

DIVERSITY, ACCEPTANCE, AND
LESSONS FROM A GAY SWEATER



Middle School
Curriculum Kit



THATS

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gady





LET'S LOOK AT THE WORD "GAY".
WHAT DO YOU THINK IT MEANS?

- 1) Being happy and joyful
- 2) A man or woman who wants to date/marry someone of the same gender

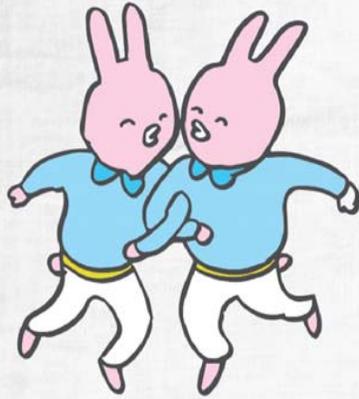
Gay should **NOT** be used to describe something you don't like.

Using the word "gay" to mean something as an insult makes "being gay" seem like an insult. It's like using any part of who we are as an insult, whether it's our skin colour or our allergies. It's hurtful, even if you mean it as a joke.



THE GAY SWEATER PROJECT TEACHES
US ABOUT THE POWER OF WORDS.

If your family has two dads, they would be called "gay" or "homosexual".



If your family has two moms, they would be called "lesbians" or also "homosexual".



If your family has a mom and a dad, they would be called "straight" or "heterosexual".



If your mom married either a woman or a man, or your dad married either a woman or a man, they might be called "bisexual".



EVERY FAMILY IS DIFFERENT. MAYBE YOU'RE BEING RAISED BY AUNTS, UNCLAS, SIBLINGS, GRANDPARENTS, STEP PARENTS OR FOSTER PARENTS.





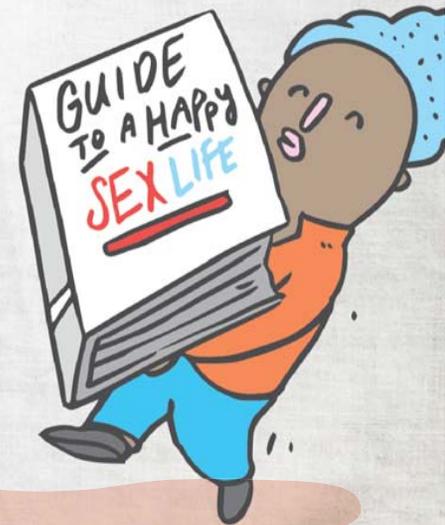
That your romantic/sexual orientation is a lifestyle.

LET'S LOOK AT SOME MYTHS AND STEREOTYPES ABOUT ROMANTIC/SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS.



That your romantic/sexual orientation is a phase that you will grow out of.

That something happened in our lives to create our romantic/sexual orientation, or that we chose to be this way.



CALLING ANYONE WHO DOESN'T FIT WITHIN GENDER STEREOTYPES AS "GAY" IS ALSO HURTFUL.
THERE ARE MORE APPROPRIATE AND ACCURATE TERMS THAT DESCRIBE GENDER DIVERSITY.

CIS OR CISGENDER GIRL:

Girls who were assigned as a girl at birth and usually fits into a girl's gender stereotypes.



TRANS OR TRANSGENDER GIRL:
Girls who were assigned as a boy at birth.



CIS OR CISGENDER BOY:

Boys who were assigned a boy at birth and usually fits into a boy's gender stereotypes.



TRANS OR TRANSGENDER BOY:
Boys who were assigned as a girl at birth.



GENDER CREATIVE BOYS:

Boys who were assigned as a boy at birth and don't fit under a boy's gender stereotypes.



GENDER CREATIVE GIRLS:

Girls who were assigned as a girl at birth but don't fit under a girl's gender stereotypes.



TRANSGENDER, GENDER CREATIVE,
OR GENDER INDEPENDENT KIDS:

These kids may have been assigned a girl or a boy at birth, but they do not fit into gender stereotypes. They know they're neither boys nor girls, but something different or new.



THE GAY SWEATER PROJECT TEACHES US THE POWER OF WORDS,
BUT IT ALSO TEACHES US THE POWER OF ACTIONS.

WHATEVER SOMEONE'S ROMANTIC/SEXUAL ORIENTATION,
AND/OR GENDER IDENTITY WE SHOULD RESPECT
THEIR LIFE AND THEIR FAMILY.

When a boy likes to wear pink, dresses, or nail polish, we should celebrate that as much as a girl who likes those things.

When a girl likes to wear baseball hats, play in the mud, and play with action figures or video games, we should celebrate that as much as a boy who likes those things.

When a kid is transgender and tells us whether they're a girl or boy, we should believe them and support them.

When a kid is transgender or gender creative and doesn't like being called a boy or a girl, we should believe them and support them too.



IT'S GREAT
THAT PEOPLE
ARE SO
DIVERSE.



LET'S CREATE
A WELCOMING WORLD TOGETHER!

PRESENTER'S NOTES:

PAGE 1 What did you think about the video?

PAGE 2 Some words can hurt our feelings, especially if they're words that don't describe us or are meant to make us feel bad.

Some words can make us smile, especially if they encourage us and compliment us.

What are some words you don't like being called?

What are some words you love being called?

PAGE 3 The Gay Sweater Project is also trying to teach us about the word "gay", and ways the word should be used and shouldn't be used.

For example: "that shirt is so gay", "this movie is so gay". Using it this way is hurtful, because you're using someone's identity as an insult.

PAGE 4 "Gay" is only one kind of romantic/sexual orientation among the many kinds of romantic/sexual orientations in the world.

What kind of family do you have?

Optional Activity:

Have the students draw out their family trees. Choose one of your favourite trees and look up what shape and colour its leaves are. When you draw out the connections your family has, instead of just writing out the names of each family member, draw a leaf around that name to give it a more "tree"-like feel.

PAGE 5 Something happened in our lives:

Usually, people are just born straight, gay, bisexual, etc. It isn't something people choose or because something happened to them to make them this way. At some point, people just "figure out" their orientation. The difference is that in a lot of places, being any other orientation that isn't "straight" can be dangerous because of bigoted and/or violent people. So if you live in an unsafe community and you're not straight, you may have to consider "staying in the closet" by not disclosing your orientation, or "coming out" to people if you think it's safe and they'll support you and help protect you.

Grow out of it:

Usually our orientations are fixed states that we're born with, but for some people they are always exploring and trying to understand themselves. Neither of these approaches are wrong, but it is wrong to assume that someone is in a "phase" when they're not in a phase or that someone will always be a certain way when they know they are more "fluid" in the way they live or express themselves.

It's a lifestyle:

The way people are attracted to others is not a lifestyle, it's just one aspect of someone's life. Sometimes there are cultural activities or norms that people with the same kind of attractions share, and a lot of folks celebrate that together. This could be romantic comedies with heterosexual plots or gay pride parades. But that doesn't mean bisexuals can't enjoy straight movies or straight people can't support gay pride parades. Our lives are so much more complicated and full than who we want to date, marry, or build families with.

PAGE 6 Can girls only wear certain colours? Look a certain way? Behave in a certain way? Like specific things?

Can boys only wear certain colours? Look a certain way? Behave in a certain way? Like specific things?

Have you ever had days where you fit inside gender stereotypes?
How about days where you didn't fit in?

PAGE 7 Gender creative boys:
Examples would be boys who wear dresses and/or play with Barbies.

Gender creative girls:
Examples would be girls who wear baseball caps and play with action figures or video games.

PAGE 8 If you see someone getting bullied about their family, their romantic/sexual orientation, or their gender identity and expression, speak up or intervene if you can. If you think intervening will put you in danger, at least check in with the bullied kid to see if they're okay and if you can do something to help.



FICTION BOOKS ON DIVERSE GENDER, SEXUALITY AND FAMILIES:

Ash by Malinda Lo

Becoming Billie Holiday
by Carole Weatherford

Between Mom and Jo by
Julie Anne Peters

Boy Meets Boy by David
Levithan

Chance to Dance For You
by Gail Sidonie Sobat

Evil? By Timothy Carter

Geography Club by Brent
Hartinger

Gertrude is Gertrude is
Gertrude is Gertrude by
Jonah Winter

God Loves Hair by Vivek
Shraya

Gravity by Leanne
Lieberman

Keeper by Kathi
Appelt

Luna by Julie Anne
Peters

Parrotfish by Ellen
Wittlinger

Pink by Lili Wilkinson

Stitches by Glen
Huser

The Adventures of
Tulip, Birthday Wish
Fairy by S. Bear
Bergman

The Boy In A Dress by
David Walliams
The Misfits by James
Howe

The Popularity Papers by
Amy Ignatow

Totally Joe by James
Howe

More Book Resources from
Edmonton Public Schools
and the Edmonton Public
Library (Canadian &
American content):

Sexual Orientation
and Gender Identity:
Recommended Fiction
and Nonfiction Resources
for K-12 Schools
<http://bit.ly/1wWjFV3>

ACTIVITIES AND ONLINE LESSON PLANS:

The Heterosexual Questionnaire: A Lesson Plan from Creating Safe Space for
GLBTQ Youth: A Toolkit by Advocates For Youth

<http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/for-professionals/lesson-plans-professionals/223?task=view>

Gender Neutral Day by Teaching Tolerance
(A Project of the Southern Poverty Law Center)

<http://www.tolerance.org/toolkit/toolkit-gender-spectrum>

Family, Life, and Sexual Health by the Seattle and King County Public Health
Department

http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/personal/famplan/educators/~media/health/publichealth/documents/famplan/G456_L2.ashx

Where I'm From: Family, Community & Poetry by Welcoming Schools

<http://hrc-assets.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/welcoming-schools/documents/WS-Lesson-Where-Im-From-Poetry.pdf>

Think Outside the Box (Gender Stereotypes)

<http://www.tolerance.org/supplement/think-outside-box-grades-3-5>

What Happens If (Gender Roleplays)

<http://www.tolerance.org/supplement/what-happens-if-grades-3-5>

Gender Neutral Day

<http://www.tolerance.org/toolkit/toolkit-gender-spectrum>

Gender Expression

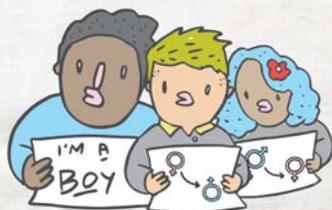
<http://www.tolerance.org/gender-expression>

Online Lesson Plan on Art & LGBT Rights by Teaching Tolerance (A Project of the
Southern Poverty Law Center)

<http://www.tolerance.org/lesson/art-and-lgbt-rights-study-symbols>

More Online Resources for Educators by the Pride Education Network

<http://pridenet.ca/staff-resources>



PLACES TO CALL IF YOU NEED HELP:

The Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans Youthline

Peer Support Service Lines (Serving All of Ontario) Toll-Free: 1-800-268-9688

In the Greater Toronto Area: 416-962-9688

Text Messaging: 647-694-4275

E-mail: askus@youthline.ca

Open Sunday to Friday (Closed on Saturday & major holidays) 4:00pm to 9:30pm

Confidential, free & non-judgmental peer support

Kid's Help Phone

For ages 20 and under, free, confidential, 24/7, professional and anonymous

1-800-668-6868

The Trevor Project

The Trevor Project is the leading American organization providing 24/7 crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth ages 13-24.

1-866-488-7386



Some Helpful Organizations:

The Canadian Centre for Gender & Sexual Diversity

<http://ccgsd-ccdgs.org/>

Promotes diversity in gender identity, gender expression, and romantic and/or sexual orientation in all its forms on a national level through services in the areas of education, health, and advocacy.

GSA Network

www.GSANetwork.org

Gay-Straight Alliance Network is a national youth leadership organization that connects school-based Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) to each other and community resources through peer support, leadership development, and training.

GLSEN

www.GLSEN.org

GLSEN, which stands for the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network, is the leading national education organization working to create safe schools for ALL students. We strive to ensure that each member of every school community is valued and respected regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

NYSHN

www.NativeYouthSexualHealth.com

The Native Youth Sexual Health Network (NYSHN) is an organization by and for Indigenous youth that works across issues of sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice throughout the United States and Canada.

CLGA

www.CLGA.ca

The Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives (CLGA) is the largest independent LGBTQ+ archives in the world. With a focus on Canadian content, the CLGA acquires, preserves and provides public access to information and archival materials in any medium.