

Lesson 7.3

Gender and Sexual Identity

Connecting the Lessons

Planning ahead: Connects to Lesson 7.4: *Creating a Safe School Environment.*

Lesson Goals

- Identify gender stereotypes.
- Explain why stereotypes can be harmful.
- Explain difference between sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Discuss LGBTQ+ issues respectfully.

Preparation & Materials Checklist

- ☐ Copy family letter and family activity.
- ☐ Have:
 - Gender and Sexual Identity Vocabulary List answer key (*Optional:* Make copies for students.)
 - Gender and Sexual Identity Vocabulary word and definition cards
 - Stereotypes About Men/Boys and Women/Girls written on chart paper (See Activity 7.3.2).
 - Tape
 - Anonymous Questions Box
 - Slips of paper for anonymous questions

Terms to Use

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| ■ Sexual orientation | ■ Gender expression |
| ■ Straight | ■ Transgender |
| ■ Gay | ■ Questioning |
| ■ Lesbian | ■ LGBTQ+ |
| ■ Bisexual | ■ Ally |
| ■ Gender identity | |

SEL Skills Addressed

Self-awareness, social awareness

Logic Model Determinant(s)

Increase communication with parents and other caring adults.

Address perceptions of peer norms regarding sexual behavior.

Increase self-efficacy of SEL skills to delay and/or refuse sex.

→ Teacher Note

The focus of this lesson is to teach appropriate terms for gender identity and sexual identity, identify why stereotypes can be harmful, and address the importance of creating a safe space in the classroom for all students. The teacher's tone in this lesson will help set classroom expectations for addressing LGBTQ+ issues in a respectful manner.

Activity 7.3-1

5 minutes

Process Family Activity

Process Family Activity from Lesson 7.2

Process Questions

1. Did you do the activity with your parent or other caring adult?
2. Name some feelings you had while doing this activity.
3. Name something you learned or discovered during this conversation.
4. What might you do differently as a result of this conversation with your parent or other caring adult?

Get Real for Parents

Remind students to have their parent/caring adult use the access code to log in to the mobile website.

Activity 7.3-2

15 minutes

Stereotypes Brainstorm

Explore why stereotypes can be harmful

Let students know that today's class will focus on identity. To begin the conversation tell students first they will talk about stereotypes. Define stereotypes as "an oversimplified generalization about a person or group of people." Give the example that some people might say, "All that teenagers care about is social media." Ask students if this is true. Ask students why stereotypes can be harmful. List student responses on the board as students volunteer them.

Examples may include, "They might be untrue," "They can be negative and make people feel bad," "They can be racist, homophobic, sexist, etc.," "They might be true about some people, but not all people."

Explain that together the class will examine some specific gender and sexuality stereotypes. Post the following stereotypes about men/boys for students to see:

- Men/Boys don't cry
- Men/Boys have muscles
- Men/Boys are attracted to women
- Men/Boys have short hair and wear pants

Ask students if there are any other stereotypes about men/boys that they've heard.

Post the following stereotypes about women/girls for students to see:

- Women/Girls are crazy and emotional

→ *Teacher Note*

Before beginning this activity remind students that there is a difference between sex assigned at birth and gender. Explain that this activity will examine stereotypes and why they can be harmful. For that reason the activity uses the words "men," "boys," "girls," and "women" intentionally.

It may be important for you as the teacher to state that you do not believe these stereotypes to be true.

- Women/Girls wear dresses and makeup
- Women/Girls are bad at math and science
- Women/Girls are attracted to men

Ask students if there are other stereotypes about women/girls that they've heard.

Process Questions

1. Are all of these stereotypes true?
2. Why do some people believe these stereotypes are true? (*The stereotype may be the only thing they've ever heard about a person/group of people, makes them feel powerful and in control, keeps them from feeling threatened by things they don't understand, etc.*)
3. If someone believed these stereotypes were true, how might that affect their self-awareness and self-esteem?

Before moving on to the next activity, tell students that one of the reasons stereotypes can be harmful is that they create expectations around behavior and identity. However, a person's identity is their own, and part of self-awareness is figuring out who we want to be without forcing ourselves into stereotypes. There are lots of terms someone might use to describe their identity, particularly as it relates to their gender and sexuality. Tell students that the next activity will explore those terms.

Activity 7.3-3

15 minutes

Gender and Sexual Identity Vocabulary

Define gender and sexual identity

Explain that, during the next activity, students will discuss terms related to gender and sexual identity. Explain that sometimes people can be confused about what terms to use when talking about gender and sexual identity. This activity is designed to reduce some of that confusion.

Post the Gender and Sexual Identity Vocabulary word cards on the board. Hand out the definition cards to students and ask them to tape their definitions under the correct vocabulary word. Correct placement as needed, and review words and definitions with the class in the order given in the Vocabulary List answer key.

→ Teacher Note

Key Points to Emphasize

- Everyone has a gender identity and a sexual orientation. Learning some of the common vocabulary used to describe these things is important because these are parts of everyone's identity.
- It's also important to learn about identities that may be different than one's own. Sometimes when people are unfamiliar with something, they may view it negatively just because it's different.
- Having a common language to talk about differences can help people to not use stereotypes.
- Be sure to emphasize Process Question 3 and the importance of identity being self-identified. Remind students of the importance of not labeling or putting other people into boxes.

You may wish to have copies of the Gender and Sexual Identity Vocabulary List answer key to distribute to students at the end of this activity.

Process Questions

1. What was one thing you learned that was new to you?
2. Why is it important to define these words? (*To avoid misuse and hurt feelings, to promote understanding.*)
3. Who gets to decide a person's gender and sexual identity? (*The person does. Gender and sexual identity are self-identified.*)

Activity 7.3-4

5 minutes

Visualization

Explore characteristics of attraction

Explain to the students that they are now going to engage in a visualization to help them explore identity further. Tell students that this will be done silently and that they will not be asked to share aloud anything that they picture during the visualization.

Have students close their eyes or put their heads down to focus on themselves. Instruct them to think silently about the questions you are going to ask.

Begin the visualization by stating that some of them might already have experienced liking someone in a romantic way, and some of them might not have had that experience yet.

Ask students to think of someone they've been attracted to or had a crush on. If students haven't been attracted to someone before, they can think of an example of a romantic couple that they know. (*See the Teacher's Guide for a visualization script.*)

After the visualization is over, have students bring their attention back to the classroom. Ask students to keep in mind the previous activities as they process the visualization.

Process Questions

1. Why do you think we did this visualization?
2. Do you think a person can choose who they're attracted to?
3. Why might a person choose not to share who they are attracted to?
4. How might a person feel if they believed they couldn't share this part of themselves with the important people in their lives?

Activity 7.3-5

Anonymous Questions Box

Review anonymous questions

Address student questions from the Anonymous Questions Box. Give students a new question prompt to answer if they don't have one about the class material, and remind students to place their anonymous questions in the box as they leave the classroom.

Activity 7.3-6

Family Activity

Explain family activity

Review the Family Activity for this lesson.

Get Real for Parents

Remind students to have their parent/caring adult use the access code to log in to the mobile website.

Family Activity 7.3

Patrick's Story

Instructions: Either the student or adult can read the story out loud to the other person. While reading or listening to the story, think about how Patrick felt before and after he talked to his parents. After the story, talk about ways that your family is respectful of—or could be more respectful of—people of differing sexual orientations.

Patrick's Story

Patrick told my parents I was gay, the fear they wouldn't accept me was overwhelming. Now, knowing that my parents are there for me is incredible. It makes everything better. I see so many stories on the news, and hear from other kids who are gay, that their families don't accept them. My parents totally trust me, I know they support me. Parents need to know that a child they love may be gay. Unless your child tells you, you won't know. There are ways to bring up the subject. For example, when parents see things about the gay community on TV, they need to be aware of comments they make. If they are supportive, children who are gay will feel they can trust their parents to accept them. There are probably hard times ahead for me, I am fully prepared for discrimination. There are people who are against homosexuality. I've dealt with them before, and I'll probably have to deal with them again. But the love from my parents helps me cope with cruel comments. I know my parents love me. It makes me love myself more.

(From Words Can Hurt: Other Dating with Kids About Sexual Health, by Jennifer Blain, www.wordscanhurt.com)

Tips for Parents

The goal of this activity is to promote conversations between you and your child about sexual health. It provides a safe space for you to ask questions, and for your child to share their thoughts and feelings. It's important to discuss these topics with your child, and to be open to their questions. Be honest and do the best you can. Be patient. Write down your answers and then read them out loud to your child. Laugh, giggle, and go right on to the next page.

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Parent or Other Caring Adult Signature _____ Student Signature _____

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Family Activity 7.3**Student Workbook page 11****References****Gender and sexual identity:**

Definitions and background information adapted from the Human Rights Campaign:

- Glossary of Terms: www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms.
- A Few Definitions to Help Understand Gender and Sexual Orientation for Educators and Parents/Guardians: www.welcomingschools.org/resources/definitions/definitions-for-adults.
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Definitions: www.hrc.org/resources/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-terminology-and-definitions.
- Schools in Transition: A Guide for Supporting Transgender Students in K-12 Schools: <https://www.genderspectrum.org/staging/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Schools-in-Transition-2015.pdf>.

Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network, Safe Space Kit: A Guide to Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Students in Your School. www.glsen.org/safespace

Gender and Sexual Identity Vocabulary List

Sex Assigned at Birth A term referring to how a person is most often assigned a sex at birth based on their external genitalia.

Gender Identity Refers to a person's deeply personal feeling of identifying as a man, a woman or some other gender, which may or may not line up with the sex the person was assigned at birth.

Transgender or Trans An umbrella term for a person whose gender identity and/or expression is different from what might be expected based on the sex they were assigned at birth.

Cisgender A term used to describe a person whose gender identity and expression are aligned with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Gender Expression How people express their gender to the world. This can include a person's name, clothing, hairstyle, behavior, body language and mannerisms.

Sexual Orientation A term that refers to a person's feelings of emotional, romantic or physical attraction to others.

Straight A person who is emotionally, romantically and/or physically attracted to people of another gender.

Gay A person who is emotionally, romantically and/or physically attracted to people of the same gender.

Lesbian A woman who is emotionally, romantically and/or physically attracted to other women.

Bisexual A person who is emotionally, romantically and/or physically attracted to two genders.

Questioning A term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.

LGBTQ+ An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender. Q can stand for Questioning or Queer. The plus exists because these are not the only sexual and gender identities a person may have.

Ally A person who is not LGBTQ+ but shows support for LGBTQ+ people and promotes equality in a variety of ways.

Gender and Sexual Identity Vocabulary

Word Cards

Sex Assigned at Birth	Straight
Gender Identity	Gay
Transgender or Trans	Lesbian
Cisgender	Bisexual
Gender Expression	LGBTQ+
Sexual Orientation	Questioning
Ally	

Continued

Definition Cards

A term that refers to a person's feelings of emotional, romantic or physical attraction to others.	A term that refers to a person's feelings of emotional, romantic or physical attraction to others.
A term referring to how a person is most often assigned a sex at birth based on their external genitalia.	A person who is emotionally, romantically and/or physically attracted to people of another gender.
Refers to a person's deeply personal feeling of identifying as a man, a woman or some other gender, which may or may not line up with the sex the person was assigned at birth.	A person who is emotionally, romantically and/or physically attracted to people of the same gender.
An umbrella term for a person whose gender identity and/or expression is different from what might be expected based on their sex assigned at birth.	A woman who is emotionally, romantically and/or physically attracted to other women.
A term used to describe a person whose gender identity and expression are aligned with the sex they were assigned at birth.	A person who is emotionally, romantically and/or physically attracted to two genders.
How people express their gender to the world. This can include a person's name, clothing, hairstyle, behavior, body language and mannerisms.	A term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.
An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender. Q can stand for Questioning or Queer.	A person who is not LGBTQ+ but shows support for LGBTQ+ people and promotes equality in a variety of ways.

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Comprehensive Sex Education That Works

Dear Parent or Other Caring Adult,

This week in class, students learned more about gender identity and sexual orientation. Young people get messages about this topic from lots of sources, including peers, the media, and the internet. Parents and caregivers can help support the idea that all people deserve respect, no matter what their race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity might be. Beliefs about sexual orientation vary and are often based on religious, cultural and family values. Some families already talk about this topic, while it may be challenging for others.

When talking about sexual orientation and gender identity, many different terms may be used. These definitions can help make the Family Activity and your ongoing talks more clear.

Sexual orientation refers to a person's feelings of emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to others.

- **Straight** refers to people who are emotionally, romantically and/or physically attracted to people of another gender.
- **Gay or lesbian** refers to people who are emotionally, romantically and/or physically attracted to people of the same gender.
- **Bisexual** refers to people who are emotionally, romantically and/or physically attracted to two genders.
- **Questioning** refers to people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Some people know from a young age that they are attracted to people of the same or another gender. For others, feelings can evolve over time.

Gender identity is people's deeply personal feeling of identifying as a man, a woman or some other gender, which may or may not line up with the sex assigned to them at birth.

- **Cisgender** is a term used to describe a person whose gender identity and expression are aligned with the sex they were assigned at birth.
- **Transgender** is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from what might be expected based on the sex they were assigned at birth.

Being transgender is not the same as being gay or lesbian. *Transgender* describes a person's internal sense of gender identity, while *gay* or *lesbian* are terms that describe a person's sexual orientation—the feelings of emotional, romantic and physical attraction the person feels toward other people.

People who identify as transgender have some issues in common with gay, lesbian and bisexual people, such as “coming out” (when a person tells another person about their sexual orientation or gender identity), finding access to welcoming, supportive health care providers, self-esteem and being targets of prejudice or violence. But gender identity is *not* the same as sexual orientation.

Patrick's Story

Instructions: Either the student or adult can read the story out loud to the other person. While reading or listening to the story, think about how Patrick felt before and after he talked to his parents. After the story, talk about ways that your family is respectful of—or could be more respectful of—people of differing sexual orientations.

Patrick's Story

“Before I told my parents I was gay, the fear they wouldn’t accept me was overwhelming. Now, knowing that my parents are there for me is incredible. It makes everything better. I see so many stories on the news, and hear from other kids who are gay, that their families don’t accept them. My parents totally trust me, I know they support me. Parents need to know that a child they love may be gay. Unless your child tells you, you won’t know. There are ways to bring up the subject. For example, when parents see things about the gay community on TV, they need to be aware of comments they make. If they are supportive, children who are gay will feel they can trust their parents to accept them. There are probably hard times ahead for me. I am fully prepared for discrimination. There are people who are against homosexuals. I’ve dealt with them before, and I’ll probably have to deal with them again. But the love from my parents helps me cope with cruel comments. I know my parents love me. It makes me love myself more.”

(from *Words Can Work: When Talking with Kids About Sexual Health*, by Jeanne Blake, www.wordscanwork.com.)

→ *Tips for Parents*

The goal of this activity is to promote conversations between *Get Real* students and caring adults in their lives. It provides a great chance to review material covered in class, research resources for additional information, and share your feelings and values.

Note: If it’s embarrassing to discuss these issues with one another, you can decide to:

- Say so—and do the exercise anyway.
- Skip parts of it.
- Write down your answers and then read each other’s answers.
- Laugh, giggle, blush, and go right on talking.

Parent or Other Caring Adult Signature

Student Signature