



Activity: 9-10.12.2

Key Messages

- Sexuality is not fixed and there is a diverse range of sexual orientations.
- Sexuality is vital and dynamic, and an integral part of our lives from birth. It is difficult to describe sexual orientation in simple terms.

Activity Details

Victorian Curriculum

Health & PE Critique behaviours and contextual factors that influence the health and wellbeing of their communities VCHPEP151

Capabilities VCICCB018

Time 30 minutes

Levels 9 & 10

Equipment • *Being a trans-man* worksheet (one per student).

Being a trans-man

Purpose

To help students develop an understanding of the issues faced by a person who is transgender.

Teaching notes

This may be a sensitive issue in your classroom especially if a student is or has a close friend or family member who is a transgender person. There may also be students in your class who hold discriminatory attitudes to people who are transgender. As with all sensitive issues, students should be allowed to express their opinions, (in a respectful manner) but the teacher should step in to make the law clear on issues of discrimination and human rights.

Procedure

1. Hand each student a copy of the worksheet, *Being a trans-man*.
2. Explain that this is a young person's account of their life as a person who identifies as a trans-man.
3. Choose a student (or have a volunteer) to read aloud the account on the worksheet.
4. Discuss the questions at the end of the worksheet.

From Ollis, D and Mitchell, A 2001, *Talking sexual health: a teaching and learning resource for secondary schools*, ANCAHRD, Canberra. Used by permission of the Australian Government.



Being a trans-man

This is a transcript of an interview with a young person who is trans-man. Read it and discuss the questions listed below.

I've never quite fitted into society. Although it was my childhood dream to have a wife and kids and a house and ra ra ra, I was learning, as I got older, that it wouldn't be quite that easy. I have stopped trying to fit in. I don't even really care if I don't pass as a man all the time...

I call myself a trans-man, mostly cos I think it sounds kinda nice (like I am a trans-man for the country)...it is my way of saying I'm a female-to-male transsexual (which doesn't sound nice at all)...ie. A man who has XX chromosomes, or to use an awful cliché, a man trapped inside a woman's body. I have no idea why I am like this. For as long as I can remember, I have known I was male. When I was a little kid, I believed I would grow up into a man and everyone would see the horrible mistake they'd made. I was so convincing, all the other kids believed me and I was able to be a boy, right up until we properly learnt the 'facts of life' and puberty struck me and I grew up into a woman, not a man. Well, I went through a lot of bad stuff, thinking I 'must' be a lesbian (since I liked girls), trying to be as feminine as possible, inventing crushes on guys so I could pretend to be straight and be accepted at school...Until my first serious girlfriend encouraged me to live out the real, male me and we discovered these guys called FtM*. Transsexuals that were just like me...and finally I was able to be myself.

Sure, it's hard sometimes, being this big screwed-up, feeling my whole life is a lie. It can drive me insane, how hard I have to fight just to get across to people I am a man. And not having a penis and not being able to father children and not being able to marry a woman and not being able to play cricket on the guy's teams and ...well, the list could go on and on. I've come close to suicide a few times but, fortunately, I have good friends and some sort of friendly spirit that's on my side...because I'm still here. Besides, I am young, just out of puberty...I hope to start taking testosterone over my summer vacation, which at least will eliminate some of my problems. And you know, I'm actually starting to enjoy being a trans-man. Sometimes, if I'm in a good mood, well, in any case, I don't get so frustrated, depressed and angry as I used to...

*FtM Female to Male

Discussion

- How might society define this person? Why?
- What are the implications of this definition/s for this person?
- What does it tell us about gender and/ or sexuality?
- How does he feel about himself?
- How much power does this person have?
- What changes would need to happen in society to enable this person to feel more comfortable with his gender identity and/ or sexuality?

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