

Lesson 9.4

Gender and Sexual Identity

Connecting the Lessons

Connects to *Lesson 9.3: Sex, Gender and Shared Responsibility* and *Lesson 9.8: Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships*.

Lesson Goals

- Explain the importance of gender and sexual identity being self-identified.
- Identify proper vocabulary for describing gender and sexual identity.
- Explain the difference between sex assigned at birth, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation.
- Discuss LGBTQ+ issues respectfully.
- Demonstrate how to be an ally and to effectively communicate support for peers.

Preparation & Materials Checklist

- ☐ Review gender and sexual identity vocabulary.
- ☐ Review student handouts and homework:
 - Handout 9.4-2a: The Most Important Part of Me
 - Handout 9.4-2b: Gender and Sexual Identity Vocabulary List
 - Handout 9.4-3: How Might It Feel
 - Journal Activity 9.4: Gender and Sexual Identity
- ☐ Have:
 - Anonymous Questions Box
 - Slips of paper for anonymous questions

Terms to Use

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| ■ Sexual identity | ■ Cisgender | ■ Sexual orientation | ■ LGBTQ+ |
| ■ Sex assigned at birth | ■ Masculine | ■ Straight | ■ Questioning |
| ■ Intersex | ■ Feminine | ■ Gay | ■ Queer |
| ■ Gender identity | ■ Androgynous | ■ Lesbian | ■ Ally |
| ■ Gender expression | ■ Gender nonconforming | ■ Bisexual | ■ Misgendering |
| ■ Transgender | ■ Genderqueer | ■ Asexual | ■ Heteronormative |
| | | ■ Pansexual | |

SEL Skills Addressed

Self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills

Logic Model Determinant(s)

Parent-child communication about sexual behavior and relationships.

Perception of peer norms about relationships.

Skills and self-efficacy to use SEL skills to increase assertive communication in relationships.

Values/attitudes towards abstinence and delaying sex.

Values/attitudes towards sexual behavior.

→ Teacher Note

The focus of this lesson is to teach terms for sexual and gender identity; to explore the aspects of those varied identities; and to develop skills in supporting and respecting all people. The teacher's tone in this lesson will help set classroom expectations for addressing LGBTQ+ issues in a respectful manner.

Activity 9.4-1

5 minutes

Discuss Journal Activity

Process Journal Activity from the previous lesson

Process Questions

1. What did you think about as you were reflecting on the journal prompts?
2. How does this journal activity relate to sexual health?

Activity 9.4-2

25 minutes

The Most Important Part of Me

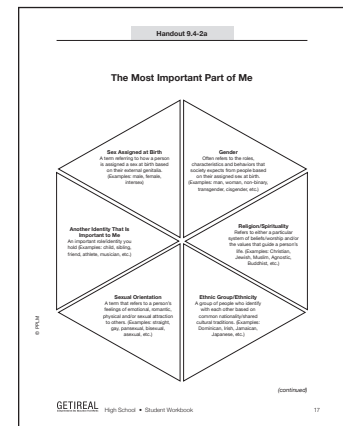
Identify feelings around identity

Before beginning this lesson, review the Class Rights and Responsibilities. Ask students which Rights and Responsibilities might be particularly important when discussing gender and sexual identity. Remind students of their right to privacy and their ability to pass if they do not feel comfortable sharing with the class.

Explain to the class that this activity will give them an opportunity to explore identity and that they will be participating in the activity for themselves. No personal information will be shared out loud.

Ask students to turn to **Handout 9.4-2a** in the Student Workbook. Review the handout and definitions with students and answer any questions they have about the terms. Explain that before they begin the activity they are going to have to decide what each of these words mean for them.

Emphasize these are only some of the identities that people hold. Other identities may include physical ability, mental health, immigration status, age, etc.



Handout 9.4-2a
Student Workbook
pages 17–18

→ Teacher Note

If students have specific questions about the words related to “Sex Assigned at Birth,” “Gender” or “Sexual Orientation” refer them to **Handout 9.4-2b**, the Sexual and Gender Identity Vocabulary List handout. Additionally, be sure to review the examples in all of the identity categories ahead of time so you are prepared to answer questions. Lastly, remind students you cannot define any aspect of their identity for them. If they have questions, reassure them there are no wrong answers.

Provide two minutes for students to silently choose a word that corresponds to each of the identities on the handout for their own life. Remind students they do not have to write this down and will not be asked to share it aloud. Tell students that whatever they choose today does not have to be the word they use forever. This is just one activity and they are the only ones who will know what word they have chosen.

To continue the activity, tell students they will need to be willing to suspend disbelief. Wait for students to agree to this before beginning the activity. Tell them that they are going to be transported to an apocalyptic science-fiction world and ask them to name the world.

Write the name they come up with on the board. Explain that the remainder of the activity will be done in silence. Guide them through the activity as follows:

- As you all know, here in *(insert the name of the sci-fi world)*, the only way that we can know anything about another person's identity is if they share it with us. We can't just look at someone and know. And, for years, we've all been very open about all of our identities.
- But recently the rulers of *(insert the name of the sci-fi world)* have come together and written a new law. They feel we as a society are too open and so we all have to choose one aspect of our identity that we are no longer allowed to share.
- Please take a moment and cross out the identity that you are no longer going to share. *(Pause for them to do this.)* Now, turn your paper over and take one minute to respond to the first question. I'll know you're done when you turn your paper back over. *(Pause for them to do this.)*
- A few months have gone by in *(insert the name of the sci-fi world)* and another law has been passed. As a society we are still sharing too much and the rulers are worried about an uprising. So we are now being forced to choose another identity that we are no longer going to be able to share with others. Only, this time, we don't get to choose for ourselves.
 - *If you don't have classroom management concerns:* Please reach over to the person next to you and randomly cross out one of the remaining identities.
 - *If you have classroom management concerns:* Because of this, I will be coming around and randomly crossing out one of your remaining identities.
- Please turn your papers over and take one minute to respond to the second question. I'll know you're done when you turn your paper back over. *(Pause for them to do this.)*
- An additional year has passed and a new ruler has been elected in *(insert the name of the sci-fi world)*. This new leader still feels we are sharing too much with one another and has declared that I must choose

one additional identity that you are no longer allowed to share with the world. *Circulate and cross out an identity for students.*

- Please turn your papers over and take one minute to respond to the final question. I'll know you're done when you turn your paper back over. *(Pause for them to do this.)*

Thank students for participating in the activity, and tell them they are no longer in *(insert name of sci-fi world)* and that they have all of their identities and can speak again. Tell students that in a moment you'll process that activity. First, however, it's important to think about all of the unique and amazing aspects of our identity that make up each one of us. Tell students that each person should be celebrated for their uniqueness and for what makes them special. Explain that often in our culture we don't spend time celebrating these pieces of ourselves because only certain identities get the most attention or are considered "OK." Tell students that you appreciate all of them for exactly who they are and the identities that they hold.

Process Questions

1. How did that feel?
2. Was it hard to choose which piece to not share?
3. Did it feel different when someone else chose for you? Why? *(If students chose for one another and then you chose for them ask: Did it feel different when your peer crossed out your identity than when an adult did it? Why?)*
4. What does this activity have to do with gender and sexual identity? *(Although we participated in this activity by creating a sci-fi world, the experience of not sharing aspects of gender and sexual identity is real-life for many people. The point of this activity was to create a safe way to develop social awareness for people's lived experiences.)*

Explain to students that there are four aspects to a person's gender and sexual identity: sex assigned at birth, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation. We defined some of these in the previous activity. Ask students to turn to **Handout 9.4-2b** in the Student Workbook to review these

→ Teacher Note

Selecting an Identity

As you walk around crossing out identities make intentional choices. If you have a student who may have never thought about privilege before, make sure to cross out the "Another Identity That Is Important to Me" to ensure that they are no longer sharing an identity that matters to them.

→ Teacher Note

For process question 4, explain to the class that, for some people, gender and sexual identity are something they feel they need to hide from others in order to protect themselves from stigma, bullying and harassment. Also explain that these aspects of identity can be something other people make assumptions about, and then base their entire relationship or interaction on those assumptions. Discuss with students why this is harmful.

Handout 9.4-2b

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 (male, female, intersex) based on their external genitalia.

Intersex: A general term that encompasses people who are born with chromosomes, hormones, genitalia and/or other sex characteristics that are not strictly male or female.

Gender identity: A term that refers to a person's deeply personal feeling of identifying as a man, woman or some other gender, which may or may not line up with the sex assigned to the person at birth.

Gender expression: How a person expresses their gender to the world. This can include, for example, a person's name, clothing, hairstyle, behavior, body language and mannerisms.

Transgender: An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression is different from what might be expected based on the sex 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.

Masculine: A term used to describe the socially and culturally expected behaviors and norms associated with men.

Feminine: A term used to describe the socially and culturally expected behaviors and norms associated with women.

Gender nonconforming: A term used by people whose gender expression falls outside what is generally considered typical for their assigned sex at birth.

Genderqueer: A term used by people whose gender identity differs from the traditional binary structure.

Sexual orientation: A term that describes a person's emotional, romantic, physical and/or sexual attraction to people of a specific gender or genders.

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

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

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

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

(continued)

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Handout 9.4-2b Student Workbook pages 19–20

Activity 9.4-4

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 9.4-5

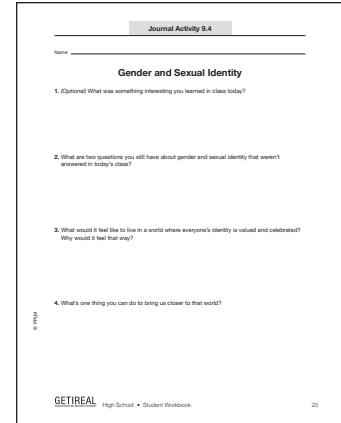
5 minutes

Introspective Journaling

Review journal activity

Review the Journal Activity questions for this lesson:

1. *(Optional)* What was something interesting you learned in class today?
2. What are two questions you still have about gender and sexual identity that weren't answered in today's class?
3. What would it feel like to live in a world where everyone's identity is valued and celebrated? Why would it feel that way?
4. What's one thing you can do to bring us closer to that world?

A student workbook page titled "Journal Activity 9.4" with the subtitle "Gender and Sexual Identity". It contains four numbered questions for journaling. At the bottom, it says "GETREAL High School • Student Workbook" and "23".

Journal Activity 9.4

Gender and Sexual Identity

1. *(Optional)* What was something interesting you learned in class today?

2. What are two questions you still have about gender and sexual identity that weren't answered in today's class?

3. What would it feel like to live in a world where everyone's identity is valued and celebrated? Why would it feel that way?

4. What's one thing you can do to bring us closer to that world?

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Journal Activity 9.4

Student Workbook page 23

References

Definitions and background information adapted from:

Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network, GLSEN: The GLSEN Jumpstart Guide 7:
<http://www.glsen.org/download/file/NzAyOA>

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

Advocates for Youth: *Creating a Safe Space for GLBTQ Youth: A Toolkit*:
<https://advocatesforyouth.org/resources/health-information/creating-safe-space-for-glbtc-youth-a-toolkit>

Human Rights Campaign:

Glossary of Terms: www.hrc.org/resources/entry/glossary-of-terms

A Few Definitions to Help Understand Gender and Sexual Orientation for Educators and Parents/Guardians: http://www.hrc.org/welcoming-schools/documents/Welcoming-Schools-Definitions_Gender_Sexual_Orientation_Adults.pdf

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Definitions: <http://www.hrc.org/resources/entry/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-terminology-and-definitions>

Schools in Transition: A Guide for Supporting Transgender Students in K-12 Schools:
<http://hrc-assets.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com//files/assets/resources/Schools-In-Transition.pdf>

How Might It Feel:

Adapted from *The Teaching Transgender Toolkit: A Facilitator's Guide to Increasing Knowledge, Decreasing Prejudice and Building Skills* by E. R. Green and L. M. Mauer, 2015, Ithaca, NY: Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes: Out for Health. Reprinted with permission. <http://www.teachingtransgender.org>