



Lesson Plan

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For Professionals Working With Teens

Sexetc.org

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Lesson for "What a Difference an Ally Makes"

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the completion of this lesson, students will be able to

1. Define homophobia.
2. Describe at least four different ways to be an ally.

NATIONAL SEXUALITY EDUCATION STANDARD ADDRESSED

ID.12.SM.1 Explain how to promote safety, respect, awareness and acceptance.

TIME NEEDED

50 minutes

MATERIALS

- 1 sheet of newsprint (or PowerPoint slide, laptop and LCD projector)—prepared (see preparation)
- 3 sheets of blank newsprint
- Tape
- Blank piece of paper and writing utensil—one per student
- Copies of article "What a Difference an Ally Makes"—one per student

PREPARATION

Prepare a piece of newsprint or a PowerPoint slide with all of the following statements or questions on it:

- a. Think of a time where you were in a situation that made you uncomfortable. Describe what happened and how you felt.
- b. Would having a friend or person you trust there to support you have made that situation easier?
- c. Has there ever been a time that you helped another person when they needed it? Describe what happened.
- d. How did it feel to be able to help that person?

Hang the prepared newsprint up in the front of the room with the bottom half taped up so the sheet is folded in half. Reveal the sheet after you have paired off the students. (If you're using a PowerPoint slide, project the slide on the wall in front of the room after you've paired students up.) Hang two of the blank sheets side-by-side on the right side of the prepared sheet or slide and the third piece on the left side.

PROCEDURE

1. Begin the lesson by pairing students up. (If there is an odd number, you can have one group of three). Reveal the prepared newsprint (or display the PowerPoint slide), and tell the students that they are going to spend the next five minutes discussing the posted statements and questions with their partners.

Offer students an example of a topic they might discuss by drawing their attention to the first statement, which reads, “Think of a time where you were in a situation that made you uncomfortable. Describe what happened and how you felt.” Explain that someone might choose to share with his or her partner about a time that he or she and a best friend were having dinner with a group of people and someone started making jokes about people who are biracial. The person who is sharing might say, “They obviously did not realize that my best friend is biracial. It made me really angry that they would say such things and really sad because I know it hurt and embarrassed my best friend.” So, that’s an example of what someone might share in response to the statement. The pair would continue sharing until they had each responded to the remaining three questions.

Remind students that they should only share an experience that they are comfortable talking about and that these conversations should remain confidential between each student and his or her partner. [6 minutes]

2. Call time when five minutes have passed. Ask students the following questions to generate discussion:

- What were some of the words you and your partner used to describe how it felt when you were in an uncomfortable situation?
- What were some of the words that you and your partner used to describe how it felt to help someone in need?

[Facilitator’s Note: Some of the words likely to come up in response to the first question are “sad,” “mad,” “angry,” “hurt,” “embarrassed,” etc. Some of the words likely to come up in response to the second question are “good,” “nice,” “happy,” “proud,” “empowering,” etc.]

Record the words from the first question on one of the blank pieces of newsprint on the right side of the prepared newsprint, and the words from the second processing question on the blank piece of newsprint directly next to it. [5 minutes]

3. Review the two lists side by side, pointing out that the words used to describe being in an uncomfortable situation are all (or mostly,

depending on the list) negative and the words used to describe the feeling to help someone are all positive. Explain that the group will now read an article about a person who received some help when they were in an uncomfortable situation. [2 minutes]

4. Distribute copies of the article “What a Difference an Ally Makes” and read together with the class. Get reactions to the article as time permits. [7 minutes]

5. Ask students the following questions to generate discussion:

- The article mentions the word “homophobia” several times. What does homophobia mean and what does it mean to be homophobic?
- Who is affected when people use homophobic language or act in a homophobic manner?
- Can anyone give an example of how a heterosexual person might be affected by homophobia? (Provide an example of how heterosexual people can be affected by homophobia if students don’t come up with some.)
- Is anyone willing to share a personal story about a time he or she (or someone he or she knows—no names please) was bullied or discriminated against because of something like his or her race, religion, level of ability, weight, appearance, intelligence, etc.? [5 minutes]

6. Tell the students that they will now have the opportunity to publicly thank someone who has helped them. Instruct the students to take out a piece of paper and something to write with. Once students have done this, explain that you will give them five minutes to write a short paragraph that lets someone know that his or her help was appreciated.

Explain that other students will read their letters, so students should not put their names or the names of the people their letters are addressed to on the letters. Also suggest that if they are writing about a very sensitive topic, not to put any specifics about the situation because it will be shared with the rest of the class anonymously.

Encourage students to consider writing to someone who helped them in a situation where they were being harassed or bullied because of their race, religion, level of ability, weight, appearance, intelligence or anything personal to them. Remind students that the goal of the letter is to reflect on what a difference it made to have someone there to help them. [6 minutes]

7. Call time when five minutes have passed. Collect all of the paragraphs from the students. Shuffle them up and quickly hang them around the room. Ask one or two students to help you hang them as needed.

Once the papers are all posted, have students walk around the classroom and read as many of the paragraphs as they can during the time given. Ask that all students do this in silence and to be respectful of those around them. **[Facilitator's Note:** You can play soft music in the background as students are moving around, if appropriate. Just be sure that it does not become a distraction]. [9 minutes]

8. When there are about 10 minutes left to the class period, ask students to please return to their seats. Once everyone is seated, ask the students for their reactions to reading other people's letters. [3 minutes]

9. Direct the students' attention back to the two newsprint sheets that contain the positive and negative terms. Explain that when we act in ways that are homophobic, it makes people feel like the words posted on the negative sheet. When we are allies to an LGBTQ person, it evokes feelings like those listed on the positive sheet and elicits the gratitude that is expressed in the letters posted around the room.

Remind students that everyone is affected by homophobia and that we each have the power in our words and actions to cause the feelings listed on the positive sheet and prevent the ones on the negative sheet. [2 minutes]

10. Close out the lesson by asking students the following processing questions:

- Who can recall the four things that were listed at the end of the article that you can do to be an ally for LGBTQ people?
- In addition to these four things can anyone else think of something you can do to be an ally to LGBTQ people to help them feel safe and respected? (Record these responses on the remaining piece of blank newsprint.) [5 minutes]