

Breaking the Binary Workshop Package

Age: High School (grades 9-12)

Objectives:

- Understanding of basic terms surrounding sex, gender, and sexual orientation developed
- Understanding of discrimination towards LGBTTQ* community achieved
- Understanding of unique experience of transgender people developed
- Exploration of ways to create a more inclusive community

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Heterosexual Questionnaire Activity

Time: 10 minutes

Materials:

One questionnaire for each student (provided in student package)

Instructions:

Explain to the group that when gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth are beginning to 'come out,' they are often asked questions that are nearly impossible to answer. In order to help participants understand the heterosexist bias in our culture, you will ask them to grapple with these same questions in regard to *heterosexuality*.

Everybody has one questionnaire in their packet, and will break off into groups of four or five for about 10 minutes and will try to come up with answers. Explain that you want everybody to attempt to answer as though they are heterosexual (some may not identify as such).

Question list:

1. What do you think caused your heterosexuality?
2. When and how did you first decide you were heterosexual?
3. Is it possible that your heterosexuality is just a phase you may grow out of?
4. Is it possible that your heterosexuality stems from a fear of others of the same sex?
5. If you have never slept with a member of your own sex, is it possible that you might be gay if you tried it?
6. Why do you flaunt your heterosexuality? Can't you just be who you are and keep it quiet?
7. Would you want your children to be heterosexual, knowing the problems they would face, such as heartbreak, disease, and divorce?

Debrief:

Did you find the questions hard to answer? Were some harder than others? Which? What, specifically, was so difficult?

How did the questions make you feel?

What does it say about our society that gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth are asked similar questions?

What can you do in the future if you hear someone asking such questions?

Representation and Oppressive Norms Activity:

In the following images, identify the oppressive norm. Is the image heteronormative, cisnormative, or not? What else do you notice about the image that may be harmful? Discuss in groups of 2-3.

- **Cisnormativity:** the assumption that all, or almost all, individuals are [cisgender](#). Although [transgender](#)-identified people comprise a fairly small percentage of the human population, many [trans*](#) people and allies consider it to be offensive to presume that everyone is cisgender unless otherwise specified.
- **Heteronormativity:** the belief or assumption that all people are heterosexual, or that heterosexuality is the default or "normal" state of human being. It tends to complement and accompany concepts like [cisnormativity](#), [gender binarism](#), and [gender essentialism](#). A heteronormative society operates on the assumption that heterosexuality and specific gender features are the human "default." These assumptions can be hurtful because they are stigmatizing and marginalizing, making people who are LGBT+ feel like they are perceived as deviant or unnatural.

Also consider: race, age, ability, language, nation, religion,





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