

UNIT 2 'COMING OUT'

Note: You should review these resources and links before use to check if they are appropriate for your pupils at Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4 and in line with your school's ethos and RSE policy. Before teaching these lessons, you should liaise with your class tutor or pastoral link to establish if there are issues or sensitivities in the class that need to be considered.

LEARNING INTENTIONS

- Pupils are learning about:
- emotions and feelings associated with 'coming out';
 - how young people who are 'coming out' can be supported;
 - sources of guidance and support for young people who are 'coming out'; and
 - respecting everyone's voice, even if their beliefs and choices are different from mine.

SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES

- Working with Others
- Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making
- Communication.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

- Skills integrated
- Offers choice
- Supportive environment
- Positive reinforcement.

ATTITUDES AND DISPOSITIONS

- Respect
- Concern for others
- Tolerance
- Openness to new ideas
- Integrity.

Resources

- Resources A–C
- A3 or A4 paper
- Coloured pens
- www.whenicameout.com
- [Your Teen – Teen Coming Out Stories: 3 Gay Teenagers Share Their Stories](#)
- [LGBT Youth Scotland – Posters](#)
- [Tes – LGBT Posters](#)
- [Cara-Friend – A Teacher's Resource: Encouraging LGBTQ+ Inclusive Practice](#)
- [Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3](#)
- [Brook – Coming out as a Lesbian: Chloe's Story](#)
- [Brook – Advice on Coming Out](#)

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Activity 1
Emotions and feelings

- Ask the pupils the following questions:
 - What does 'coming out' mean?
 - Does it mean the same for everyone?
 - How do you think a person might feel before and after they 'come out'?
- Explain to the pupils that they're going to explore the emotions and feelings that someone may feel when 'coming out'.
- Introduce some 'coming out' stories from one or more of the sources below:
 - www.whenicameout.com
 - [Your Teen – Teen Coming Out Stories: 3 Gay Teenagers Share Their Stories](#), available at www.yourteenmag.com
 - [Brook – Coming out as a Lesbian: Chloe's Story](#)
- Follow up by asking the pupils the questions below to stimulate their thinking:
 - Did everyone have the same experience of 'coming out'?
 - What differences were there?
 - Did it seem harder for some people than others? What made it harder?
 - What impact might the different experiences have had on the person, their family and/or their friends?
 - Depending on the person's experience, do you think they might have felt differently before coming out, in the process of coming out and after coming out?
- Divide the class into small groups and give each group a copy of Resource A.
- Give each group a different task from the list below:
 - Discuss the emotions and feelings someone may feel before 'coming out'.
 - Discuss the emotions and feelings someone may feel in the process of 'coming out'.
 - Discuss the emotions and feelings someone may feel after 'coming out'.
- You may want to guide the pupils at the start to help them think of ideas.
- Ask the groups to write down the emotions and feelings in the relevant column on Resource A.
- After the groups have finished, ask them to share their ideas with the rest of the class.



Activity 2
Contact the helpline

- Divide the class into pairs or small groups.
- Give each group a copy of Resource B, which features scenarios about 'coming out'.
- Ask the pupils to act as agony aunts and offer advice to these fictional pupils. They can write their advice under each scenario on Resource B.
- After the groups have finished, ask them to share their ideas with the rest of the class and gather alternative advice for each scenario.
- Then ask the class to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the different advice each group has provided.

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Activity 3

What can teachers and your school do?

- Start this activity by suggesting how you, as a teacher, could be sensitive to the needs of a young person when they first 'come out'. See Resource C for some examples.
- In groups of three or four, ask the pupils to add four more examples of how staff, pupils and the school in general could be supportive to a young person when they 'come out'.
- After the groups have finished, ask them to share their ideas with the rest of the class.
- Pupil answers might include:
 - creating an inclusive environment for pupils identifying as LGBTQ+;
 - reviewing school policies to make sure that they address the issues that LGBTQ+ pupils and staff may face on a daily basis;
 - making sure that initial reactions to a young person's decision to 'come out' are compassionate and encouraging;
 - using positive language;
 - using correct pronouns; and
 - tackling any gender-based bullying issues immediately and having a zero-tolerance policy on discrimination and bullying of any type.

Teaching Notes

You might find the resources below useful for this topic:

- Cara-Friend has produced [A Teacher's Resource: Encouraging LGBTQ+ Inclusive Practice](#), available at www.cara-friend.org.uk, to help teachers support, guide and advise pupils who identify as LGBTQ+, or who are questioning their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
- The Brook advice available at www.brook.org.uk provides help and guidance for LGBTQ+ young people who are considering 'coming out.'
- The Living Out website, available at www.livingout.org, features stories about Christians experiencing same-sex attraction. These stories can be useful discussion starters for exploring same-sex attraction and, for example, making the decision to live a life of celibacy.



Activity 4

Review of learning intentions

It's important that pupils have opportunities to reflect on their learning. You can choose from a range of methods detailed in our [Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3](#) resource, such as:

- Dartboard Evaluation
- Graffiti Board
- Fist-to-Five
- KWL (Know – Want to Know – Learned) Grid
- Post-It Collection
- Think, Pair and Share.

RESOURCE A:
EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS

Before 'Coming Out'	In the Process of 'Coming Out'	After 'Coming Out'

RESOURCE B:
CONTACT THE HELPLINE



Dear helpline,
My name is Danielle. I am 15.
I have recently 'come out' as bisexual to my
parents and they are furious! They simply
cannot accept it. I am devastated and feel
very rejected! What should I do?

Dear helpline,
My name is Jill. I am 14. I have recently told
my friends that I am a lesbian and everyone in
school knows. I want to tell my parents, but I
am frightened they will hate me and say I am
not 'normal'. Can you give
me some advice?

Dear helpline,
My name is Jacob. I am 16. I have recently
'come out' as gay and all of my friends and
family are very supportive. However, some
of the boys at school have complained that
they don't want to get changed in front of
me during PE. I am feeling very upset. Can
you help?



RESOURCE B:
CONTACT THE HELPLINE

Dear helpline,

My name is John. I am 14. I know that I am gay, but I don't feel ready to have a boyfriend. Should I 'come out'? I am worried that there will be pressure to move too fast.



RESOURCE C:
SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE

Signposting to other organisations for further or more specialised support

Allowing the young person to be in charge of their own story and to tell people when they are ready

Listening to what the young person is saying and allowing them to express themselves and self-identify

Asking supportive questions and not interrogating the young person, as talking about these issues can often be emotionally difficult and even embarrassing

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