

Kaleidoscope Manual **Student lesson plan**

Time required: A double lesson (approximately 80 minutes).

This student lesson plan should be placed in the curriculum at an opportune time. It would sit well within a context of embracing diversity, anti-bullying or sexuality. It is well suited for years 9-12.

Requirements:

- *one or two posters to put up on walls
- *blue tack or drawing pins
- *whiteboard marker and duster
- *one sheet of paper and one pen per student
- *one list of websites and phone numbers supporting SSA young people per student
- *feedback forms (if desired) for each student (need to photocopy the student evaluation form).

Given that all classes are different, please select information and activities that suit your particular class.

1. **GROUND RULES (five minutes)**

Facilitator introduces the topic by saying: Today we will be speaking about sexuality.

Facilitator elicits group agreements. What we will talk about today is important and sensitive. So we need to begin with some agreements so everyone feels they can have a say and be heard in safety. What do we need to agree on?

Participants make suggestions.

Facilitator elicits the following agreements:

- a) Everyone has the right to speak, not just a few.
- b) Confidentiality. What you hear in this room stays in this room.
- c) Be respectful of others opinions.

Put your hand up if you agree to these rules.
Let's begin.

(If a student isn't adhering to these rules during the session, they can always be reminded of them.)

2. SAME SEX ATTRACTION (five minutes)

Facilitator: We'll talk about same sex attraction. What does the term same sex attraction mean?

(Wait for answers.) It refers to people who are romantically or sexually attracted to people of the same gender as they are. It includes gay, lesbian and bisexual people but the term 'same sex attracted' describes whom a person is attracted to rather than how they label themselves.

(If students are unclear about the meaning of SSA, the facilitator could use the following examples to clarify the term SSA.)

Facilitator: For example, some students may have a partner of the opposite sex and identify as heterosexual. They may, however, be physically or romantically attracted to someone who is the same gender as they are.

The people in this example are attracted to others of the same sex and would be included in the description of same sex attracted.

Facilitator: Sexuality can be fluid, especially for young people. Attractions can change. Dreams can change. A person's fantasies about another person can one day be about a male and the next day the same young person might be fantasising about a female. A person's sexuality, their fantasies and attractions can shift around. This is a very common occurrence.

3. PERCENTAGE THAT IS SSA (five minutes)

Facilitator: What percentage of the population is SSA?

Researchers have found that more than 10 per cent of the population is SSA. Let's work out what this means for the Australian population. What is the population of Australia?

Participants: (20 million)

Facilitator: If 10 per cent are SSA, how many people are SSA?

Participants: (200,000).

Facilitator: So, we know that 10 per cent or 1 in 10 people are SSA. Therefore, if you know more than 10 people including family members, then all of you will know people who are SSA. (Pause for comments.) Now let's look at the number of people in this school. How many students and staff are there?

Participants: (1000?)

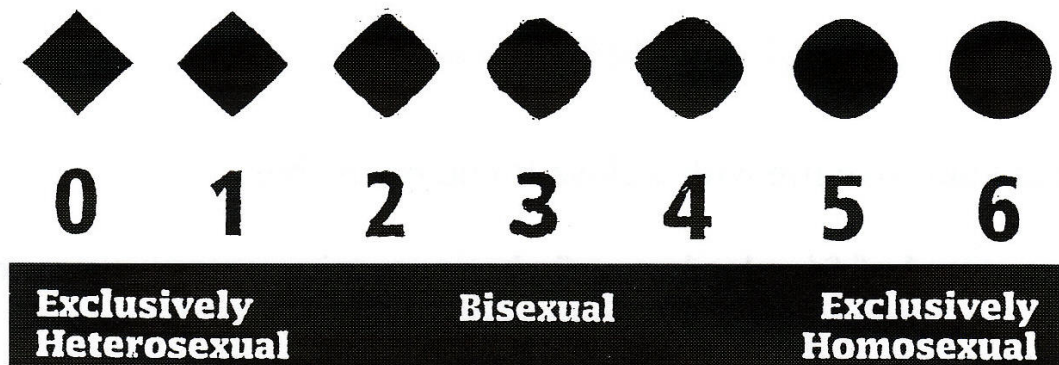
Facilitator: So, on average, how many SSA people are there at this school?

Participants: (100.)

Facilitator: If you've never met a SSA student, this number may come as a surprise to you. And many of you will never have been told about your friends, SSA parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc.

Facilitator: Being SSA is not very different from being straight. We don't neatly divide into two groups – straight and gay. I'll put up a diagram that demonstrates how most people are not exactly the same but they are not very different from each other either.

Draw a copy of the model below on the whiteboard.



Facilitator: Even though there are many people who are not exclusively heterosexual, our society is very supportive of those who are and much less supportive of the others.

4. ACTIVITY – THE REWARD SYSTEM (twenty minutes)

Facilitator: We will do an exercise to see how life can be different for SSA and straight people. (Hand out pens and paper.) In this activity we will look at some of the messages we get from TV, family, friends and how these do or don't support the relationships people have. Write down the numbers from 1 to 20 on the left side of the page. Now I will divide you into two groups.

Facilitator divides the class in half down the centre of the room and names them group 1 and group 2. Both groups – imagine that you are 16 years old and living at home.

Group 1: Imagine you are in a same sex relationship.

Group 2: Imagine you are in a heterosexual relationship.

Facilitator: I will be reading out questions and you are to respond by writing *yes* or *no* next to the appropriate number.

Facilitator reads out the questions one at a time. After each question the facilitator pauses so the students can have time to write either *yes* or *no*.

Questionnaire

Answer *yes* or *no* to the following questions:

1. Could you talk to a parent or close relative about this relationship?
2. Could you invite your partner home?
3. Could your partner be included in any family gatherings like birthdays, weddings, New Year's Eve parties?
4. Would your parents or siblings feel OK if you started introducing your partner to their friends as your girlfriend or boyfriend?
5. Would people who knew about your relationship feel comfortable having you as a babysitter?
6. Do you think your friends would accept your new relationship?
7. Would you take your partner to the school formal?
8. Could you tell your mates what you did on the weekend and with whom?
9. Would you chat about your love life with a close friend on the bus?
10. When you go out in a crowd of friends, do you feel you can give your partner a kiss and a hug?
11. Could you easily find other couples like you if you wanted to go out as a group?

12. Can you be fairly confident you won't get put-down or physically hurt by others because of the relationship you are in?
13. Could you talk to the leader of a youth group e.g. scouts, guides, religious group, a sporting team, etc if you were having problems in your relationship?
14. Do love scenes on TV and the movies commonly show relationships like yours?
15. What about the words in music – do they talk about your relationship?
16. Do you know teachers, parents' friends or other adults who are the same sexual orientation as you?
17. Do you know four famous people with the same sexual orientation as you e.g. pop stars, sports people, politicians, TV personalities?
18. If your doctor asked you if you were sexually active and using contraception to avoid pregnancy, would you be able to be open with her or him?
19. Could you easily get safe sex information if you needed it?
20. Could you get married when you turned 18 and receive all the legal benefits of marriage?

(An activity by Rex Halliday entitled 'The Reward System'. Adapted with permission from *Affirming Diversity - An Educational Resource On Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Orientations*, by the Family Planning Association of New Zealand, 1994, page 30.)

Facilitator: Write one or two words to describe how you felt while doing the questionnaire.

Facilitator: Now add up your scores, i.e. the number of *yes*'s you wrote. When you have done that, stand up. Wait until everyone is standing.

Facilitator: If you scored 20 out of 20 sit down. If you scored 19 sit down. 18, 17, 16, 15, 14. (When only a few are standing (probably when the score is at about 14), the facilitator continues.)

Facilitator: Everyone look around and observe who remains standing. (Then the facilitator continues with the count down.)

Facilitator: Read out the feeling word you wrote down. Each student in the class reads their word out to the class. Facilitator then selects just a few students and asks: Why do you think you felt that way?

Facilitator: Now I'd like you to get into groups of four. As they move into their groups, the facilitator writes the following questions on the board.

- a) Why were so many people on the SSA side standing?
- b) What is homophobia?
- c) How does homophobia affect SSA people and heterosexual people?

Facilitator: In your groups, discuss all of the above questions. Facilitator reads out a), b) and c). After a few minutes, facilitator asks each group to report back.

5. ANONYMOUS QUESTIONS (Five minutes)

Facilitator: This is your chance to ask any questions you want about same sex attraction.

I'd like everyone to take out a piece of scrap paper and write a question. Your question is anonymous and does not have your name on it. If you don't have a question, I want you to write – I do not have a question. I need a piece of paper from each person in the room.

Fold the paper and hand it to me as I walk around. I will have a look at the questions while you are watching the video and after the video I'll answer those questions that I think are genuine.

6. GUEST SPEAKER OR DVD (10 minutes)

It would be valuable here to have a guest speaker or to play a DVD about gay and lesbian young people. DVDs can be obtained by ringing the La Trobe University's Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS) on 9285 5382.

Then discuss: How could schools become safer places for SSA students? If you or a friend were SSA or had gay or lesbian parents, what changes would have to take place at school for you to feel safe and accepted?

7. ANSWER ANONYMOUS QUESTIONS (10 minutes)

Facilitator: gives the answers to the anonymous questions.

Some examples of the types of questions that have been asked by year nine and ten students can be categorised.

GAYNESS

Questions relating to this might include:

- a) Can you easily recognise if someone is gay by the way they act?

Some gay people act 'camp' and many don't. If you've seen the T.V. show Queer eye for the straight guy you'll have seen that there are five gay guys.

With three or four of them you just wouldn't know that they are gay. So the answer is 'occasionally' you can tell but mostly you can't.

- b) Me and my family think my cousin is gay. He hasn't told us and I want to know. How can I find out?

You need to show you are trustworthy and open-minded. If your cousin has heard you say positive things about gay people and sees you as supportive, then you might be chosen as a trusted friend. Only then might he tell you. You'd need to think about how you could build up his trust in you.

- c) Why are some people gay?

There are probably many reasons, some of them environmental, some biological. No one knows for sure. But what we do know is that it's a normal part of society. Over 10 per cent of the population is same sex attracted; about 10 per cent of the animal world is gay. That's just how it is.

- d) I think my friend is gay. What should I do?

Be a good friend. Be supportive. Show him or her that you are accepting of gay people and that you can be trusted with the information. Stand up for gay people if you hear put-downs.

- e) A lot of people my age are experimenting. Will it pass and is it normal?

It is normal. Many people experiment until they decide what gender they are interested in and some people decide they are interested in both. Sometimes people choose a sexuality when they are young but further down the track they may not feel comfortable with the sexuality they have chosen and decide to test it out again. They might then start experimenting again to see if their sexual preference has changed or not.

Because our society assumes and favours heterosexuality, it is hard for us to know what we really are.

SEX

Questions relating to this may include:

- f) A boy keeps touching me and I think I like it.

If you feel safe, maybe you could talk to the boy in private. If you are interested, you could show him you are interested. It's OK to like it. You may feel confused so take things at your own pace. There's no need to rush.

- g) How do gay and lesbian people have sex?

Sex should feel and be safe. Gay men and lesbians, just like straight people, can touch each other in ways that feel pleasurable. An important thing about having sex, no matter what your sexuality, is communication. Communicate to your partner what you like, what feels good and also what you don't like.

DISCRIMINATION

Questions relating to this may include:

h) What rights do gays and lesbians have regarding sexual contact?

It is the same in Victoria for gay and straight sex. Young people under 16 can't legally have sex with anyone who is more than two years older than they are. Sixteen is a grey area. Other things are taken into consideration when you're 16. Once you're 17 it's your choice.

i) Do gay people get bashed up because they are bad and wrong?

People who bash others are violent. People who bash people they suspect of being gay are violent and homophobic.

There are a number of reasons why some people are homophobic. It is not because there's something wrong with gay people. Gay people aren't criminals and they're not breaking the law. But the people who bash them up are breaking the law and could be prosecuted for assault. Homophobic people might enjoy the power they have over a minority group or perhaps they hurt others in order to be accepted into their own peer group. Whatever the reason, assault is a crime and can be reported to the police.

Homophobic behaviour is learnt, and over time it can be unlearnt.

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

For example:

j) Do you have anything negative to say about gays and lesbians?

They are ordinary people. Some are rich, some are poor, some are kind, some are mean. Same sex attracted people are part of society. The only difference is that they belong to a minority group.

k) What is your sexuality?

My sexuality is irrelevant. What we know is that one in 10 people are same sex attracted which means probably everyone knows someone who is SSA.

The important thing is to be a good friend and to be supportive.

8. THREE POINTS TO REMEMBER (two minutes)

While students are filling in the feedback sheets, facilitator writes on the board, then says the following to the class:

Facilitator: I want you to take three important points away with you:

- 1) Homosexuality is not the problem. Homophobia is.
- 2) Respect people's right to be who they are.
- 3) Ask yourself: If I were in his or her shoes, what would I want from my friends and from my school?

9. SUPPORT LIST AND FEEDBACK SHEETS (three minutes)

Hand out the resource list entitled 'Where to get information and resources in Victoria'.

If the school requires feedback sheets to be filled out, hand out the Student Feedback Form and ask the students to fill them in and return them to the facilitator.

This lesson plan (updated 2007) originally appeared in the Kaleidoscope Manual (2004). The author Viv Ray has provided the lesson plan with permission from the Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service.

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