

## **Lesson Eight: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth**

### **Student Learning Objectives:**

The students will be able to...

1. Define ten relevant terms (gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, transgender, cisgender) and the acronym LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender).
2. Distinguish among facts and common fallacies (myths/stereotypes) regarding LGBT people.
3. Describe at least one strategy for working to end anti-LGBT harassment and violence or to otherwise act as an ally to LGBT people.

### **Agenda:**

1. Explain the lesson's relevance and purpose and review the importance of ground rules.
2. Briefly define and distinguish among four key terms on the board.
3. Put a diverse human face on LGBT youth: Film: This Is Re-teaching Gender & Sexuality and have student volunteers read aloud LGBT Youth Speak OUT Handout.
4. Follow with guided discussion or guided writing.
  - 1.** Today we'll be talking about sexual orientation and gender identity... about gay, lesbian, bisexual, and heterosexual people and about transgender and people who are not transgendered. From now on, I'll use the acronym LGBT to stand for "lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender." We'll begin with understanding those words and a few other terms. Then we'll move on to hear from some LGBT youth. And

we'll consider discrimination and what people can do to stand up against it.

Like the other issues we'll address in this unit, this one has personal meaning to many members of this class. In any class, there probably are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender students. There are also students who have close family members or friends who are LGB or T. And the chances are some people, both gay and straight, have been teased or hurt because someone thought they weren't masculine or feminine enough. I am going to remember that and work hard to protect people's feelings, and I would ask you to do the same.

There are also probably differences in values among us. Some people here may believe that homosexual behavior is wrong. Others may think it's no different from heterosexual behavior. Respecting one another's differing opinions will be important.

## **2. Definition of Terms:**

**"Gender Identity"** refers to how a person feels on the inside, the person's inner sense of being male, female, both or neither. This usually matches with their physical anatomy and the gender that the doctor guessed they were based on their biological sex at birth. When it does match their body, that's called 'cisgender.' Because the majority of people are cisgender, people may not even know there is a word to describe them. Sometimes, on the other hand, a person's body and their identity don't match. Their body may be male, but they feel like a girl or woman on the inside. Or vice versa. They may describe themselves as **"transgender."**

**"Gender Expression"** refers to how a person walks, talks, dresses and acts. They may fit extreme stereotypes of what it means to be masculine or feminine or they may be anywhere in between the extremes. Or they may be both masculine and feminine, or neither. And it may change from day to day depending upon what they're doing or how they're feeling. Most people's gender expression is roughly consistent with what their culture and generation expect of

them. Once again, if they think about it at all, which people often don't when they're in the majority, they may call themselves "cisgender." Not everybody is able to, or chooses to, conform to expectations of how a boy or a girl should look or act. If a person doesn't act like society expects a boy or girl to act, they may consider themselves "**transgender.**"

**"Sexual Orientation"** refers to who a person likes ... the genders of the people they feel most sexually or romantically attracted to. The majority of people are primarily attracted to people of another gender. That's called being "heterosexual." That's a guy who mostly gets crushes on girls or a girl who mostly would want to date boys. Some people are primarily attracted to people of their own gender; they're "gay" or "lesbian." They mostly get crushes on people or want to be in relationships with people of their own gender. Some people are attracted to people of more than one gender; they might call themselves "**bisexual.**"

**3.** Film Re-teaching Gender & Sexuality followed by reading the handout LGBT Youth Speak OUT.

[www.putthisonthemap.org/education/reteaching-gender-and-sexuality](http://www.putthisonthemap.org/education/reteaching-gender-and-sexuality)

**4.** Guided discussion or guided writing. LGBT Youth Speak Out (See attached PDF)

Before moving on from definitions, there's one more word we should discuss. The word "queer" is one that, historically, has been used as a slur or put down against people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. Did the people you heard from just now seem to consider it derogatory? Were they offended by it?

### **Discussion Questions or Writing Prompt:**

1) Based on real people you know (protecting their privacy by leaving out their names, of course) and given what you just heard, how do

you think people know what their gender identity is? How do they know if they're supposed to be a boy or a girl?

2) What about sexual orientation? How do people figure out if they are gay, lesbian, bisexual or straight?

3) What myths or stereotypes about LGBT people did you used to believe that you're starting to realize aren't true?

4) What could be done to make school a more positive place for the students telling these stories? What could you do to be more of an ally?