



Sexual diversity and gender identity

Combating homophobic and transphobic prejudice and exclusion

 7-9, 12-15

 4 x 45 min.

 tape; posters (A3 size); projector; smartboard;

 The module revolves around typical gender role expectations, and experiences of homophobia and transphobia in day-to-day life. Its intent is to help pupils engage with and reflect on constructed norms around gender and sexuality and to point them to possibilities for action if they experience or witness discrimination.

 **Political/social studies** **Ethics/values education** **Philosophy** **Psychology**



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Introduction

Background information and didactical perspective

The module's intent is to raise pupils' awareness of the impact of constructed societal norms by telling them the stories of young people subject to discrimination as LGBTQI+ people. Its overarching objective is their empowerment to find and advocate for their own standpoints.

Placing an emphasis on biographical learning, the module's materials centre specific, everyday depictions of situations in which discrimination takes place. Pupils will explore the situation for LGBTQI+ people in their own countries and identify and discuss potential routes to action.

Teachers delivering the module should be aware that there are likely to be people in the group or class who identify as LGBTQI+ and should conduct the lessons with the appropriate sensitivity. They may wish to display a poster in their classroom containing details of local or national support and advisory services.

Teachers in whose schools hate incidents have occurred may find helpful information in the UN factsheet downloadable from www.unfe.org.

Learning outcomes

Competencies

Skills in forming judgements, taking action; the genesis of societal norms; methodological and analytical skills; social skills; values education; multiperspectivity; skills in acting independently and successfully within a heterogeneous group; identity and lifestyle choices in a changing, modern society; negotiating the competing demands of self-fulfilment and societal expectations within personal identity and lifestyle choices; value systems and orientations with regard to societal norms; developing strategies for action; acknowledging and advocating for human rights and the principles of liberty and equality; media literacy skills

Topics / National curriculum

People and society/community: respect for difference and diversity; rejection of societal attitudes and actions that denigrate others; encouragement to stand up for what one believes in; recognising the subjectivity of emotions and points of view

Lesson plan

Abbreviations:

A = Activity

D = Discussion

GW = Group work

IW = Individual work

HW = Homework

PW = Partnerwork

PTS = Previous Teacher's Study

PO = Pupils opinions

PP = Pupil's presentations

TP = Teacher's presentation

Lesson No 1 : What is 'normal' anyway?

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Introduction (15 min.) GW PO	<h3>Preparation</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The teacher has made a sufficient number of copies of M1.• Materials for displaying the posters are available.• The teacher has set up a projector for a video (M2). <h3>Execution</h3> <p>Step 1 The teacher divides the pupils into, or asks them to form, small groups and provides each group with an A3 copy of the poster template (M1).</p> <p>Step 2 Each pupil in the group begins with one of the four questions on the poster, considering it and noting down their thoughts in the poster's appropriate quadrant, leaving enough space for others to do the same in the course of the exercise.</p> <p>Step 3 The teacher allows a short period of time for this and then tells the group it's time to move on; the pupils turn the poster 90° and each pupil in the group starts on the next question, adding their thoughts to those written down by the previous pupil.</p> <p>Step 4 This is repeated until all pupils in a group have noted down their thoughts on all the questions.</p>	M1 Poster template What is 'normal' anyway?
Presentation; Reinforcement of learnings (15 min.) GW PP	<p>Step 1 The groups read all their comments together and explain them to the others in the group if necessary.</p> <p>Step 2 In each quadrant, they choose and highlight a thought or view that they think is particularly important.</p> <p>Step 3 Each group chooses one or two of its members to read out and explain the highlighted ideas to the others.</p> <p>Step 4 The whole class now discusses the ideas presented by each group, with the teacher facilitating the discussion.</p> <p>Step 5 At the end of this phase, the posters are displayed in the room.</p> <h3>Note</h3> <p><i>At the end of the lesson, the teacher should note down the working definition of '(societal) norm' developed during the lesson with the pupils.</i></p>	M1 Poster template What is 'normal' anyway?
Extension (8 min.) PO PW	<p>Step 1 The teacher shows the video of the song 'The Light' (M2).</p> <p>Step 2 In an initial whole-class discussion, the pupils give their first impressions of the video.</p> <p>Step 3 They then work in pairs to come up with a suitable title for the video.</p>	M2 Video 'The Light'

Presentation;
Reinforcement
of learnings
(7 min.)

Step 1 Each pair tells the others their ideas for a title; the whole class discusses the ideas, with the teacher facilitating.

Note

PP D

The teacher should explain that the video's principal focus is critical reflection on and questioning of gender roles and societal expectations of what being a 'normal' boy involves; the initial exercise on the definition of 'normal' should reinforce this point. Pupils should be made aware that enjoying wearing dresses as a boy doesn't necessarily equate to being, or identifying as, gay or trans. Teachers may wish to discuss the 'Gender Unicorn' with pupils, and should help pupils with any questions they have about terminology in this context.

Lesson No 2 : Tackling homophobia and transphobia

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Initial and second phases of lesson (10 min.) A	<p>Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher has made sufficient numbers of copies of M6 (for students working on their own), M7 (for group work), M8 (for students working on their own, as required), M9-M13 (one per pupil), and M14 (group work). Prepare a computer with internet access and projector for videos <p>Execution</p> <p>Step 1</p> <p>Each pupil receives one of the worksheets with observation tasks for the video 'The Light' (M3-M6) and reads through the tasks quietly to themselves.</p> <p>Note</p> <p><i>As all pupils will have the same amount of time to complete the tasks, the teacher should try and give the more substantial tasks (child, father) to more able pupils.</i></p> <p>Step 2 The teacher explains that she or he is now going to show the video 'The Light' a second time and asks the pupils to make brief notes on the worksheet about the character(s) assigned to them.</p> <p>Step 3 If needed, the teacher can pause the video at certain points or show it again in full.</p>	<p>M2 Video 'The Light'</p> <p>M3 Worksheet Observations on 'The Light' (child)</p> <p>M4 Worksheet Observations on 'The Light' (mother)</p> <p>M5 Worksheet Observations on 'The Light' (father)</p> <p>M6 Worksheet Observations on 'The Light' (other characters)</p>
Presentation; Reinforcement of learnings (10 min.) PP D	<p>Step 1 In the course of a whole-class discussion facilitated by the teacher, pupils share and talk about their observations.</p> <p>Step 2 Discussion starters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What role do ideas of 'the norm' play in the video? What do these ideas consist of? What impact do they have on the various characters in the video? How do the characters in the video handle expectations around 'normal' ways of being a boy or girl, and what attitudes do they show? How and why do these attitudes change in the course of the story? 	<p>M2 Video 'The Light'</p>
Transition to next phase of lesson (5 min.) TP	<p>Step 1 The teacher now shows the UN video 'The Riddle' (M7), whose purpose is to raise awareness of a range of forms of discrimination against LGBTQI+ people in the UN's member states.</p> <p>Step 2 If needed, the teacher can hand out copies of the video's transcript (M8).</p>	<p>M7 Video The Riddle</p> <p>M8 Transcript The Riddle</p>

Third phase of lesson
(20 min.)

GW

Step 1 The teacher explains that the next phase of the lesson will focus on discrimination at various levels, using accounts of real-life events. She or he hands out **M9-M13**, ensuring that roughly equal numbers of pupils are working on each source. All pupils additionally receive a worksheet (**M14**), which can also be used in poster format.

Step 2 The teacher asks the pupils to read through the source given to them quietly to themselves, paying particular attention to the accounts the sources give of how people responded to the discriminatory acts. The teacher may assign each pupil looking at a particular story one of the sources listed; that pupil reads the source and notes down what was done against the discrimination. They should keep these notes, as they will need them later.

M9
Informational text
Constance's story

M10
Informational text 'It wasn't an attack on me, it was an attack on the bar'

M11
Newspaper article
Gay men unable to donate blood plasma

M12
Newspaper article
Discrimination at a viennese coffee house

M13
Newspaper article
American singer pays tribute to lesbian couple attacked on London bus

M14
Worksheet
Discrimination

Lesson No 3 : Forms of discrimination; pupil research

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Continuation of third phase from previous lesson (10 min.)	<p>Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The teacher has made a sufficient number of copies of M15.• Facilities for internet searches are available (alternatively, the teacher can print out copies of the country-specific information from the website in M15). <p>Execution</p> <p>Step 1 The pupils return to their groups from lesson 2 and continue their work on the sources they have been given.</p> <p>Step 2 In their groups, they discuss the questions on the worksheet/poster (M14) and note down their answers in the appropriate fields.</p>	<p>M9 Informational text Constance's story</p> <p>M10 Informational text 'It wasn't an attack on me, it was an attack on the bar'</p> <p>M11 Newspaper article Gay men unable to donate blood plasma</p> <p>M12 Newspaper article Discrimination at a viennese coffee house</p> <p>M13 Newspaper article American singer pays tribute to lesbian couple attacked on London bus</p> <p>M14 Worksheet Discrimination</p>

Presentation;
Reinforcement
of learnings
(20 min.)

PP D PO

Step 1 One group tells the class what they have noted down, and the other groups add their own thoughts and ideas.

Step 2 With the teacher facilitating, the pupils ask questions about the ideas on the worksheets/posters and give their own views.

Step 3 The teacher may wish to bring the following aspects into the discussion:

- o How would you describe the discrimination that took place in the accounts given in the sources?
- o What do those carrying out the discrimination perceive as being outside the 'norm'?
- o What forms do the discriminatory acts and attacks described in the sources take?
- o Have you experienced or witnessed similar incidents?

Step 4
The teacher categorises the instances of discrimination and violence discussed (physical, verbal, systemic, etc.)

Note

Options for action in response to discrimination will be the subject of the module's closing lesson.

Important

The teacher should ensure that pupils who share their own experience of discrimination with the class are not put in the position of having to justify themselves.

Discrimination can have a profound impact on the individual subject to it. It's important to avoid creating a hierarchy of experiences of discrimination; as multi-faceted as these experiences are, it would be unwise and inappropriate for a teacher to deny a pupil's experience or invalidate her or his feelings about it.

Step 5 After this, pupils look back at the posters they made in lesson 1 around the concept of 'normal' (M1) and discuss any changes the thoughts and ideas noted on the posters have undergone in the course of the lessons since then.

Research
session
(15 min.)

GW

Step 1 The teacher reminds students that the materials they have worked on in the course of the last two lessons report incidents that took place in England, Slovenia, Austria and the US, and raises the question of LGBTQI+ rights in other countries.

Step 2 The teacher should emphasise at this point that LGBTQI+ rights are not 'special' rights of some kind, but rather human rights.

Step 3 Pupils now spend time finding out about the situation in their country. The teacher points them to the '*Rainbow Map*' (M15) as a source of information.

Note

*Students can click on the relevant country on the '*Rainbow Map*' to download a 'chapter' providing concise and significant information on the country in question.*

M15
Worksheet Rainbow
map

Lesson No 4 : What can we do?

Phase	Content	Media, Material
Completing research (10 min.) GW	Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A blackboard or whiteboard is available for writing up points arising from the discussion. Execution <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils complete the research work commenced in the previous lesson.	
Presentation; Reinforcement of learnings (15 min.) PP D PO	Step 1 One of the groups reports back to the class on key facts regarding the situation of LGBTQI+ rights, with the other groups adding further points as required. Step 2 The teacher facilitates the discussion. Ideas and points to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What rights do people who do not identify as 'straight' have and need?• Which rights have LGBTQI+ people yet to attain in your country, in terms of equality and freedom from discrimination?• Is there anything else you found out that you would like to bring to the class' attention?	
Discussion; Wrapping-up of topic (20 min.) TP D PO	Step 1 The teacher explains that the final part of the lesson will revolve around calls to and options for action against discrimination experienced by LGBTQI+ people. Step 2 The materials covered in the module so far can serve as a partial basis for the discussion, alongside the 'action points' ¹ recommended by the UN, which the teacher reads out at this stage: <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Speak out when you see any form of discrimination against LGBT people.○ If you, your friends or family members believe you are the victim of discrimination on [the] grounds of sexuality or gender identity, [tell a teacher or another adult you trust, or alternatively, if you don't feel anyone you know can help you, you can send an email to] the UN (urgent-action@ohchr.org).○ Don't assume that everyone else is heterosexual: ask if someone has a partner rather than assuming they have a wife, if a man, or a husband, if a woman.○ Don't assume all trans and intersex people are lesbian or gay – they may be heterosexual or bisexual.○ As well as doing these things, you should listen to LGBTQI+ people, educate yourself about their lives and needs, and make sure your language is respectful, including using appropriate pronouns, terms and forms of address. Step 3 The pupils discuss the action points and supplement them with their own ideas on how to actively combat discrimination. Step 4 The teacher writes up a selection of ideas on the board. Step 5 The Free & Equal campaign website contains numerous additional materials, videos, GIFs and memes on the issues: www.unfe.org .	

¹ United Nations Human Rights/Office of the High Commissioner (2015): Equality & Non-Discrimination, p. 3:

<https://www.unfe.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Equality-And-Non-Discrimination-English.pdf>

United Nations Human Rights/Office of the High Commissioner (2015): Bullying and Violence in Schools, p. 3:

<https://www.unfe.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Bullying-and-Violence-in-School.pdf>

M1 Poster template What is 'normal' anyway?

What is 'normal' – what does it mean?

Who decides which sexualities or gender identities are 'normal'?

Is there a 'normal' way of being a girl or a boy?

What if someone doesn't meet these definitions of 'normal'?

M2 Video 'The Light'

This video accompanies the song '*The Light*' by HollySiz and tells the story of a boy who goes against social norms by playing with toys stereotypically associated with girls and wearing a dress.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cf79KXBCIDg> (03:52 min.)

Sources:

'*The Light*', from the album *My Name Is* by HollySiz.

Music: HollySiz, Video: Fabien Faure, Actors: Marie Denarnaud, Alexis Manenti & Kolia Abiteboul, Production: MAJA FILMS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cf79KXBCIDg>

M3 Worksheet Observations on *'The Light'* (child)

Pay close attention to the child who is the protagonist (main character) of the video.

What do you think he is thinking at various points in the story? Write down his thoughts in the first person ('I').

Scene 1: At school

Scene 2: Playing

Scene 3: At the table

Scene 4: Wearing the dress to school

Scene 5: Dad picks me up from school the first time



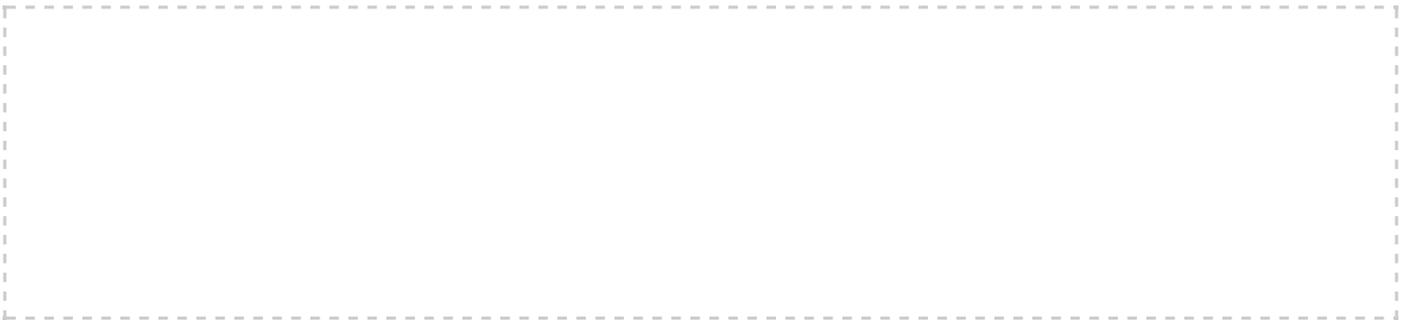
Scene 6: Dinner time and staying at the table



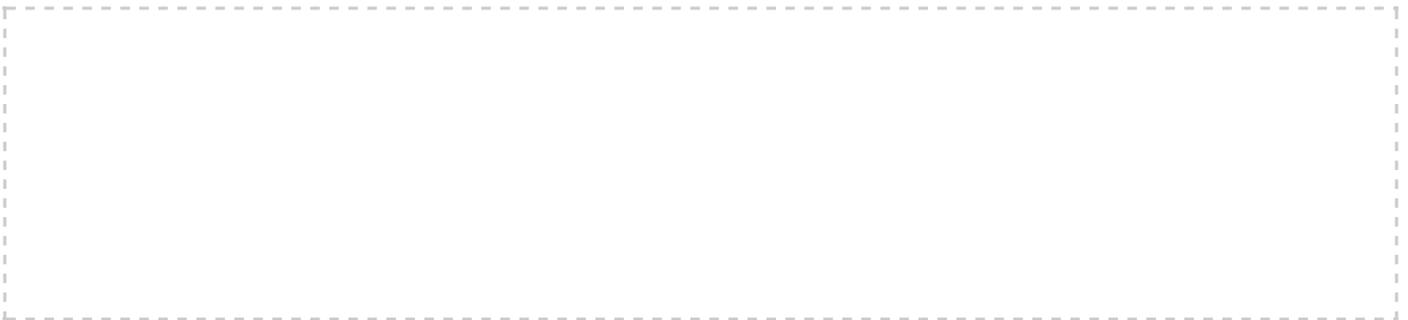
Scene 7: Next morning



Scene 8: At school again



Scene 9: Dad picks me up from school wearing a dress



You can write down anything else you noticed here.

A large, empty rectangular box with a dashed border, intended for writing notes or observations.

M4 Worksheet Observations on *'The Light'* (mother)

Pay particular attention to the child's mother.

What do you think she is thinking at various points in the story? Write down her thoughts in the first person ('I').

Scene 1: At the table

Scene 2: Argument with my partner

Scene 3: Taking my child to school

Scene 4: Parent-teacher meeting

Scene 5: Dinner time



Scene 6: Going to bed



Scene 7: The next morning – another argument



You can write down anything else you noticed here.



M5 Worksheet Observations on *'The Light'* (father)

Pay particular attention to the child's father.

What do you think he is thinking at various points in the story? Write down his thoughts in the first person ('I').

Scene 1: At the table

Scene 2: Argument with my partner

Scene 3: Picking my child up from school

Scene 4: Parent-teacher meeting

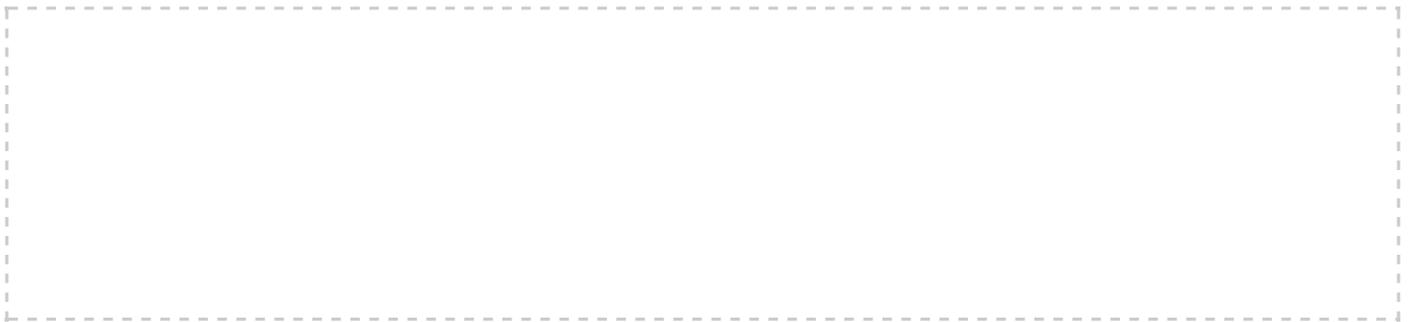
Scene 5: Dinner time



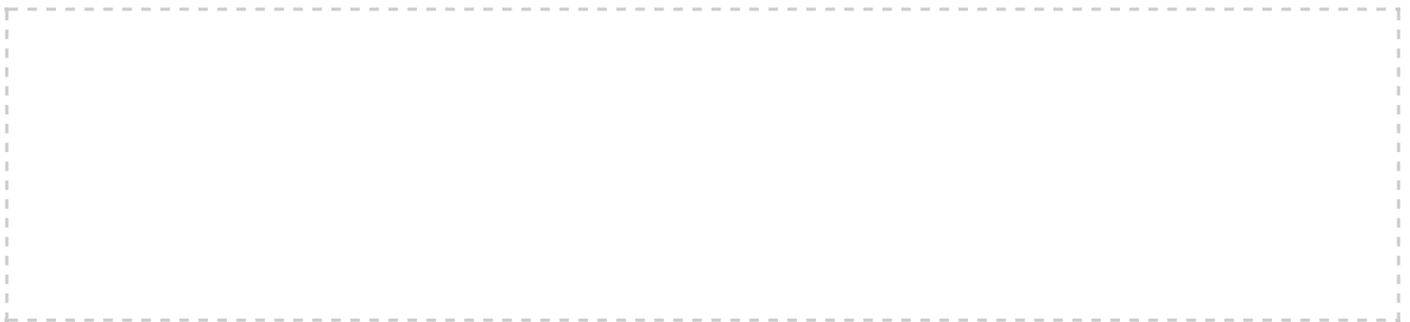
Scene 6: Going to bed



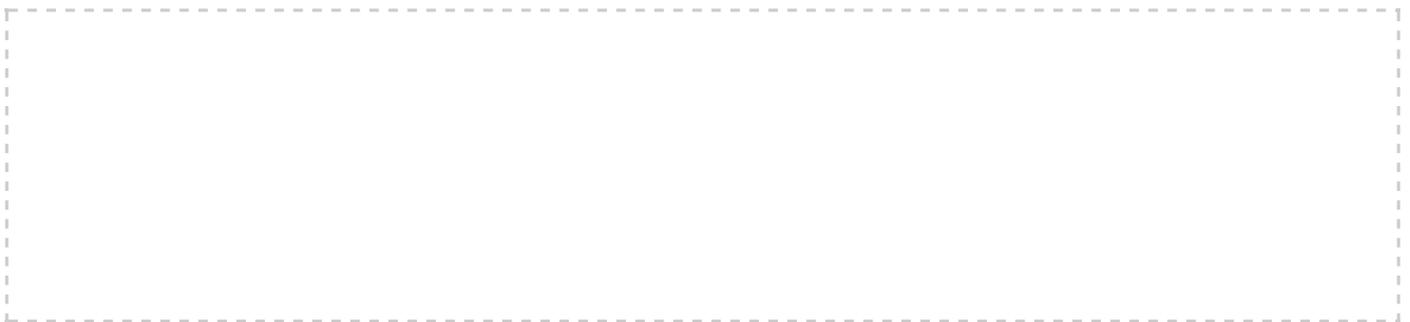
Scene 7: The next morning – another argument



Scene 8: Going for a run



Scene 9: Alone in my son's room



Scene 10: Picking him up from school – in a dress



You can write down anything else you noticed here.



M6 Worksheet Observations on *'The Light'* (other characters)

Pay particular attention to everyone in the film who is not from the family – the other children at school, the teacher, the other children's parents at pick-up time, people in the street.

What do you think they are thinking at various points in the story? Write down their thoughts in the first person ('I' or 'we'). Always make a note of which character(s) you are writing as.

Scene 1: In the classroom

Scene 2: On the way to school

Scene 3: Pick-up time (the first time)

Scene 4: Parent-teacher meeting

Scene 5: Pick-up time – with a dad in a dress



You can write down anything else you noticed here.



M7 Video The Riddle

The video *'The Riddle'* is part of a campaign called *'Free & Equal'* launched by the UN in 2015 to raise worldwide awareness of discrimination against people on the grounds of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Link: <https://www.unfe.org/the-riddle/> (02:20 min.)

Sources:

United Nations Human Rights/Office of the High Commissioner (2015)
<https://www.unfe.org/the-riddle/>

M8 Transcript The Riddle

“What exists in every corner of the world - embraced and celebrated in some countries, but is illegal in 76?

What is hidden for fear of public shame, imprisonment, torture or in 7 countries even the death penalty?

What tears families apart?

What makes people confront brutal violence on a daily basis?

What simple trait gets people treated as second-class citizens everywhere they go?

What gets children kicked out of homes, students bullied and expelled from schools and workers fired from jobs without warning?

What has existed in every country throughout history, but some people still consider it "abnormal"?

The answer?

Being gay, being lesbian, bisexual or transgender.

All over the world millions of people face violence and discrimination - just for being who they are.

Every nation is obligated by international human rights law to protect all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people from torture, discrimination and violence.

The United Nations has one simple message to the millions of LGBT people around the world:

You are not alone! LGBT rights are human rights! Together we will build a world. We will build a world that is Free and Equal!"

Sources:

'The Riddle', United Nations Human Rights/Office of the High Commissioner, 2015
<https://www.unfe.org/the-riddle/>

M9 Informational text Constance's story

A real-life instance of homophobic discrimination

Constance McMillen comes from a small town in the US state of Mississippi; her mother worked as a waitress and her father as a care coordinator. Her story takes place in 2010, when she is about to graduate high school. Most US high schools organise proms for their leavers; Constance's school is among them. Constance is looking forward to the prom, which its organisers plan to make 'a beautiful, elegant and unforgettable evening', and wants to attend with her girlfriend. The problem is that the prom's organisers have stipulated that students' dates for the event have to be of the opposite sex.'

Constance takes the decision to talk to the school's principal beforehand. She asks his permission to attend the prom with her girlfriend and lets him know that she would like to wear a suit rather than a dress. Later, Constance says that she had wanted to meet with her principal in order to avoid issues at the prom and possible attacks on her and her girlfriend. The principal denies Constance the permission she seeks, but Constance doesn't give up; she takes her case to the vice-principal and the school district. The answer from both is no. The school district's superintendent tells Constance that girls have to wear dresses to the event and boys tuxedos.

Constance requests support from the ACLU, an organisation that advocates for people in the US who are experiencing violations of their civil liberties. Two ACLU representatives write to the principal and the school district's superintendent on Constance's behalf, declaring it would be unconstitutional to exclude Constance from the prom because she is a lesbian. In response, the principal cancels the prom, citing the 'disruption' to the running of the school that meeting Constance's request would have caused. The ACLU's press office publicises the case and the school authorities' response. Constance subsequently appears on two major television talk shows and works with the ACLU to set up a Facebook page called 'Let Constance take her girlfriend to prom', which gains hundreds of thousands of likes. The school refuses to comment, Someone puts up a sign on the outside of the school: 'What happened to the Bible Belt?' The reference is to the part of the US known for its large number of highly religious and conservative inhabitants.

The case goes to court, where the judge rules that the school was not entitled to exclude Constance from the prom, but declines to order the school to hold the event. By this stage of the matter, some parents from Constance's class had organised a private prom. When Constance attempts to buy a ticket for this event, it too is cancelled. A new private prom is announced and Constance invited. On attending this event with her girlfriend, she finds only five other students there. It later emerges that a further, parent-organised private prom had taken place in secret, with all the rest of the class in attendance. After this, Constance leaves the school and changes to another. She says she was subject to repeated harassment at her old school because people blamed her for the issues around the prom.

Looking back, Constance says she had never thought that her case would gain so much publicity. She had assumed that the ACLU would write to her school, the school would take back their ban on her attending with her girlfriend, and the issue would be resolved. She also says, however, that all things considered, she's glad that her story generated so much attention, because it gave rise to a long-overdue public discussion of the problems facing young gay and lesbian people and of their rights.

Sources:

Runge, Evelyn. 'Verbotene Liebe: Warum eine US-Schule wegen zweier Lesben in Konflikt mit der Verfassung geriet', Spiegel Online, 3 April 2010, <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/a-687479.html>

Jones, Mia. „Interview with Constance McMillen“. AfterEllen.com, 22 July 2011

'2010 Itawamba County School District prom controversy', Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2010_Itawamba_County_School_District_prom_controversy

Broverman, Neal, 'ACLU Investigating Fake Prom', Advocate, 5 April 2010, <http://www.advocate.com/news/daily-news/2010/04/05/aclu-investigating-fake-prom>

Le, Judith. Prom Nite in Mississippi: McMillen V. Itawamba County School District, 16 May 2011, https://www.law.berkeley.edu/files/Prom_Nite_in_Mississippi_Le.pdf

M10 Informational text 'It wasn't an attack on me, it was an attack on the bar'

At around 9:00 pm on 25 June 2009, a group of masked young adults attacked Mitja Blažič as he stood outside Café Open, an LGBTQ bar in the Slovenian capital Ljubljana. The attack left him with injuries to his head and neck, and with permanent damage to one of his fingers. Before fleeing the scene, the attackers smashed the bar's plate glass window with a rock and threw a burning torch inside.

Mitja Blažič is president of Slovenia's 'Society for the Integration of Homosexuals (Društvo za integracijo homoseksualnosti, DIH) and was at the bar as an invited guest at a gay and lesbian literature evening. The event was part of the Pride Parade Week that took place in Ljubljana from 20 to 27 June of that year. Blažič describes the attack as a homophobic incident that targeted not him, but the bar – standing, in this case, for the whole of Slovenia's LGBTQ community.

Three perpetrators of the attack received prison sentences of one and a half years each. Blažič's legal representatives emphasised the fact that the sentences communicated to the public the important message, from the police, prosecutors and the court, that incitement to hatred, violence and discriminatory attitudes will not be tolerated in Slovenia. They further expressed the hope that the judgement would encourage other victims and survivors of homophobic violence to come forward and report the crimes committed against them. Blažič also pursued a civil case for 10,000 Euro in damages, planning to donate one-third of the amount to Café Open and one-third to the Pride Parade while keeping the final third as compensation for the injury to his finger and the psychological trauma resulting from the attack. He now takes a taxi to work and avoids walking in the city at night out of fear for his safety.

While he accepted the apology offered by the perpetrators after the first hearing in the criminal case, Mitja Blažič doubted it was genuine due to their behaviour in court. The defendants appealed their sentences; two had them reduced to seven months each and one to five months. Despite this, and in view of the fact that the defendants admitted their guilt during a restorative justice meeting and paid a sum in compensation, Blažič considers the judgement to have symbolic significance; the reduction in the perpetrators' sentences does not take away their convictions for carrying out an organised homophobic attack motivated by hatred.

Sources:

'Brutalen napad v Ljubljani', MMC RTV SLO, STA, 26 June 2009, <https://www.rtvlo.si/crna-kronika/foto-brutalen-napad-v-ljubljani/206177>

'Napadalci Blažiča dobili leto in pol zapora', 24 COM UR, 11 March 2010, <https://www.24ur.com/novice/slovenija/napadalci-blazica-dobili-leto-in-pol-zapora.html>

'Napadalci na Mitjo Blažiča v zapor', MMC RTV SLO, STA, 11 March 2010, <https://www.rtvlo.si/crna-kronika/napadalci-na-mitjo-blazica-v-zapor/225498>

'Sodba za napadalce na Open Café razveljavljena', Mladina, 29 October 2014, <https://www.mladina.si/161564/sodba-za-napadalce-na-open-caffe-razveljavljena>

M11 Newspaper article Gay men unable to donate blood plasma

“[...] I wanted to do more though. During the peak, Covid-19 wasn't just an abstract concept or an alarming news story for me. [...] So I want to make a difference. [...] I want to donate my blood plasma so that scientists can use my antibodies for treatment of other seriously ill patients. But I can't. Because I'm a gay man. I'm considered high risk because I am a man who has sex with another man.

That's despite being happily married with two children, monogamous for 17 years, healthy, HIV negative, fit and relatively young. If I was straight, bedded a different partner every week, even every night, and had never seen the inside of a GUM clinic, let alone had a test taken, I'd still be eligible to open my veins for the good of humanity.

No matter how you look at this policy, it's homophobic and out of touch. It's taken years for the gay community to shake off the stigma of the Aids epidemic of the 1980s (an event which directly led to the current NHS guidelines on gay blood donation), yet here we are in 2020 facing a virus which does not discriminate, only to be told we are still somehow contaminated.

[...] What's needed is a fairer donation system – one based on sexual behaviour, not sexual orientation. Gay men have for too long been treated as a homogenous group – everyone tarred with the stereotype of being promiscuous disco bunnies, hopping into bed with each other at the slightest provocation.

[...] There needs to be a more robust screening process that looks beyond the statistics and takes a more nuanced approach to eligibility. A collaborative report into whether the guidelines could be changed to allow some gay and bisexual men to donate blood without the current three-month deferral was delayed, ironically, by the coronavirus and is now not due to release its findings until the end of this year. It has the potential to lift the blanket ban on men who have sex with men, hopefully in time for Christmas. Its late arrival, however, could be costing lives. [...]”

Sources:

Jenkin, Matthew. 'Gay men being unable to donate covid plasma is dangerous discrimination in the middle of a public health crisis', The Independent, 1 August 2020

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/coronavirus-plasma-gay-men-donation-discrimination-test-trace-a9647956.html>

M12 Newspaper article Discrimination at a viennese coffee house

Intolerance in Vienna: Lesbian couple thrown out of café after kissing

It seems that at [one Viennese coffee house], respect for difference and diversity is not part of the philosophy. Two lesbians were thrown out for kissing. The campaigning group Achse kritischer SchülerInnen Wien (AKS Wien) says: 'After sharing a kiss when greeting each other, two lesbian women found themselves ordered by a waiter [...] to refrain from doing so and treated in a disparaging manner. After complaining to the management, the two women were asked to leave.'

The incident might sound unbelievable, but it doesn't appear to be an isolated case in Vienna. 'In the last year, between five and seven similar incidents took place in Vienna's coffee houses', says Gerd Picher from the campaigning network To Russia With Love Austria. The Vienna office of the Austrian public service broadcaster ORF says that a comparable episode happened at the [same] coffee house in 2005, with a lesbian couple asked to leave for hugging and kissing.

Asked by ORF to comment, the café's owner [...] defended her actions, claiming the kiss was more than just a greeting – if it had been, she would not have objected, 'but you don't have to be all over each other in public'.

Protest planned

On its Facebook page, AKS Wien has called for supporters to attend a planned protest, a demonstration outside the café on 16 January, with the aim, as the organisation says, of making a strong statement against homophobia. 1300 people have indicated on Facebook that they will be there.

A similar demonstration took place after the incident in 2005 [...] [during which] homosexual couples entered the café and shared demonstrative kisses. It doesn't look as if that event caused the coffee house's owner and staff to seriously rethink their attitudes to respect and tolerance.

Sources:

Rütten, Finn. 'Intoleranz in Wien: Lesbisches Paar nach Kuss aus Café geschmissen', Stern, 11 January 2015
<https://www.stern.de/panorama/wien-lesbisches-paar-nach-kuss-aus-caf%C3%A9-geworfen-3461090.html>

M13 Newspaper article American singer pays tribute to lesbian couple attacked on London bus

‘F*** your straight pride’: Halsey pays tribute to lesbian couple attacked on London bus

“American singer Halsey has paid tribute to the lesbian couple who were attacked on a London bus last week. On Monday, the artist took to the stage at the Electric Ballroom in Camden wearing a T-shirt that featured a photograph of the two women on the front and the words ‘F*** Your Straight Pride’ on the back. The couple displayed on her top were Melania Geymonat and her girlfriend Chris, who were hospitalised with facial injuries and left covered in blood after being attacked by a group of men in a homophobic attack in north London.

In a powerful speech captured on video, Halsey spoke about the ‘vicious’ attack that was made on the couple before taking a moment to address the fear many members of the LGBT+ community can feel when out in public.

‘When the glitter is being swept out of the streets, a lot of people get on those trains and on those buses, and they try to wash the rainbows off their bodies,’ Halsey said in fan-captured footage which was shared on Twitter. ‘Because when Pride is over, it’s not safe to be gay anymore.’

[...] Halsey went on to call out those who are proposing a ‘straight pride’ parade in Boston for their ignorance. ‘So when the people around the world ask: ‘Why isn’t there a straight pride parade?’ the singer said. ‘The answer is because if there was one, you wouldn’t have to get on the bus and be terrified of being f***ing beaten or killed afterwards. That’s why there’s not a straight pride parade.’

[...] Geymonat, a 28-year-old Ryanair cabin crew member from Uruguay, shared the photo from the assault on Facebook. The couple were travelling home to Camden after a date, in the early hours of 30 May, when they were attacked by a group of four men for refusing to kiss for their entertainment.

[...] Speaking of the assault, Laura Russell, director of campaigns policy and research at [Stonewall](#) – an organisation that campaigns for the equality of lesbian, gay, bi and trans people across Britain – told The Independent: ‘This attack is an upsetting reminder of how much we still have to do for LGBT+ equality. It’s tempting to think that in 2019, we are safe from attacks like these, and indeed we all should be. But sadly, this isn’t the reality.’”

Sources:

Young, Sarah, “‘F*** your straight pride’: Halsey pays tribute to lesbian couple attacked on London bus”, The Independent, 12 June 2019
<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/halsey-lgbt-tshirt-lesbian-couple-attack-bus-straight-pride-twitter-a8954781.html>

M14 Worksheet Discrimination

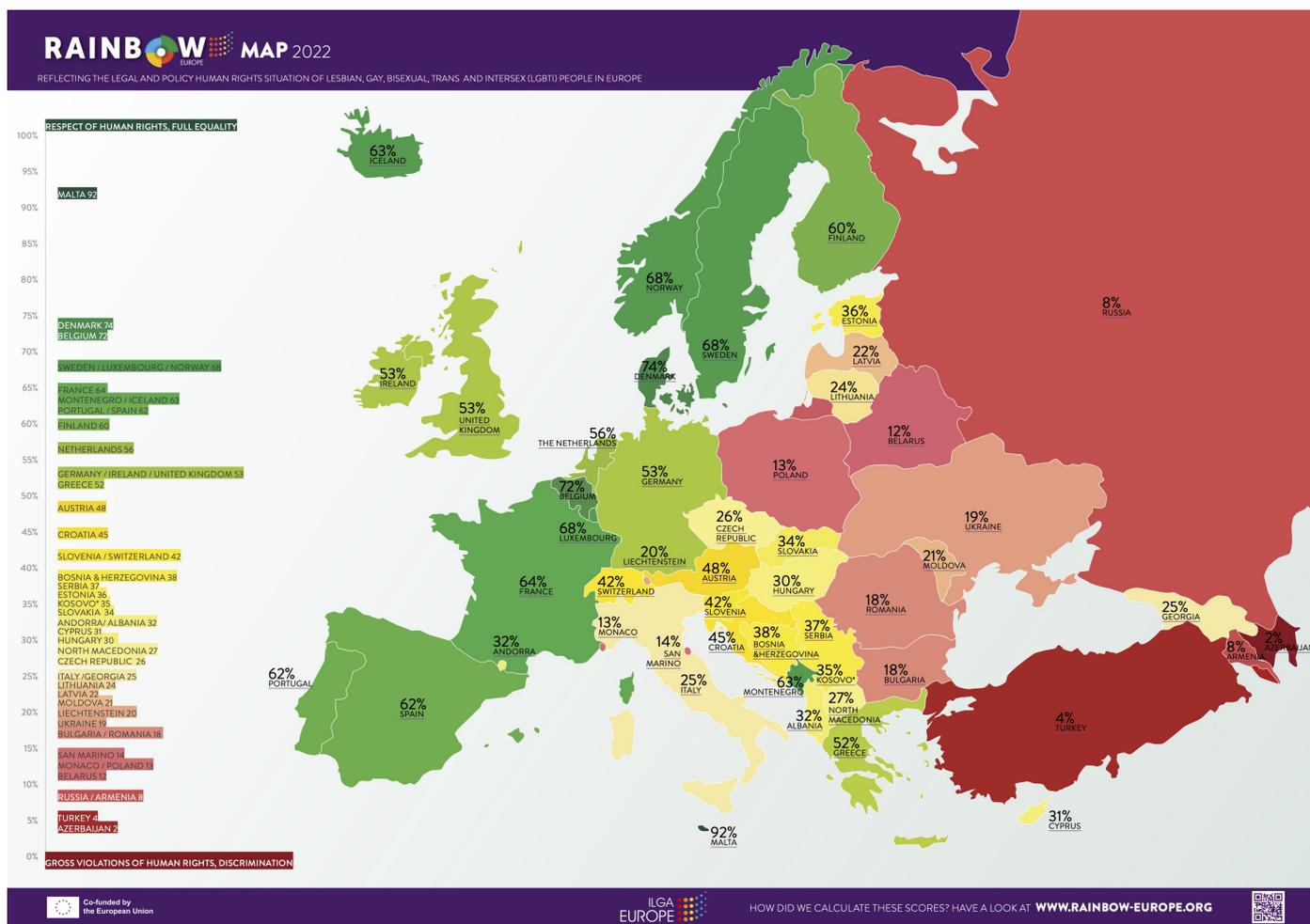
How do we (societally) expect people to behave in order for us to perceive them as 'normal'?

What does this mean for the people confronted with these expectations?



How do people subjected to discrimination respond to these expectations? How do they try to resist them? Can you understand why they respond as they do?

M15 Worksheet Rainbow map



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Tasks

Find out about the current legal situation in your country with regard to LGBTIQ+ people's equality, rights and protection from discrimination. The [Rainbow Index 2022](#) and the [Rainbow Map](#) produced by ILGA-Europe can help you.

Sources:

ILGA-Europe 2020, cc-by-nc-nd [28.07.2022]

<https://www.ilga-europe.org/rainboweurope/2022>