They may not make themselves known, but current research indicates that between 2% and 10% of individuals in North American society are non-heterosexual. Students may have sexual minority siblings, parents/caregivers or other family members or friends.²



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 Quiz](#).



APPROACHES/STRATEGIES:

NOTES:

A. Ground Rules

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.

Discussion Questions

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 and transgendered). LGBTTTQ is a commonly used acronym for the constellation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirited and queer and/or questioning.³

1. What are some words that you think of when you hear the words “sexual diversity 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.²⁴

Sexual Orientation	<i>A person’s affection and sexual preference.</i>
Gay	<i>A person who is physically and emotionally attracted to someone of the same sex. The word gay can refer to both male and females, but is commonly used to identify males only.</i>
Lesbian	<i>A female who is attracted physically and emotionally to other females.</i>
Bisexual	<i>A person who is attracted physically and emotionally to both males and females.</i>
Transgender	<i>A person whose gender identity, outward appearance, expression and/or anatomy does not fit into conventional expectations of male or female.</i>
Heterosexual	<i>A person who is attracted physically and emotionally to someone of the opposite sex. Also commonly referred to as straight.</i>
Coming out	<i>Often refers to “coming out of the closet” –the act of disclosing one’s sexual orientation or gender identity</i>
Questioning	<i>A person who is unsure of their sexual orientation.</i>



This topic is mentioned under the **Alberta Human Rights Act, Section 11.C**. Teachers should familiarize themselves with The Guide to Education for information on student exemption:
<http://education.alberta.ca/media/832568/guidetoed.pdf>

(30-45 min)



The Public Health Agency of Canada have developed extremely helpful resources for:
Gender Identity in Schools
<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/qagis-qrise/pdf/qagis-qrise-eng.pdf>
Sexual Orientation in Schools
<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/qasos-qose/pdf/qasos-qose-eng.pdf>



ATA Diversity, Equity, and Human Rights website is a great resource to help teachers build inclusive school communities.
<http://www.teachers.ab.ca/For%20Members/Professional%20Development/Diversity%20and%20Human%20Rights/Sexual%20Orientation/Pages/Index.aspx>



Two-Spirited	<i>Some aboriginal people identify themselves as bisexual, gay, lesbian, or transgender. Historically, in many Aboriginal cultures, two-spirit persons were respected leaders and medicine people. Before colonization, two-spirited persons were often accorded special status based upon their unique abilities to understand both male and female perspectives.</i>	
Heterosexism	<i>The assumption that everyone is heterosexual and that this sexual orientation is superior, Heterosexism is often expressed in more subtle forms than homophobia.</i>	
Homophobia	<i>Fear and/or hatred of homosexuality in others, often exhibited by prejudice, discrimination, intimidation, or acts of violence.</i>	
Gender Identity	<i>A person's internal sense of being male or female, which may not be the same as one's biological sex.</i>	
Gender Variant	<i>Refers to individuals whose expressions of gender do not conform to the dominant gender norms of masculinity and femininity.</i>	
Genderqueer	<i>Used to describe individuals who perceive their gender to be neither that of a male or female but outside the gender binary.</i>	
Transition	<i>The process of changing from one's birth sex to one's self-perceived gender. This process may involve dressing in the manner of the self-perceived gender, changing one's name to reflect the self-perceived gender, or undergoing hormone therapy and/or sex reassignment surgery change one's secondary sex characteristics to reflect the self-perceived gender.</i>	
Sex Reassignment Surgery	<i>This is sometimes referred to as a sex change or gender reassignment surgery and is a surgical procedure to change the genitals and secondary sex characteristics for one gender to another.</i>	
Internalized Homophobia	<i>A diminished sense of personal self-worth or esteem felt by an individual as a result of the experienced or</i>	

	<i>presumed homophobia of others.</i>	
Transsexual	<i>A person who experiences intense personal and emotional discomfort with their assigned birth gender and undergo treatment (e.g. hormones and/or surgery) to transition genders.</i>	
Ally	<i>A person regardless of sexual orientation, who supports the human, civil, and sexual rights of all people.</i>	

3. Where do “homophobia” and “heterosexism” come from?

- Fear
- Differing values
- Misinformation
- Media

4. Do “homophobia” and “heterosexism” exist in our society? How do they exist?

- Yes, they do.

5. What does “homophobia” and “heterosexism” look like in this school?

- Possible 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.

6. 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.

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

- Identify and address inappropriate behaviour/ harassment.
- Speak out for some 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



<http://www.b-free.ca/home/index.html> is a

bullying prevention website developed by the Government of Alberta in partnership with Alberta youth. Here, you'll find first-hand accounts from people who have been bullied and have overcome it, along with tips and resources to help put a stop to bullying.

under stress.

- Be a friend to anyone who has decided to tell me he or she is LGTTBQ or questioning his/her sexual 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 Scenarios

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 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: Scenario 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 presentation becomes homophobic or reinforce 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

(40 min)



Discourage students from repeating jokes or slurs during this part of the discussion. Reinforce confidentiality and the need to avoid using names or identifiers.

- 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?

D. Values Continuum

Students explore their thoughts around sexual diversity. You have the option of choosing a selection if you do not want to use all of the 7 signs.

1. Post the 7 values signs (Values Statements for Dot Activity) around the room along with a blank piece of paper under each statement.

The following are the statements written on each sign.

- a. I would support a friend who decided to tell me he/she was not heterosexual.
- b. I would laugh at a joke ridiculing homosexuality.
- c. I would laugh at a joke ridiculing heterosexuality.
- d. TV shows accurately represent people who are not heterosexual.
- e. Our school is a safe place for most students, including those who identify themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, two-spirited, or queer.
- f. There are adults in this school who would be helpful to a student who was not heterosexual.
- g. I would be comfortable if my teacher/best friend/sibling was gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, two-spirited, or queer.

2. Explain that this exercise is designed to explore personal values. Give the following instructions:
 - Around the room there are a variety of different value statements. Most of the statements are about relationships, dating and sexual behaviour.
 - This activity is to be done in silence and will be strictly confidential. This activity is about your values. It does not matter what you think your friends believe it is about making a decision which can be tough and sometimes a bit uncomfortable. Afterwards, we will have a class discussion.
 - You are each to travel around the room to the different signs and read them individually. Please be respectful of others and provide people with lots of

space while they are taking their turn reading the statement.

- Everyone has some different coloured stickers. You are to place 1 sticker behind each sign. Put a green one if you AGREE with the statement. Red if you DISAGREE and yellow if you are UNSURE.
 - When you have completed reading all of the statements and placing your stickers hand in the rest of your stickers and sit down in your seat.
3. Once the activity has been completed ask students for help in turning over all of the blank sheets of paper. Read the first statement and ask everyone to notice the range of responses. Ask students if anyone would like to comment or share their perspective. Ask students to think to themselves if their parents or friends would agree with the statement.
 4. When the first statement has been fully discussed, repeat for the remaining statements. Pacing is important as you want to get through as many statements while making sure you hear as many points of view participants are willing to share. If time runs out, it is o.k. not to get to all of the statements. Make sure though that you reserve at least 10 minutes at the end to debrief the activity with the following questions.
 5. Debrief with the following discussion questions:
 - How easy was it to vote on these values?
 - Which statements were hardest for you?
 - If your parents voted on these statements, would their votes be similar to, or different from those of the group?
 6. Encourage students to think about what they learned about personal values and group values from doing the activity.
 7. Remind students of the ground rules and to respect the points of views of others.

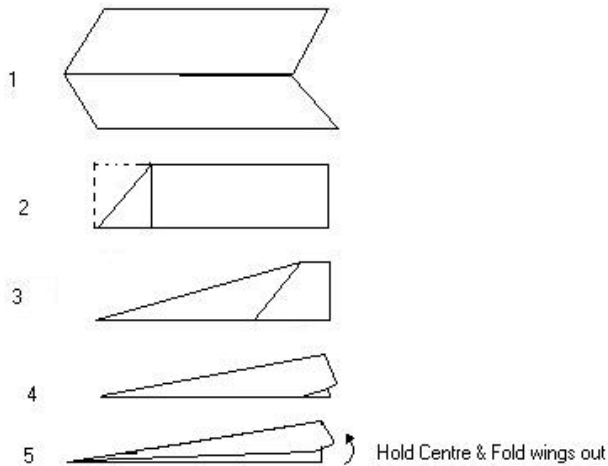
E. Myths and Realities⁵

Students examine their understanding of the issues surrounding sexual orientation. Myths are identified and clarified through discussion.

1. Take an 8 1/2' by 11" sheet of paper and fold it in half.
2. Fold the short edge of one side down to the first fold, producing a 45 degree angle. Do this for the other side too.

3. Fold down the new fold you have created to the original fold you did in (1). Repeat for the other side.
4. Do (3) again for both sides.

5. Hold center and open wings out.
6. Write a single myth or reality regarding sexual orientation on the wing of each plane. Refer to the Myths and Realities chart below.



7. Shoot paper airplane handouts to individual students.
8. Have the student read the statement on the wing aloud.
9. Discuss each statement as a group, identifying whether it is a myth or a reality. Provide factual information provided in the Myths and Realities chart below to dispel myths. Discussion questions can include:
 - Is this statement a myth or a reality?
 - What is the factual information when it comes to this statement?

MYTHS	REALITIES
I don't know any people who identify as LGBTTQ	Although you may not personally know someone who is <i>out</i> to you but you have probably met someone who identifies themselves as gay, lesbian transgender, two-spirited, or queer.
Gay men are child molesters.	By far, the majority of sexual offenders are heterosexual men.
Lesbians are failed females, haven't found the right man, or want to be male.	Lesbians are simply attracted to women rather than men. Lesbians, like all women, have both feminine and masculine qualities.
Gay males are feminized, failed males and want to be female.	Gay males are simply attracted to men rather than women. Gay men, like all men, have both feminine and masculine qualities.
Bisexual and transgendered individuals just can't make up their minds.	Bisexuals are attracted to both sexes in varying degrees. Some may be attracted more to males, some more to females, and some equally to both sexes. Gender is not a deciding factor. Transgendered individuals are individuals who have the physical characteristics of one gender but consider themselves to be

	members of another.
Gay, lesbian, transgendered, two-spirited, or queer individuals are promiscuous and cannot maintain long-term relationships.	Similar to heterosexuals; gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered individuals form a variety of relationships, lasting from one night to many years. Research on lesbian relationships suggests that, as a group, lesbians have more monogamous relationships than heterosexuals do. The <i>Canadian Men's Survey</i> found that the majority of the men in same sex relationships were sexually exclusive or in monogamous relationships.
Gay, lesbian, transgendered, two-spirited, or queer individuals could change if they really wanted to.	Most studies indicate that those who are highly motivated to change their sexual orientation may change their behaviour, but not their underlying desire. In fact, it is often societal homophobia that forces people to attempt to change. More and more research suggests homosexuality has a biological or even genetic basis; sexual orientation is not a matter of choice.
Gay, lesbian, transgendered, two-spirited, or queer individuals do not make good parents.	There is no evidence that having openly lesbian or gay parents harms children; the greatest difficulty they face is homophobia in society.
Civil rights laws protect bisexuals, gay men, lesbians and transgendered individuals.	In fact, there is no Canadian Federal law protecting people who are not heterosexual from discrimination. The majority of Canadian provinces and territories, however, do state that sexual orientation is a prohibited reason for discrimination.
Saying something is "gay" every so often is OK.	Name calling and put downs create a climate where discrimination is allowed and where difference of any kind is not respected.
Homosexual people spread disease.	Disease, and the spread of disease, is not limited to the gay community.
Feeling safe in school is nice, but not necessary for education to take place.	It is important that all students and staff in our school feel safe. Fear inhibits quality learning.
Our community is immune to any kind of prejudice or racism.	In our community, some people are physically and verbally attacked because they are thought to be gay.



For resources, support, and help:

- **OUT IS OK Helpline:** 1-877-OUT-IS-OK (688-1765)
A toll-free, peer and crisis support line operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- **Youth Safe:** <http://www.youthsafe.net/index.html>
A guide to Alberta's resources for LGBTTTQ
- **Alberta's Bullying Helpline:** 1-888-456-2323



QUESTION BOX:

(10 min)

Introduce the question box. You could have students fill out questions every lesson, or have students begin to think about questions that they might ask next lesson.



SELF REFLECTION:

During the lesson, were:

- Ground rules being followed?
- Good practices established regarding discussion?
- Skill building activities handled appropriately by the students?

What will you change for future classes with this group?

What will you change for future use of this lesson with other groups?



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?

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>