



Teachers' upskilling aiming at a holistic inclusivity in learning

## Specialisation Course Two

Strand 2: Create an inclusive and empowering environment, free from discrimination and violence



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## Strand 2: Create an inclusive and empowering environment, free from discrimination and violence

Welcome to **Strand 2: Create an inclusive and empowering environment, free from discrimination and violence**, where you will learn how to identify, prevent, and respond to harmful behaviours in educational settings.

### How This Module Will Be Conducted

This module features a mix of **face-to-face sessions** and **asynchronous tasks**, including role-playing exercises, scenario analysis, and policy review.

### How the Training Material Will Be Used

- **Readings and Videos:** Explore the impacts of microaggressions and bullying on LGBTQI+ students.
- **Scenario-Based Learning:** Practice recognizing and addressing harmful behaviours.
- **Anti-Bullying Strategies:** Develop actionable plans for fostering safety and inclusion.

By the end of this module, you will be equipped to create a safe and empowering environment for all learners.

## Unit 1: Critical Assessment

### Unit 1: Critical Assessment - Self Directed Activity

This part of the Self-Directed Learning unit involves watching the corresponding PowerPoint presentation on Moodle, titled: Strand Two Unit One Slides.

### Unit 1: Critical Assessment - Reading Material

It is of vital importance for educators to implement a gender-sensitive approach when assessing students in the classroom. Implementing this approach helps foster and cultivate a fair and inclusive learning environment. Firstly, by recognizing, and then by addressing the different needs, experiences, and challenges faced by students of all genders, teachers can create more equitable opportunities for academic success. This approach not only eliminates biases in evaluation, but also promotes a supportive context, where every student feels represented, valued and respected, regardless of their gender identity. This way, every student can thrive not only academically, but also on a personal level.

#### 1. Bias awareness and self-reflection.

##### **Norms and values and how they shape individual and collective attitudes and biases:**

Norms and values significantly shape our preoccupations and biases by influencing how we interpret and interact with the world around us.

##### **Definitions:**

**Norms:** Norms are unwritten shared and codified societal rules that dictate acceptable and expected behaviour within a community. Norms can create a shared sense of belonging and influence our preoccupations by determining what should be emphasized (or in some cases marginalized) in our social environment. Norms in many cases reinforce biases by promoting stereotypes and discouraging deviation from the established group behaviours.

**Values:** Values are fundamental personal or common beliefs and principles that influence our judgments and actions. They shape our preoccupations by highlighting what we find important or worthy of attention. They also influence biases

by framing how we perceive and evaluate others based on whether they align with our core beliefs. A value system focused on fairness and equality can foster more inclusive attitudes, while values rooted in tradition and/or hierarchy may lead to and perpetuate exclusion of specific societal groups or attitudes.

**Recognize your own implicit biases:**

Teachers should be aware of their own implicit biases, which can affect not only how they assess students, but also their teaching style and methods. These biases might lead to unconscious favouritism or harsher criticism based on gender, and even an unintentional perpetuation of gender stereotypes. It is important to always try to question yourself and deconstruct core beliefs that may be based upon societal stereotypes of gender.

**Prompt the students to challenge stereotypes:**

Ensure that your expectations of students are not influenced by gender stereotypes (e.g., assuming boys or men are better at math or girls and women are better at arts) and include transgender and gender nonconforming people in your references. This will help set a tone of respect and safety among your students and will enhance gender inclusiveness. Furthermore, if you encounter problematic attitudes or beliefs from your class, it is crucial that you challenge these assumptions by questioning where they come from and how they impact other students.

**Cultivate empathetic attitudes:**

Creating an empathetic environment for LGBTQI+ students involves a combination of active listening, support, self-education, and forming allyship. This approach helps build a more inclusive and respectful community where everyone can thrive. Empathy incorporates a genuine effort to understand the experiences and challenges faced by LGBTQI+ classmates. This includes recognizing the diverse spectrum of identities and the unique difficulties they may encounter, such as discrimination, stigma, or lack of acceptance. Listening and validating each other's experiences helps build a more inclusive environment. Furthermore, acceptance without judgment and questioning,

fosters a sense of belonging and helps reduce the social isolation that LGBTQI+ individuals might experience. It is of pivotal importance that both educators and

***Reflection Activity:***

***Take a couple of minutes and reflect upon possible implicit gender stereotypes that you may have. How do you think these stereotypes, attitudes and beliefs have shaped your teaching approach, so far?***

***Write 250 words in your journal.***

## **2. Assessing LGBTQI+ Safety and level of diversity tolerance in a classroom environment.**

Ensuring that a classroom is safe and welcoming for LGBTQI+ students is vital for creating an inclusive learning space where all students feel valued and protected regardless of their identity. Assessing the level of acceptance and tolerance in a specific environment always requires a thoughtful and critical approach, especially if you are an educator, when you have to consider various factors that encompass physical, emotional, and cultural aspects of safety.

### **Evaluating the classroom climate:**

- Evaluate whether the classroom fosters an environment of respect and acceptance. Are there guidelines established to prevent harmful language or behaviour?
- Be mindful of classroom discussions and ensure that all students, including LGBTQI+ students, feel comfortable expressing themselves without fear of bullying, harassment, or exclusion.
- Ensure that all students' chosen names and pronouns are respected and consistently used.
- Ensure that there are clear, visible indicators of safety for LGBTQI+ students. This might include LGBTQI+ ally signs or statements of inclusion. Evaluate if supportive symbols (e.g., Pride flags, stickers, pins, inclusive posters) are displayed in the classroom. They should signal a welcoming and supportive space.

**Useful activity to assess acceptance levels and promote inclusiveness:**

A proactive way to assess the level of openness to diversity in a classroom is to introduce your students to the key terms of LGBTQI+ identities and encourage them to express their thoughts either orally by an open dialogue, or by having them write down their thoughts and reflect on them afterwards.

More specifically:

**Initiate Discussion:**

- **Group Discussion:** Start with a group discussion where students can ask questions and share their thoughts in a guided, respectful manner. Encourage them to listen actively and respond with empathy.
- **Guided Questions:** Pose open-ended questions to facilitate discussion, such as *“What do you think it means to be an ally?”* or *“How can we show respect for someone’s gender identity?”*

Firstly, it is important to allow students to share as much or as little as they are comfortable with. Respect their privacy and avoid pressuring them to disclose personal information. Moreover, make sure that all students have an opportunity to contribute, and if some students are hesitant to speak, provide alternative ways for them to express their thoughts.

**Unit 1: Self-Directed Activity:**

1. Think about the above suggested activity:
2. Consider what are some of the barriers and enablers to this task. Is it possible for you to conduct an activity like this with your students?
3. Consider age, gender, ethnicities, religion, beliefs, home-life, curriculum, institutional policies and procedures, safe(est) space, time, your own confidence, correct information etc.
4. Write 300 words, reflecting on your past and envisioned future practice, on how you could conduct this activity with your students.

### 3. Practical matters of a gender-responsive teaching procedure

#### **Cultivating an inclusive classroom environment:**

Be sure that you are constantly aware of your language use. It is crucial that non-binary and gender-expansive students be considered when addressing the class. Consider using gender-neutral terms like “students” or “everyone” instead of “boys and girls” or “ladies and gentlemen”.

**\*Please, revise and consult the previous section on gender responsive language.**

#### **Pronoun practices:**

Evaluate how pronouns are managed in the classroom by the students as well. Is there an opportunity for students to share their pronouns with one another? Ensure that each student is addressed by their chosen pronouns at all circumstances.

#### **Curriculum and teaching material:**

Review textbooks, handouts, transcripts, and multimedia that are used, for gender stereotypes and/or exclusion. Ensure that learning materials feature diverse gender representations and avoid reinforcing traditional gender roles and stereotypes.

It is also important that during the teaching procedure, the conventional gender norms are constantly challenged and deconstructed. This could be implemented by teaching about historical/literature figures who break away from traditional gender expectations and roles, and even by discussing the impact of gender discrimination, or including LGBTQI+ history and experiences in the curriculum. You could practice in-class activities as the one described in section 2.

Remember, it is significant for the teachers and educators to try to be informed and up to date by critically examining the curriculum to see if it reflects a diversity of genders. Do lessons and examples include contributions from women, non-binary individuals, and transgender people in a variety of fields?

**Classroom procedures and policies:**

Aim for group work and seating arrangements that encourage mixed-gender interaction. This will help students to not hesitate or be biased and preoccupied with participating in certain activities that are often gender oriented. When forming groups, for instance, mix genders to prevent gendered group dynamics and competition, and focus on encouraging diverse perspectives. These kinds of policies should be clear and not negotiable, to help protect students and foster an inclusive atmosphere where they can develop their interests and academic abilities.

**Variety of methods in assessment policy:**

Use a range of assessment methods (tests, projects, participation, artwork activities) to cater to different strengths and learning styles, rather than relying on traditional grading methods that might favour one gender against the others or may be able-oriented.

- **Implement Universal Design for Learning (UDL) method:** UDL is an educational framework that aims to make teaching and learning more optimal for all students, by offering multiple means of engagement, representation, and action/expression, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds. It is based on the idea that students learn in different ways and that teaching methods should be flexible enough to accommodate a wide range of learners.

**Key principles of UDL:**

1. **Multiple means of representing teaching material:** Present information in various forms to adapt to different learning preferences and needs.
2. **Multiple means of expression:** Allow students to demonstrate their knowledge in different ways, depending on their strengths and/or abilities.
3. **Multiple means of classroom engagement:** Be flexible about the teaching methods in order to motivate and engage students by orienting teaching to their interests and by providing choices.

UDL helps educators create a teaching environment that recognizes the variability of learners and seeks to optimize learning for everyone, fostering a more inclusive and effective approach to education.

**Feedback:**

Ensure that students of all genders receive equal attention in feedback. Avoid giving gender-oriented feedback, such as praising girls for neatness and boys for intelligence. Furthermore, provide constructive criticism and encourage all students to improve, regardless of gender.

It should be stressed at this point that you should seek feedback from students as well. Be willing to adapt teaching and assessment strategies based on students' needs, to better support gender equality. Feedback from students may help identify and address any areas where gender bias might be inadvertently affecting outcomes.

**Share with and encourage colleagues:**

It would also be useful to share the best practices with your colleagues and discuss any challenges faced in implementing gender-sensitive assessments. Collaboration can lead to improved strategies and solutions. Continuous professional development on gender inclusiveness can further support educators in improving their approaches.

**Institutional approaches at school level:**

Creating LGBTQI+ friendly approaches at the school level involves implementing practices and policies that foster an inclusive and supportive environment for all students, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

- **Anti-discrimination policies:** Develop and enforce policies that are explicitly against discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. These should cover all aspects of school life, including admissions, curriculum, and extracurricular activities.
- **Reporting mechanisms:** Establish clear confidential, accessible, and responsive procedures for students and staff to report discrimination or harassment.

- **Visible support:** Display symbols of LGBTQI+ support, such as pride flags (of various identities) or posters, around the school. These symbols help create an environment where LGBTQI+ students feel seen and represented.
- **Counselling services:** Provide access and information to counselling services that have expertise on LGBTQI+ issues and can offer tailored support to LGBTQI+ students.
- **Gender-inclusive facilities:** Ensure access to gender-neutral facilities (i.e. restrooms and changing facilities).
- **Local community:** Get involved with local LGBTQI+ organizations and activists to provide additional resources and support for students and their families.

#### 4. Conclusions

Overall, adopting a gender-sensitive approach is crucial for creating a fair and inclusive learning environment. By actively recognizing and addressing potential biases, employing diverse assessment methods, and cultivating an inclusive classroom culture, educators can provide every student with equal opportunities for success, regardless of gender.

#### VIDEOS

1. [Toward a Gender-Inclusive Classroom | Rachel Bailey Jones | TEDxNazarethCollege](#)
2. [Inclusive Education and Gender Representation | Timipre Wolo | TEDxUniversityofSalford](#)
3. [Why We Need LGBTQ\\* Education \(Slam Poem\)](#)

#### READING LIST

<https://scholarzest.com/index.php/ejhea/article/view/1352>

<https://ijme-journal.org/index.php/ijme/article/view/78/120>

<https://eric.ed.gov/?ff1=subInclusion&ff2=pubJournal+Articles&ff3=subSocial+Bias&ff4=pubReports+-+Evaluative&q=lgbtq+AND+school>

## UDL REFERENCES

CAST. (2018). *Universal Design for Learning guidelines version 2.2*. CAST.

<https://udlguidelines.cast>.

Morin, A. (2020). *The basics of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)*. Understood.org.

<https://www.understood.org/en/articles/universal-design-for-learning-what-it-is-and-how-it-works>

National Center on Universal Design for Learning. (2014). *What is UDL?*

<http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/whatisudl>

## Unit 2: Microaggressions and bullying

### Unit 2: Microaggressions and Bullying - Asynchronous Activity

This part of the Asynchronous material for this unit involves watching the corresponding PowerPoint presentation on Moodle, titled: Strand Two Unit Two Slides.

### Unit 2: Understanding microaggressions and bullying – Reading Material

Microaggressions are (intentional or unintentional) verbal and/or behavioural misconducts that express a form of internalized bias. Sometimes it derives from hostility and derogation that perpetuate marginalization and stereotypes. Thus, these attitudes can enforce the invalidation of different identities (e.g. racial or sexual). More precisely, microaggressions on **gender** and **sexual orientation**, occur in various forms and often stem from heteronormative and cis-normative assumptions, which regard heterosexuality and cis-gender identity as the norm.

On a more thorough note:

**Microaggressions towards gender identities:** These target individuals based on their gender identity, often non-binary and transgender individuals, or those who don't conform to traditional gender roles. They may involve:

1. Misgendering (using the wrong pronouns or name).
2. Assuming that a transgender athlete has a privilege or is under-privileged compared to cis-gender athletes.
3. Assumptions about someone's interests and/or capabilities based on their gender (e.g., assuming a woman is less competent in engineering or astrophysics).
4. Enforcing traditional gender norms (e.g., "Women are supposed to become mothers" or "Boys don't cry").

**Microaggressions targeting sexuality:** These are directed towards individuals based on their sexual orientation, i.e. those who are part of the LGBTQI+ community. Examples include:

1. Assuming someone is heterosexual ("do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend?") without considering other possibilities.
2. Statements that imply non-heterosexual relationships are a choice, or a phase (e.g., "Everyone decides to be gay now, it is nothing but a trend.").

3. Suggesting that bisexuality is merely just confusion, “half straight/ half gay”, or that a bisexual person needs to “pick a side”.

### **More examples on gender and sexuality microaggressions:**

**Misgendering:** Addressing a transgender or non-binary individual by the wrong pronouns, or intentionally using their pre-transition name (deadname), which invalidates their gender identity (and in many cases, may cause life threatening distress and dysphoria).

**Tokenism:** Saying something like, “*You’re not like other girls*” or “*You’re not like other lesbians*,” which implies that femininity or being a lesbian is inherently negative, and the person is an exception for defying stereotypes.

**Backhanded compliments:** Comments like, “*You look like a real woman/man*,” towards a transgender woman or man respectively, which simultaneously suggests that being a transgender is “*less than*” being cis-gender, or is fake.

**Intrusive questions:** Asking questions such as, “*Have you had the surgery down there yet?*” directed toward transgender people and thus, reducing their identity to their body image and anatomy or their medical decisions, resulting in dysphoria and distress.

These microaggressions can lead to feelings of invisibility, invalidation, or confusion. They often aggregate over time, contributing to stress and depression, and serve for the marginalization of people belonging to particular gender and sexual identity groups.

Bullying is a recurring aggressive behaviour with the explicit intention to harm others, which can be either verbal, physical, or psychological. It relies upon an existing imbalance of power dynamics, where the bully targets someone who they perceive as “weaker” or deviant from the norm. Bullying can occur face-to-face or online.

### **Some consequences of bullying:**

**Emotional distress and mental health impacts:** Victims often suffer from fear, anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. They may experience persistent feelings of sadness, isolation, and powerlessness, which can often lead to self-harm practices or suicidal thoughts.

**Poor academic performance:** Bullying can affect a victim’s academic performance, resulting in lower grades and lack of interest in school. In some cases, victims may drop out.

**Social isolation and marginalization:** Bullying often leads to social withdrawal. Victims may have difficulty forming friendships due to the negative experiences they've endured.

Both microaggressions and bullying are harmful behaviours that can negatively impact a school environment and consequently a whole community. By fostering awareness, educating both school staff and children, and intervening, when necessary, schools can work toward creating safer, more inclusive spaces for all students.

### **How to avoid microaggressions in the classroom/ school context for educators:**

#### **Self-reflection and awareness:**

- It is important to educate yourself and others about different sexual and gender identities (also their intersection with class, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, ability), and the variant experiences that derive from them which may differ among individuals
- Reflect on your personal biases and stereotypes. Being aware of implicit biases helps prevent unintentionally hurtful comments.

#### **Use inclusive language:**

- Avoid making assumptions about someone's identity (e.g., gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation).
- Use gender-neutral language (e.g., "they/them," "folks," or "everyone" instead of "ladies and gentlemen"/ "boys and girls").
- Always ask people how they like to be addressed or how they identify instead of guessing.

#### **Be mindful of jokes and comments:**

- Avoid humour that targets specific groups or reinforces harmful stereotypes. This type of humour perpetuates inherent types of violence and enhances exclusion.
- Be aware that harmful comments which are intended as compliments (e.g., "*you don't look gay*" or "*you are very feminine for a lesbian*") can be offensive.

#### **Active listening:**

- Pay attention to how your words and actions impact your students and colleagues. If someone mentions they feel uncomfortable by something you said, listen carefully and reflect on it rather than becoming defensive or passive aggressive. It is crucial to implement this practice in general.

### **Help create inclusive communities:**

- Respect and sense of belonging: schools should promote values of respect and acceptance. This can be done through regular assemblies, activities, and visible messaging (e.g. pride flags/ stickers/ drawings/posters) that celebrate diversity.
- Modelling inclusivity: School staff must serve as role models and implement inclusive behaviours by respecting diverse perspectives and constantly encouraging students to do the same.

### **Implementing awareness practices and educating your students about inclusiveness and acceptance step by step:**

- Firstly, provide clear and thorough definitions of the terms of microaggressions and bullying.
- Use real-life examples to demonstrate both concepts, showing how microaggressions might be less overt than bullying, but still harmful (example: joking about someone's sexual orientation or questioning someone's gender identity).
- Role-playing exercises where students act out different scenarios involving microaggressions and bullying could be extremely useful for deeper empathic understanding. Have them practice recognizing these behaviours and responding in various different respectful ways.
- Empathy-building: Engage students in activities and exercises that build and promote empathy, such as sharing stories/experiences or imagining themselves in someone else's shoes. Mutual sharing can help students understand both the emotional and physical impact of bullying and microaggressions but also help set a proactive context for acceptance and respect.
- Implement a non-tolerance policy on emotionally and physically harmful behaviours along with anti-discrimination policies: it is at this point important to stress that it is better to use methods of constructive criticism rather than punishments. Positively reinforce your students to behave with respect toward their peers.

- Focus on the building of strong teacher/student relationships: encourage your colleagues to develop strong, supportive relationships with all students-especially those who might feel marginalized- in order to create a safe environment for the victims to speak up.
- Peer relationships: Facilitate opportunities for students to build positive relationships with one another, through group activities and cooperative learning.

## How to deal with Bullying incidents in the classroom context: Preventive and Responsive strategies

### Preventive Strategies:

#### *Foster a Positive and Inclusive School Culture:*

A positive school culture is foundational to preventing bullying. By promoting inclusivity, building a strong sense of community, and incorporating social-emotional learning (SEL)<sup>1</sup>, educators can create an environment where respect, empathy, and kindness flourish, leaving little room for bullying behaviours.

Inclusivity means creating a school environment where every student feels valued, respected, and seen, regardless of their background or identity. When inclusivity is actively promoted, students are less likely to engage in exclusionary or bullying behaviours based on differences.

- **Celebrate Diversity:** Hold events, projects, or lessons that celebrate cultural, social, and individual diversity. This can include:
- **Multicultural Days:** Organize school-wide events where students and staff share food, traditions, clothing, and stories from their cultures.
- **Diverse Role Models:** Include diverse voices and perspectives in lessons across subjects, such as featuring authors, historical figures, and leaders from various ethnicities, genders, and abilities.
- **Display Inclusive Symbols:** Post LGBTQI+ pride flags, posters, and signs that affirm support for diversity and inclusion. These symbols signal to LGBTQI+ students that the school is a safe space.
- **Create As Safe A Space As Possible for Marginalized Groups:** Establish support groups or clubs that provide a safe environment for students from marginalized communities,

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<sup>1</sup> SEL stands for Social and Emotional Learning, which refers to the process through which individuals, especially students, develop skills to manage emotions, set positive goals, show empathy for others, establish healthy relationships, and make responsible decisions. It integrates emotional intelligence with academic learning to foster well-rounded personal development, creating a foundation for success both in school and in life. SEL programs aim to improve social skills, self-awareness, and emotional regulation, enhancing both academic performance and overall well-being in the school context.

such as LGBTQI+ students, students with disabilities, or students from minority racial or ethnic groups.

- **Inclusive Language and Behaviour:** Teach and model the use of inclusive language. Address and challenge stereotypes, slurs, or microaggressions in a manner that fosters understanding rather than punishment alone.
- **Educator Responsibility:** Teachers should ensure that classroom materials, interactions, and curricula reflect a range of identities and experiences, helping students feel that their identities are respected and represented.

### **Create a Sense of Community between both students and educators:**

Creating a sense of community in a school helps students feel connected to one another and fosters a collective responsibility for maintaining a safe and supportive environment. When students feel they are part of a caring community, they are more likely to act with empathy and less likely to engage in bullying.

**Teamwork and Cooperative Learning:** Incorporate activities that require students to work together towards a common goal, such as:

- **Group Projects:** Assign collaborative tasks where each student's contribution is vital to the team's success, fostering interdependence and mutual respect.
- **Classroom Jobs:** Assign students rotating responsibilities within the classroom (e.g., helping organize materials or assist peers), which gives them a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for their environment.

**Support Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs):** Help establish or support student-led LGBTQI+ clubs, such as Gay-Straight Alliances, which provide a safe space for LGBTQI+ students and allies to come together, share experiences, and advocate for inclusion.

**Mentorship Programs:** Pair LGBTQI+ students with trusted mentors or older students who can provide guidance and emotional support, helping them navigate challenges and avoid isolation.

**Classroom Inclusion Activities:** Incorporate team-building activities and group projects that promote collaboration and build relationships between diverse students, reinforcing a culture of inclusion.

**School-Wide Activities:** Plan regular, school-wide events that bring students and staff together, such as:

- **Assemblies and Pep Rallies:** Use these events to reinforce messages of unity, respect, and school pride.
- **Community Service Projects:** Engage students in community service and activism activities, both inside and outside the school, to foster a shared sense of purpose and contribution.

**Classroom Community-Building:** Teachers can integrate community-building activities within their classrooms through morning meetings, weekly reflections, or social circles, where students can share personal experiences, discuss challenges, and celebrate successes together.

### **Develop Explicit Anti-Bullying Policies**

**Define Bullying Clearly:** Ensure that the policy includes specific definitions of bullying, harassment, and discrimination, emphasizing behaviours targeting sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression.

**Include Specific Protections:** Clearly state that the school prohibits bullying and harassment based on actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

**Outline Reporting Procedures:** Establish clear, accessible procedures for reporting bullying incidents, ensuring that LGBTQI+ students can report safely without fear of retaliation.

### **Encouraging students to be Upstanders instead of Bystanders:**

A **bystander** is someone who witnesses bullying or harmful behaviour but chooses not to take action, often out of fear or uncertainty, which can perpetuate the issue. In contrast, an **upstander** actively intervenes, either by speaking out against the behaviour, supporting the victim, or reporting the incident to someone who can help. Upstanders play a crucial role in creating a positive school environment by promoting empathy and solidarity, while bystanders may unintentionally enable bullying to continue. To encourage upstander behaviour, educators can provide training and resources that empower students to recognize bullying and equip them with strategies to intervene safely and effectively. Training students on how to be upstanders, is a vital approach in creating a supportive environment for LGBTQI+ peers. Here's how to effectively encourage and equip students to intervene safely when they witness bullying or harassment towards a classmate:

#### **1. Education and Awareness**

**Workshops:** With the support of associations or experts in anti-LGBTQI+ bullying, consider organizing workshops to educate students about LGBTQI+ identities, the impact of bullying,

and the importance of allyship. An effective approach is to ensure that the facilitators use interactive activities to foster understanding and empathy.

**Guest Speakers:** Invite LGBTQI+ advocates to share their experiences, helping students relate to the issues on a personal level.

## 2. Recognizing Bullying

**Definition and Examples:** Teach students how to identify different forms of bullying (verbal, physical, social, and cyberbullying). Provide real-life scenarios to help them recognize what constitutes harassment.

**Impact of Bullying:** Discuss the emotional and psychological effects of bullying on individuals, emphasizing the need for intervention. You may request support from the school psychologist or another expert in the topic.

## 3. Developing Intervention Strategies

**Safe Interventions:** It is crucial to train students on how to intervene safely. Encourage them to assess the situation and choose the best approach, whether it's direct intervention, seeking help from an adult, or providing emotional support to the victim afterwards.

**De-escalation Techniques:** Teach skills for calming tense situations without escalating conflict. Role-playing can be effective in practicing these skills as well.

### **Parental and Community Involvement:**

- **Workshops for Parents:** Host informational sessions for parents about supporting LGBTQI+ youth and understanding the importance of being upstanders. Nevertheless, it is critical to remember that some parents may be indifferent, negative or hostile in adopting an overtly supportive attitude which can create tensions with parents who are more empathetic. Therefore, instead of following an “activist” approach, it may be more useful to build trust and introduce them gradually to the core topic, trying each time to deepen the discussion on the systems of privilege and discrimination that certain groups are confronted with. The trust-building process should be held between parents and yourselves as teachers as well as among parents themselves. In the early stages of this process, the presence of an experienced peer or an expert is unquestionably useful.

- **Community Partnerships:** Collaborate with local LGBTQI+ organizations to provide resources and support for students and families.

### Assessing regularly the school climate as an educator:

To effectively assess, strengthen, and monitor LGBTQI+ inclusiveness in school climate, consider the following key actions:

#### Assessment

- **Surveys:** Distribute anonymous questionnaires to students, staff, and parents about their experiences related to LGBTQI+ inclusiveness.
- **Focus Groups:** Conduct focus groups with LGBTQI+ students and allies to gather qualitative insights.
- **Observations:** Monitor classroom interactions and school events for inclusive practices.

#### Strengthening Inclusiveness

- **Policy Review:** Ensure non-discrimination policies explicitly include sexual orientation and gender identity.
- **Curriculum:** Integrate LGBTQI+ history and contributions across subjects to enhance visibility and understanding.
- **Support Groups:** Establish and promote clubs like GSAs for LGBTQI+ students.

#### Continuous Improvement

- **Interactive Process:** Treat inclusivity as an ongoing effort, regularly adjusting strategies based on feedback and outcomes.

### Assessing Crisis: Responsive practices against bullying

Responsive anti-bullying behaviour for educators involves actively assessing and addressing crises as they arise. Educators should be trained to recognize the signs of bullying, both overt and subtle, and to understand the impact it has on students' well-being. When a bullying incident is reported or observed, immediate intervention is crucial. This includes creating a safe space for the affected students, gathering information from all parties involved, and providing support tailored to their needs. By being proactive and responsive, educators can help create a safer and more inclusive environment for all students.

### Address and Challenge Homophobic and Transphobic Behaviour:

A zero-tolerance approach to homophobia and transphobia is crucial in addressing bullying of LGBTQI+ students. Educators must respond immediately to any form of harassment, no matter how minor.

#### *Steps:*

- **Immediate Intervention:** When homophobic or transphobic bullying occurs, intervene immediately. Educators should address the behaviour, reinforce school policies, and remind students of the importance of respect.
- **Address Microaggressions:** Educators must address even subtle forms of homophobia or transphobia, such as jokes or slurs, to prevent a culture of intolerance from taking root.
- **Implement Restorative Justice Practices:** Consider using restorative justice practices, where students involved in bullying are guided through discussions about the harm caused, encouraged to understand the impact of their behaviour, and required to make amends.

### Restorative Justice in Addressing LGBTQI+ Bullying in Schools:

Implementing restorative justice in schools can significantly reduce LGBTQI+ bullying by promoting healing, accountability, and understanding. By fostering a supportive community and encouraging open dialogue, schools can create a safer environment for all students.

#### *What is Restorative Justice?*

Restorative justice is an approach to conflict resolution that focuses on healing and rehabilitation rather than punishment. It emphasizes understanding the impact of actions on individuals and the community, fostering dialogue, and repairing harm.

#### *Why Use Restorative Justice for addressing LGBTQI+ Bullying incidents?*

1. **Empowerment:** It gives victims a voice, allowing them to express their feelings and needs.
2. **Accountability:** Offenders are encouraged to understand the consequences of their actions and take responsibility.
3. **Community Building:** It promotes a supportive school environment, fostering empathy and understanding among students.

4. **Prevention:** By addressing the root causes of bullying, restorative practices can help prevent future incidents.

### Model Positive Behaviour

- **Be a Role Model:** Demonstrate respectful and inclusive behaviour in your interactions with students and staff.
- **Share Personal Experiences:** When appropriate, share your own experiences or insights about inclusivity and respect.

### Importance of Counselling

Counselling plays a critical role in addressing the emotional and psychological impacts of bullying for both survivors and aggressors. It provides a safe space for individuals to express their feelings, understand their experiences, and develop coping strategies. Offering counselling to both bullying survivors and aggressors is essential for healing and prevention. By addressing the needs of both groups, schools can help create a more supportive environment, reduce future incidents, and promote healthier relationships among students.

### Conclusion

Proactively addressing bullying requires a multi-faceted approach that prioritizes inclusivity, communication, and support. By implementing these strategies, educators can create a safe and welcoming environment for all students, significantly reducing the incidence of bullying and promoting a culture of respect. Continuously reflect on the progress being made in educating students about microaggressions and bullying. Check in with students regularly to assess their understanding and adjust the approach if needed.

#### Unit 2: Self-Directed Activity:

A number of reported incidents are reported to an educator and then to the leadership team by a student. The student tells the educator and leadership that they are microaggressions that are having a significant negative effect on their well-being, and they consider themselves to be a victim of sustained bullying which is being enabled by the institution. The leadership team does not see the incidents reported as microaggressions but looks at each individual incident separately and tells the student they are simply jokes or comments made by other students who don't understand what they are saying can be interpreted as homophobic.

How can this incident impact psychologically, socially, emotionally, and physically on the student? How can the student proceed from here? What would you advise the student and what would you advise the leadership team?

Write a 300-word answer in your journal.

## Unit 2: Suggested Activities

### Introduction and icebreaker

**Objective:** Understanding Bullying and Microaggressions. This exercise aims to help educators recognize different manifestations of both bullying and microaggressions, understand their multiple impacts on students, and equip them with practical strategies for interventions and inclusive and supportive classroom environments.

**Duration:**

90 minutes (approx.)

**Begin by the definitions:**

- **Bullying:** Recurring, intentional harm (physical, verbal, or social) inflicted on a vulnerable individual by someone who perceives themselves as more powerful.
- **Microaggressions:** Subtle, sometimes unintentional actions and/or comments that convey bias and discrimination against marginalized groups or minorities.

Discuss how microaggressions differ from bullying. Differences and similarities.

**Discussion and self-reflection:**

- What kinds of bullying or microaggressions have you observed or heard about in schools so far in your career?
- How do you think these affect students both emotionally and academically?

### *Scenario and role play activity:*

**Duration:**

90 minutes (approx.)

Create small groups of 3 to 4 people (dependant on the number of educators).

Distribute handouts with a mix of hypothetical bullying and microaggression scenarios

A few sample scenarios:

**Scenario 1 (*Bullying*):**

*A non-binary student is repeatedly mocked by classmates for their masculine appearance. Others exclude the student from group activities.*

**Scenario 2 (Microaggression):**

*A teacher frequently addresses a trans student by her deadname, despite being corrected several times. When questioned, the teacher laughs it off, saying, "It's too hard for me to remember so many names."*

**Scenario 3 (Bullying):**

*A student is frequently pushed around and called homophobic slurs during recess for dressing more feminine from his peers. Other students encourage the behaviour, and the victim stops participating in recess activities.*

**Scenario 4 (Microaggression):**

*A female student during class is told by her male classmate, "Wow, you're pretty good for a girl in physics!"*

**Group Activity:**

Ask the groups to discuss:

- What might each student feel in these situations?
- What may be the long-term impacts on the student?
- How should a teacher or staff member handle the situation?
- Each group will write down their thoughts and share with one another.

*Role-play activity:*

*Objective: Empathy-building*

Hand out role-play cards with character roles (e.g.: the aggressor, the subject target, the teacher, the bystanders and the upstanders).

Encourage each group to act out one of the scenarios from the handout. The objectives of the activity are to:

1. Identify the type of each behaviour (bullying or microaggression).
2. Take initiative with appropriate language and actions to address the situation.

After each role-play, take 10 to 15 minutes to discuss and reflect upon what went well and what could be improved.

**Reflection questions examples:**

- How did you feel while playing your assigned role?
- What was effective in the educator's response, and what could have been done alternatively?
- How can you apply this learning outcome in your own school setting?

*Reflection journals*

Ask educators to independently and one by one reflect on the role-play exercise and the earlier group discussion on the following:

- a. Describe a moment when you witnessed bullying or microaggressions in your school. How did you respond, and how do you wish you had responded?
- b. What strategies would you further adopt to address bullying and microaggressions?
- c. What actions can you take to make your classroom a safer and more inclusive space?

*Discussion*

Ask each educator to share one key insight from their reflection and one action they are committed to practice in their classroom.

**Examples:**

- Include discussions about microaggressions in the curriculum
- Establish clear, consistent classroom policies against bullying and discrimination
- Regularly check-in on students to ensure they feel safe
- Attend further training on inclusivity and empathy in education

**Summing up**

Both microaggressions and bullying, despite differing in detectability, contribute to harmful school environments that deeply affect students' well-being and academic performance. As

educators, it is essential to foster awareness, empathy, and inclusive practices in the classroom, by addressing and challenging these behaviours and the biases they derive from.

### Videos

#### [History of Pride Since The 1800s](#)

Watch this video carefully and make notes on how LGBTQI+ history milestones could be integrated in the curriculum.

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## Unit 3: Manage conflicts and foster dialogue: How to talk about LGBTQI+ inclusion

### Unit 3: Manage conflicts and foster dialogue: How to talk about LGBTQI+ inclusion - Asynchronous Activity

This part of the Asynchronous material for this unit involves watching the corresponding PowerPoint presentation on Moodle, titled: Strand Two Unit Three Slides.

### Unit 3: Manage conflicts and foster dialogue: How to talk about LGBTQI+ inclusion – Reading Materials

Creating an inclusive classroom environment that supports LGBTQI+ inclusion is essential for fostering a space where all students feel valued, respected, and safe. This requires deliberate effort from educators to manage conflicts and promote meaningful dialogue. Below is a more in-depth step-by-step guide on how to engage in these discussions and maintain an inclusive learning environment.

#### 1. Establish a foundation of respect and safe (as possible) spaces

##### *Clear ground rules:*

Before engaging in discussions about LGBTQI+ topics, set clear expectations for behaviour and communication. Establish policies such as “no hate speech” and make these guidelines visible to all (e.g. put them on a board) and refer back to them when you think it is necessary.

##### *Inclusive language:*

As an educator, using language that acknowledges and respects diversity in sexual orientation and gender identity (and other domains of course) is of high importance. Avoid making assumptions about a student’s identity or using gendered language that may exclude certain groups. Use terms like “they” instead of assuming or guessing “he”/ “she,” and ask students how they prefer to be addressed, including their pronouns. Moreover, try at all times to be discreet with students’ gender and sexual identity, in order not to expose someone.

## **2. Educate class on LGBTQI+ Issues and Identities**

*Introduce your students to the basics of LGBTQI+ terminology:*

It is essential to ensure that students clearly understand the terms related to LGBTQI+ identities (such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, etc.) and the distinctions between them. Take time to explain what each identity represents, ensuring students have a shared understanding of concepts. However, it is crucial to understand that this education needs to happen gradually and thoughtfully.

*Integrate LGBTQI+ contributions and history in the curriculum:*

Don't limit LGBTQI+ discussions to specific topics like health or social studies. Instead, embed LGBTQI+ figures, issues, and histories across different subjects. For instance, in literature, explore works by LGBTQI+ authors; in history, highlight LGBTQI+ movements and figures like the Stonewall riots, Harvey Milk, or Marsha P. Johnson.

*Highlight the intersectionality within LGBTQI+ identities:*

Help students understand that LGBTQI+ communities are diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, and ability. This intersectional approach challenges the idea that LGBTQI+ identities are homogeneous and serves for a more holistic understanding of people's experiences which fosters empathy.

## **3. Open Dialogue**

*Encourage questions and dialogue:*

Encourage students to ask respectful questions if they don't understand certain concepts. Normalize this process of learning by reminding students that it is okay to ask questions as long as they do so with empathy and respect. Be prepared to answer questions and guide students toward well-respected resources.

*Facilitate group discussions:*

To encourage dialogue, create opportunities for students to discuss LGBTQI+ inclusion in small groups or as a class. Pose open-ended questions like, "What does it mean to be inclusive of different gender identities?" or "How can we support our peers in feeling safe and respected?" These discussions help students process the complexity of ideas, exchange experiences and build safe relationships with their peers and classmates.

#### **4. Addressing Conflicts**

##### *Intervene in bullying and discriminatory behaviours:*

If students engage in bullying, harassment, or discriminatory behaviour based on sexual orientation or gender identity, it's crucial to intervene immediately. Make it clear that such behaviour will not be tolerated and that it violates the classroom's rules of respect and inclusion.

##### *Facilitate restorative justice:*

When conflicts arise, particularly between students, consider using restorative justice practices. This involves bringing the students involved in the conflict together to discuss what happened, express their feelings, and work toward a resolution. It is crucial that the focus is on understanding and healing rather than the punishment of the perpetrator(s).

#### **5. Support LGBTQI+ Students explicitly**

##### *Confidentiality:*

Some LGBTQI+ students may not be out to their peers or family and may have concerns about their privacy. Ensure that any conversations you have with them about their identity are confidential, unless they choose to share it. Reassure them that you are available for support and that their safety and well-being are your priorities.

##### *LGBTQI+-inclusive policies:*

Establish rules that explicitly protect LGBTQI+ students from discrimination and harassment. This should include that students are addressed by their correct name and pronouns and have access to gender-neutral restrooms or facilities that align with their gender identity.

##### *Organize LGBTQI+ celebration events:*

Celebrate diversity in your school community by organizing events such as LGBTQI+ history month or pride-themed activities. These events can highlight the contributions of LGBTQI+ individuals while reinforcing the school's commitment to inclusion.

## **6. Engage parents/caretakers constructively to the dialogue**

### *Communicate the importance of inclusion:*

When discussing LGBTQI+ topics with parents, frame the conversation around creating an environment where all students can thrive both academically and as personalities. Emphasize the importance of respect and sense of belonging for every student, regardless of their identity.

### *Handle oppositions by providing facts:*

When faced with resistance or controversy, respond calmly. Use evidence-based information to clarify misconceptions and explain the importance of inclusion in supporting student well-being and academic success. Avoid escalating conflicts by remaining non-confrontational.

### *Acknowledge parental concerns while upholding the commitment to inclusiveness:*

Some parents may express discomfort or opposition to LGBTQI+ topics being discussed in the classroom. While it's important to listen to their concerns, be clear that fostering a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment is non-negotiable. While it's important to respect diverse viewpoints, it's equally important to reinforce that respect and safety are essential in the classroom. Make it clear that no one's beliefs should harm another person or make them feel unsafe. Focus on the well-being of all students as your top priority.

### *Provide valuable resources to families:*

Offer families resources that can help understand LGBTQI+ identities and issues. For example: books, websites, or community organizations that support LGBTQI+ individuals and their families.

## **7. Focus on continuous self-education**

### *Professional development:*

As an educator, it is important to continue being up to date with LGBTQI+ inclusion and best teaching practices. It may be helpful to attend further workshops or read contemporary articles that focus on LGBTQI+ issues in education. Regularly reflect on your teaching practices and identify areas for growth, while seeking feedback from your students.

## 8. Reflect and evolve

*Assess the classroom environment on a regular basis:*

It is important that you reflect constantly on the atmosphere in your classroom to be sure that it is truly inclusive for LGBTQI+ students. Are there areas where more work needs to be done? Ask for feedback from your students to understand how they perceive the classroom environment and make adjustments if needed.

*Be flexible:*

LGBTQI+ issues and conversations evolve over time. Stay adaptable and open to learning new ways to foster inclusion in the school context.

By implementing these strategies, educators will be able to manage conflicts effectively, encourage dialogue, and foster an inclusive environment for LGBTQI+ students. The key is to be proactive, empathetic, and committed to creating a classroom in which every student feels respected and supported, regardless of their identity.

### Unit 3: Self-Directed Activity:

Consider the following questions and write a 250–300-word entry into your learning journal. Reflect on your past, present, and future educational institutions:

1. How have you seen conflicts regarding LGBTQI+ inclusion resolved in the past?
2. Who are the most and least influential people in resolving conflicts and supporting LGBTQI inclusion?
3. How do the interests of these stakeholders align or conflict with one another?
4. What might motivate each stakeholder group to support a more inclusive environment?

### Unit 3: Suggested Activity

Duration: 90 min. (approx.)

#### Goals:

By the end of the activity, participants should have a clear understanding of the key stakeholders involved in classroom conflict management and LGBTQI+ inclusion, as well as a deeper understanding of each group's influences and interests. This activity aims to help in forming strategies to engage stakeholders effectively and foster an inclusive classroom environment.

#### Introduction/ icebreaker:

Briefly explain stakeholders: introduce the concept of stakeholders: individuals or groups who have an interest in or are affected by the topic at hand; in this case LGBTQI+ inclusion and classroom conflicts.

#### Issues:

- How to manage classroom conflicts in a constructive manner.
- How to promote LGBTQI+ inclusion and respect for diversity in the classroom.

Stakeholders: students, educators, parents, school administration

#### Brainstorming:

Ask participants to think about all the people or groups involved in conflict management and LGBTQI+ inclusion in schools, and the different ways each group involved is affected by or is in a position to resolve conflicts.

Discuss the following topics in small groups:

- Who are the most influential stakeholders in resolving conflicts and supporting LGBTQI inclusion?
- How do the interests of these stakeholders align or conflict with one another?
- What might motivate each stakeholder group to support a more inclusive environment?

- Who are the highest influence stakeholders and who are the least influential?

For each stakeholder group, analyse:

- What their main interests or concerns related to managing conflicts and LGBTQI+ inclusion are
- Define the role they currently play in the classroom/school environment
- Brainstorm proactive methods of resolving conflicts and fostering inclusivity for each stakeholder group

Based on the stakeholder map, encourage participants to brainstorm various ways for engaging the key stakeholders. Examples could include:

- Providing training for teachers on conflict resolution and LGBTQI+ inclusion
- Creating peer support groups for LGBTQI students
- Engaging parents through educational workshops on diversity and inclusion
- Developing school policies that explicitly support inclusivity
- Organizing anti-bullying campaigns and events

Ask participants to reflect on what they learned about the role of stakeholders in managing conflicts and promoting LGBTQI+ inclusion and share their insights with the whole group.

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