Sexual Orientation Facts and Info:
Finding and Assessing Credible Sources Online

A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum

Fostering responsibility by respecting young people's rights to honest sexuality education.

NSES ALIGNMENT:

SO.10.AI.1 - Access credible sources of information about sexual orientation

SO.12.INF.1 - Explain how support from peers, families, schools, and communities can improve a person's health and wellbeing as it relates to sexual orientation and sexual identity

TARGET GRADE: High School

TIME: 50 Minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED:

• Computer with internet, screen and speakers

• Internet access for students to complete small group work; this can either be in-class workstations/ laptops or individual phones with internet if permitted

• Copy of Project Look Sharp's Developing Habits of Inquiry poster, hard copy for display or to project on screen

• Copies of Project Look Sharp's Key Questions to Ask When Analyzing Media Messages, one copy for each small group of 3-4 students

• Copies of the following activity worksheets so half the students get sheet 1 and half get sheet 2:

  - Activity Worksheet: Credible Sources Scavenger Hunt 1

  - Activity Worksheet: Credible Sources Scavenger Hunt 2

• Pens/pencils, as needed

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Describe two ways to show support to LGBTQ people. [Knowledge]

2. Define what credibility means. [Knowledge]

3. Recall at least two factors to consider when assessing credibility of a source of information. [Knowledge]

4. Find at least two sources of credible information about sexual orientation online. [Knowledge]

LESSON RATIONALE:

Understanding how to find and assess credible sources of information about sexuality topics requires skills and practice. This is especially true of finding information about sexual orientation, particularly sources of information that share facts and stories of resilience and thriving, not only the poor negative health outcomes that result from inherently homophobic systems and structures. In this lesson we will learn about how to assess credibility and how to find important pieces of information about sexual orientation online. From self-advocacy to showing support for peers, families, schools, and communities, students will also learn about the benefits to one's health and wellbeing when they receive support and kindness.

ADVANCED PREPARATION:

• Ask the IT person at your school to make sure you can access YouTube to show the following 2 minute, 37 second video clip: Got Your Back GLAAD Video: https://youtu.be/6i5fFwCr4M4

• Review and become familiar with assessing credibility of sources and some of the key questions involved in the process:

  - Project Look Sharp's Developing Habits of Inquiry poster

  - Project Look Sharp's Key Questions to Ask When Analyzing Media Messages

• Make copies of the following activity worksheets so half the students get sheet 1 and half get sheet 2:

  - Activity Worksheet: Credible Sources Scavenger Hunt 1

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A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE:

Language is extremely important. It is one way you can be explicitly inclusive around often underrepresented and not as commonly acknowledged sexual orientations and gender identities. We've intentionally been very thoughtful about our language throughout this curriculum. You may notice language that seems less familiar, for example, using the pronoun "they" instead of "her" or "him", and simply referring to the body parts and processes we are teaching about rather than unnecessarily gendering them. We have also explicitly included scenarios and role plays that use a variety of names typically coded to certain genders, as well as ones that are not as readily coded to assumptions about gender. We have also used a variety of gendered and gender-neutral pronouns and names to be sure we are actively including various gender identities, sexual orientations, and relationships in our activities and discussions. This commitment to inclusiveness across our lessons is aimed at building new habits within our classrooms related to actively and more seamlessly representing a broader range of genders, orientations, and lived experiences.

PROCEDURE

STEP 1:

Explain that in this lesson we will be talking about ways we can support LGBTQ people and how to find credible sources of information about sexual orientation online. State that being online can be affirming and positive for many people and can also be a difficult and hurtful place for some. What we'll be focussing on today is how we can access accurate and supportive resources online.

Begin by asking students, "**Think about a time you were supported by your friends or family. Is anyone willing to share what people did to support you? How did you know you were being supported?**" After some students have responded, ask an additional question, "**What did it feel like to be supported?**"

After students share, highlight that often when people are supported, it feels positive and like they are not alone.

Highlight that when people feel truly supported it can help them more easily manage both smaller daily stressors and bigger challenges. Explain that what we know about the lived experiences of lesbian, gay, queer, bisexual, pansexual, and people with other non-straight sexual orientations, is that support from peers, families, schools, and communities can positively impact their health and well-being. This is especially important because of the stigma and discrimination many LGBTQ people are faced with in their lives, like being bullied or harassed, or having family members that do not support them.

Explain that in a short video from GLAAD, LGBTQ students will share personal examples of when friends supported them and share what qualities can make someone supportive and kind to LGBTQ people. Invite students to listen for one concrete thing that they think is a good idea for showing support and kindness to LGBTQ friends. **Play video.**

Invite students to share one thing they thought was a good idea for showing support and kindness to LGBTQ friends. Be sure the following ways to show support are covered, if not, add them at the end of the discussion:

- Don't assume being LGBTQ is a phase

- Have an open mind and open heart

- Step back and listen

- Support people when they change their name or pronouns by using the correct names and pronouns every time

- Checking-in and asking how things are at home with their family

- Have compassion and curiosity to educate yourself and actively listen!

Share that when you show support and kindness, it can make a big difference in LGBTQ people's lives! From big things like publicly interrupting mean comments other people might be making about LGBTQ people in general, or about someone you know, to actively using someone's correct pronouns, these acts of support and kindness can help reduce stress and help an LGBTQ person feel more connected and less alone.

Similar acts of kindness and support can have a positive impact on so many people! Whether that includes interrupting biased and racist statements, or challenging ableism or ageism, or stepping up against fatphobia, when you can use your voice to interrupt bias and share kindness and support, it can make a positive difference.

(10 minutes)

STEP 2:

Explain that now we'll be doing a group activity that is a scavenger hunt for credible information online about sexual orientation. One of the ways we can show support to LGBTQ people is to educate ourselves and know how to find trustworthy information about sexual orientation. We will be focusing not only on finding credible information, but also on finding positive stories about LGBTQ people thriving and showing resilience.

Ask, "**When you are trying to find information about a product – a backpack, new mascara, headphones, anything! – where do you look and how do you know the information you get is OK to trust?**" After several students have shared ask, "**Have you ever accidentally used an unreliable source and gotten a product that isn't as good as you wanted it to be?**" Explain that seeking information about products and seeking information about sexuality and well-being require similar skills and practice.

Explain that we will start by talking about the idea of credibility. Explain that assessing credibility of a source is an important part of analyzing information and messages for trustworthiness.
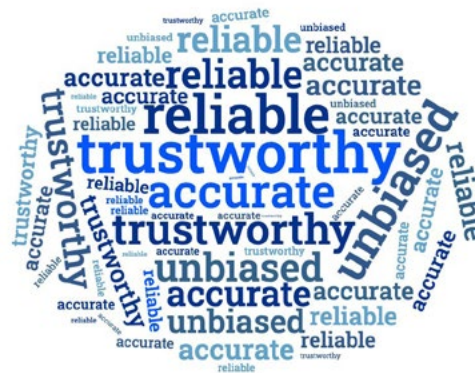
Display the visual word cloud on slide 1 and describe a credible source as one that is:

- Reliable, which means it is consistently good quality and consistently trustworthy

- Unbiased, which means it is accurate

- Current, which means verifying the date of the information being posted and making sure new information has not come out since

Explain that in order to assess if a source of information is credible, we usually have to ask some questions and do a little research to be sure. Facilitate a group conversation about the following questions, asking questions along the way about whether students have examples or experience with assessing credibility for online information or research. The information below is also available visually on slides 2-3:

What are ways you can check for accuracy of information on a website?

- Find out who is the author/source/publisher. Are they known?
- Do they have a specific set of values or beliefs about the topic?
- Are there external links? Where do those lead?
- Is there contact information, address, or email?
- Does the URL reveal anything about the source or author? (.com .edu .gov .org)

What makes it challenging to know if something is a fact or opinion?

- Facts are things that are true or real, which are backed by reliable evidence
- Opinions are what a person believes or thinks about something
- Facts are proven truths, opinions are a personal view that reflect the beliefs of an individual, which may or may not be based on facts
- Sometimes beliefs are stated as facts; examining the claims is important

What things do you look for to know whether a website is trustworthy?

- Where does the information come from?
- Is the information supported by evidence?
- Has the information been reviewed?
- Can you verify any of the information in another source or by your own knowledge?

Note to The Teacher: If you have additional time available, consider these questions for further group discussion.

- *These questions are aimed at how our personal experiences and interpretations can impact our assessment of what credibility is.*
- *How do my prior experiences and beliefs shape my interpretation?*
- *What can I learn about myself from my interpretation or reaction?*
- *How and why might different people interpret things differently?*

(10 minutes)

STEP 3:

Divide class into small groups of 3-4 students. There are two worksheets with different topics to hunt for online. Distribute worksheet 1 to half the class, and worksheet 2 to the other half. Explain that during the Credible Source Scavenger Hunt activity, each group will be asked to hunt for credible sources of online information.

Worksheet 1:

- Find a first-person story or short video about being lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual and/or queer.
- Locate an online support group for LGBTQ youth.

Worksheet 2:

- Find at least TWO hotline numbers or text/chat services that offer support to LGBTQ youth if they are feeling stressed, depressed, sad, and in need of someone to talk to.
- Find some good news! Beyond surviving, LGBTQ can thrive! There are some great parts about being LGBTQ! Find a fun, positive, funny, or lighthearted story or video. about being LGBTQ.

When you find your resource, think back to our discussion about what it means to find a credible source, and answer the following questions:

1. What is the URL?
2. Is the website associated with an organization or group?
3. Why did you choose this as a credible source? What makes it trustworthy and reliable?
4. What did you like about the source/website you found?
5. What do you think they could do better to feel even more credible?

Circulate among groups as they are working on the activity to see if there are any questions or needs for clarification or assistance. Let groups know they will be sharing at least one of the credible sources they found online with the whole class.

(20 minutes)

STEP 4:

Reconvene group. With an internet-accessible computer and projection screen setup, invite each group to be ready to share one credible source they found. Ask for the URL, type it in, and bring up the website for the whole class to see on the projection screen. Invite group to share why they chose this source. Prompt them with the following questions if needed:

1. Why did you choose this as a credible source? What makes it trustworthy and reliable?

2. What did you like about the source/website you found?

3. What do you think they could do better to feel even more credible?

Have each group share at least one credible source, more if time permits.

Note to the Teacher: If groups find the same resources online simply have them each answer the same questions for the shared source!

Thank the students for participating and remind them that one of the ways they can show support to LGBTQ people is to educate themselves and know how to find trustworthy information about sexual orientation.

(10 minutes)

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON:

Step 1 is designed to address the first learning objective; Step 2 addresses the second learning objective; and Steps 3 and 4 address the fourth learning objective.

HOMEWORK:

Dive Deeper into Media Literacy and Analysis!

Check out the tools and resources from Project Look Sharp, specifically, their Pride & Protest post. Take some time to specifically reflect on the "dual moral imperatives of anti-racism protests and the ongoing health crises related to COVID-19" as a backdrop of LGBTQ activism and pride events.

Key Questions to Ask When Analyzing Media Messages
Developing Habits of Inquiry

AUTHORSHIP

- Who made this?

PURPOSES

- Why was this made?
- Who is their target audience?
- What do they want me to do?
- What do they want me to think (or think about)?

CONTENT

- What are the messages about _____?
- What ideas, values, and information are overt? Implied?
- What is left out that might be important to know?
- How does this compare/contrast to other media messages on this topics?

TECHNIQUES

- What techniques are used to communicate the messages?
- How effective are those techniques? What are their strengths and weaknesses?
- Why might they have chosen to use those techniques?

CONTEXT

- When was this created?
- Where and how was it shared with the public?
- What aspects of cultural context are relevant to consider?
- How does this amplify or counteract existing patterns (on the topic, by the author, etc.)?
- How does the media form (social media, print, TV, etc.) impact the message?

ECONOMICS

- Who paid for this?
- Who might make money from this?

CREDIBILITY

- Is this fact, opinion, or something else?
- How credible is the information?
- What are the sources of the ideas or assertions?
- Is this a trustworthy source about this particular topic?

EFFECTS

- Who might benefit from this message?
- Who might be harmed by it?
- Whose voices are represented or privileged?
- Whose voices are omitted or silenced?

INTERPRETATIONS

- What is my interpretation of this?
- How do prior experiences and beliefs shape my interpretation?
- What do I learn about myself from my interpretation or reaction?
- How (and why) might different people interpret differently?

RESPONSES

- How does this make me feel?
- What kinds of actions might I take in response to this?

AND...

- What's my evidence?
- Why might that matter?
- Why do I think that?
- What else do I want (or need) to know?
- How could I find that out?

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Activity Worksheet:
Credible Sources Scavenger Hunt 1

HUNT for the following resources and once you find them, think back to our discussion about what it means to find a credible source, and answer the following questions:

	Find a first-person story or short video about being lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, and/or queer.	Locate an online support group for LGBTQ Youth.
What is the URL?		
Is the website associated with an organization or group?		
Why did you choose this as a credible source?		
What did you like about the source/website you found?		
What do you think they could do better to feel even more credible?		

Activity Worksheet:
Credible Sources Scavenger Hunt 2

HUNT for the following resources and once you find them, think back to our discussion about what it means to find a credible source, and answer the following questions:

	Find hotline numbers or text/chat services that offer support to LGBTQ youth.	Find some good news! There are some great parts about being LGBTQ! Find a fun, positive, funny, or lightheared story or video about being LGBTQ.
What is the URL?		
Is the website associated with an organization or group?		
Why did you choose this as a credible source?		
What did you like about the source/website you found?		
What do you think they could do better to feel even more credible?		