***Transgender Identity and Discrimination: How to Be an Ally***

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MSU Human Rights Education Internship

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**Lesson Title:** Transgender Identity and Discrimination: How to be an Ally

**Grade/Course:** Human Rights Education **Lesson duration:** 25 min

**Unit: Topic of Lesson:** How to be an ally

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| **Central Focus:** Students should be able to know what transgender means, what daily obstacles they face, and how to be an ally. They should also know at least 1 non-profit organization that serves to help transgender individuals. |

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| **Essential Question(s):** *What does transgender mean? How is gender identity different from sexual orientation? What forms of discrimination do transgender individuals face? How can we be trans allies?* |

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| **State/Disciplinary Standards:** 6.3.4.D.1: Identify actions that are unfair or discriminatory, such as bullying, and propose solutions to address such actions |

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| **Daily Performance Objectives:**   * Understand what transgender means * Be able to differentiate gender from sexual orientation * Find a way to help transgender individuals in school settings * Understand how discrimination impacts transgender individuals |

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| **Prior Knowledge Resources:** Some misconceptions are that:   * Surgery is a top priority for all transgender individuals * Children are not old enough to know their gender identity * You can tell someone is transgender by looking at them * Transgender only includes male-to-female transition or female-to-male   Refer to slide 6 on the PowerPoint presentation for more information |

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| **Academic Language:** Biological sex, *Gender, Sexual orientation, Transgender, Gender expression* |

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| **Materials and Preparation:**   * Computer * Internet * Handout (What you can do to help and Student Activity) |

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| **Assessment/Evaluation—note: all lessons *must* include checks for understanding**   * *By the end of this lesson, can students define transgender?* * *Can students identify major social challenges and problems for transgender people?* * *Can students come up with ways to help trans individuals?* |

**Lesson Progression**

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| **Duration:** | **The teacher will…** | **The student(s) will…** |
| 10 Minutes | Play the PowerPoint presentation about Transgender Identity and ways to be an ally. For more knowledge on the topic you can look at the different NPO for trans rights, such as GLAAD, GLSEN, and The National Center for Transgender Equality. | Listen and ask questions if needed |
| 10 Minutes | Give Students the poem | Read the poem out loud and identity a quote that stuck with them. Then with a partner, explain why that quote stuck out to them. They should also explore what they thought was the purpose of this poem. After they’ve done that, they will write a short letter to the author about how that poem made them feel. |
| 8 Minutes | Pass out the “What you can do to help” handout. | Read handout and identify any other ways they believe they can help. |
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| **Homework:**  Continue to educate yourself on transgender issues and how you can help. A great website to use to educate yourself is <https://transequality.org/> |

**Student Activity**

Instructions:

1. Read text aloud
2. Select 3 lines from the poem that caught your attention
3. Discuss your quotes with a partner
4. Explain what you think is the core purpose of this poem
5. Write a short poem back to the author about this made you feel

Poem:

Who are we really when we are shut out of the world?

Not even allowed a bathroom break.

Why are we set aside and overlooked?

Jobs, college acceptances, name changes.

None of which we haven't gotten the discrimination set aside.

They feed off of our misfortune.

Ladies get their suffrage as a man does,

But where does ours lie?

Suffrage for the man who born a woman, or the woman born a man.

Where is the freedom without hesitation?

The household without judgment.

Who are you to say what is wrong and what is right?

The bible doesn't say being an asshole is holy.

Those who were born in the wrong body are blamed.

Blamed for what?

Mother made us, we did not choose.

Why must we be punished for her mistake?

World so hateful.

Lives lost early.

No one's fault, but their own they say.

When will it not be blamed?

*What YOU can do to help!*

* Be supportive of your transgender peers
* Continue to educate yourself –
  + Learn about policies affecting transgender people.
  + One of the simplest ways to be an ally is to take your education into your own hands.
* Speak out.
  + Speak out in support of transgender people and transgender rights.
  + Speak out when you witness transgender people experiencing discrimination
* Support Non-Profit Organizations
  + GLAAD (the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation)
    - GLAAD tackles tough issues to shape the narrative and provoke dialogue that leads to cultural change. GLAAD protects all that has been accomplished and creates a world where everyone can live the life they love.
  + GLSEN (the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network)
    - GLSEN advises on, advocates for, and researches comprehensive policies designed to protect LGBTQ students as well as students of marginalized identities
  + National Center for Transgender Equality
    - The National Center for Transgender Equality advocates to change policies and society to increase understanding and acceptance of transgender people

Annotated Bibliography

Attia, Ashley. "Explicit equality: the need for statutory protection against anti-transgender

employment discrimination." S. Cal. Interdisc. LJ 25 (2016): 151.

Transgender individuals often suffer from discrimination in the workplace. On average, transgender workers have twice the unemployment rate of non-transgender workers. Being that transgender people are often fired, or not even hired for the job due to their gender identity, it leaves a high number of transgender individuals to live in poverty. There are only seventeen states that prohibit the explicit discrimination against transgender people. Some employers try to find loopholes within the laws that are already out. For example, Title VII which prohibits discrimination against employees based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, only applies to employers with fifteen employees or more. Therefore, some employers with less than fifteen employees will refuse to follow that law. Bans on gender identity discrimination are needed at the state level because many state laws specifically protect against discrimination based on sex, but not discrimination based on gender identity.

Buzuvis, Erin1, “On the Basis of Sex’: Using Title Ix to Protect Transgender Students from

Discrimination in Education.” Wisconsin Journal of Law, Gender & Society, vol. 28, no.

3, Fall 2013, pp. 219–243. EBSCOhost, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lft&AN=97323055&site=eds-live&sco

pe=site.

Transgender students are more likely to experience discrimination and harassment, and although we have some laws to prevent that, it is not very clear how much they will protect transgender individuals from harm. Title IX is a federal civil rights law that was passed as a part of the Education Amendments of 1972. This law protects people from discrimination “on the basis of sex” in educational programs that are federally-funded. Title IX does not specifically prohibit discrimination against transgender students. Many people interpret Title IX in different ways, and in some cases it makes the law availabile to transgender individuals to protect them from discimination. The introduction to this article references different cases in which transgender individuals experienced discrimination in school settings. One of the cases referenced the challenge the parents of a six year old girl faced when her school refused to let her use the bathroom that corresponded with her gender. The protection of transgender students using Title IX only exsists in thirteen states. In three out of those thirteen schools, transgender individuals are only protected until high school, meaning that colleges and graduate schools are permitted to discriminate “on the basis of sex.”

Grant, Jamie, et al. *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender*

*Discrimination Survey*. National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and

Lesbian Task Force, 2011, arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/dsp014j03d232p.

The National Transgender Discrimination Survey was conducted by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the National Center for Transgender Equality. Transgender individuals face discrimination in many different parts of their life including, education, employment, family life, public accommodations, housing, and health. This report highlights discrimination that is known but often dismissed by the human rights activists. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the National Center for Transgender Equality had 6,450 transgender and gender non-comforming individuals participate in this study about the injustices they face in their daily lives. The goal of this report was to motivate people to take action and help end the discrimination. This report provides statistics and experiences of discrimination in the following areas: education, employment, health, family life, housing and homelessness, public accomodations, identity documents, and police and incarceration.

Shriver, Maria. “Building A Better Understanding Of The Transgender Community.”

NBCNews.com, NBCUniversal News Group, 5 June 2014,

www.nbcnews.com/feature/maria-shriver/building-better-understanding-transgender-com

munity-n123436.

George Zuber, filmmaker of the documentary “Just Gender,” is being interviewed in this article. “Just Gender” talks about common misconceptions society makes. It explains how gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same thing and that transition is not a one-size-fits all process and does not necessarily include surgery. Throughout this interview, many questions are asked in order for people to gain a better understanding of what it means to be transgender. “Zuber shares what transgender individuals most want people to understand, discusses the term genderqueer, and explains why fixating on whether transgender individuals have undergone medical transition is offensive.”

“Supporting the Transgender People in Your Life: A Guide to Being a Good Ally.”

National Center for Transgender Equality, 10 July 2016, transequality.org/issues/resources/supporting-the-transgender-people-in-your-life-a-guide-to-being-a-good-ally.

This was posted by the National Center for Transgender Equality, which is a non-profit organization. It starts off by reminding allies that the most important step in becoming an ally is learning what it means to be transgender. This page is broken up into five sections: “The Basics: Things to Remember about Being an Ally,” “Interacting with Transgender people,” “Being Outspoken,” “Changing Businesses, Schools, and More,” and “Changing the World.”

In the “Interacting with Transgender” people section, it stated ways to interact with transgender individuals respectfully. The last three sections stated how to support change and provided actions to take in order to support transgender individuals.

“Transgender FAQ.” *GLAAD*, 1 June 2018, [www.glaad.org/transgender/transfaq](http://www.glaad.org/transgender/transfaq).

These frequently asked questions on GLAADs website provides important information on transgender topics. It starts of by discussing what it means to be transgender. “Transgender is a term used to describe people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. Gender identityis a person's internal, personal sense of being a man or a woman (or boy or girl.)” Then it goes on to explain the difference between gender identity and sexual orientation. This is a big one because oftentimes people confuse the two and don’t understand that they are not at all similar. They then go on to speak about names and pronouns, and how to approach someone if you are unsure of which pronouns they use. Also included in this page, are statistics on transgender individuals and the injustices that they face in their daily lives.

Whitehead, Joanna. “What Is Transgender Day of Remembrance and Why Does It Take Place?”

*The Independent*, Independent Digital News and Media, 20 Nov. 2019,

www.independent.co.uk/life-style/transgender-day-of-remembrance-violence-deaths-tran

sphobia-vigil-a9210506.html.

Transgender day of Rememberance takes place every year on November 20th. This day is put in place to honor the transgender and gender non-conforming people whose lives have been lost due to transphobic violence. Transgender and gender non-conforming people continue to experience high levels of violence and inequality just because of their gender identity. 41% of transgender individuals reported experiencing a hate crime within the last year. This news article talks about how many transgender individuals have died as a result of their gender identity, what happens on Transgender Day of Rememberance, and what people can do to help.