Lesson 4: Social Influences

Cluster of Learning Outcomes

Students will…

✓ **K.5.7.E.3b** **Identify the effects of social influences** (e.g., styles related to dress, hair, make-up, jewellery; cultural rituals; gender equity; harassment, nudity; violence against women…) **on sexuality and gender roles.**

  K.4.7.A.1 **Compare attitudes and behaviours** (i.e., inclusive/exclusive, positive acceptance/rejection, open/discriminatory) **that contribute to a sense of belonging.**

✓ Indicates targeted learning outcome.

Lesson Focus

As a result of the learning activities within this lesson students will be able to
- define *stereotype*
- select magazine pictures depicting social influences
- discuss the effects of social influences on sexuality and gender roles
- identify how music videos use sexuality to convey messages

Resources

Lesson Materials/Supplies
- magazine pictures
- index cards

Resource Master (See Appendix C)
- RM 1: Background Information on Special Sensitive Topics

Notes to Teacher

Refer to RM 1: Background Information on Special Sensitive Topics (see Appendix C).

Gender/Sex Roles

Spend time on the concept of roles and stereotypes, differentiating male and female from masculine and feminine. Within a class discussion, students could examine how male and female roles are formed and, perhaps most importantly, how male and female roles affect one's life. Ask students to think about examples from their own home and school situations. See whether they can come up with ways in which male and female roles could influence dating and sexual patterns.

Keep in mind that the adolescent years are formative ones. Young people are in the midst of defining their own sexual identity—what it means for them to be either male or female—and that there is considerable peer pressure to conform to expected patterns of behaviour. Gender stereotypes or roles can be damaging if they limit a person's potential. Perhaps by discussing the issues, students will come to understand that their "role" in life is something that they themselves may determine. They need not fit into a defined "box."

Another factor to consider is that some students may be experiencing same-sex attractions. These students need to know that this is okay. They also need to be aware that a supportive community with resources and positive role models is available. Without support and with enormous peer pressure to conform to heterosexual standards, many of these students turn inward and may develop social and emotional problems. Gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth in schools that do not provide gay-sensitive instruction are at greater risk than other youth for HIV infection, pregnancy, suicide, and victimization.

Curricular Connections

ELA:

GLO 1—Explore thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences

GLO 2—Comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, literary, and media texts

GLO 5—Celebrate and build community

SS:

Identity, Culture, and Community
The Land: Places and People
Historical Connections

Family Involvement

• Encourage students to discuss with their parents the gender-role stereotypes that are depicted in various media (e.g., pictures, posters, movies, advertisements).

Suggestions for Instruction

1. Begin the lesson by having students suggest definitions for the term *stereotype* (e.g., an oversimplified belief that all members of a certain group share the same characteristics, interests, and values).

2. Explain to students that this lesson will involve learning activities that examine how the media influence people's perception of sexuality and gender roles. Refrain from presenting a negative view of the media and from giving personal opinions to students. Allow students to develop their own conclusions.

3. Provide or have students collect pictures from magazines or commercials related to social influences (e.g., fashion, hair styles, make-up, accessories/jewellery, cultural rituals, gender equity, harassment, sports). Pictures may be presented as a collage or scanned for a computer presentation. Identify and discuss the effects of these social influences on sexuality and gender roles.

Alternative:

Have students watch several music videos at home and write down observations related to sexuality and gender roles that are portrayed in the videos. As a class, discuss the roles of males and females and the use of sexuality to convey a message.

4. Show students pictures of magazine advertisements and have them use a T-Chart to write down what messages are conveyed by each picture in terms of what it "looks like" and what it "feels like" (the effect it has).

Suggestions for Assessment

Journal/Learning Log
Teacher Assessment: Checklist

Have students identify (in their *Grade 7 Journal/Learning Log*) the effects of social influences on sexuality and gender roles.

Suggested Criteria:

The student is able to identify effects of social influences related to

❑ fashion
❑ hair styles
❑ make-up
❑ accessories/jewellery
❑ cultural rituals
❑ gender equity
❑ harassment
❑ sports
❑ other

Notes