



Strategies for LGBTQ Inclusivity

Language | Messaging | Activities & Adaptations



Refer to condoms as “external condoms” instead of “male condoms” and “internal or insertive condoms” instead of “female condoms” and include dental dams as a barrier method.



Avoid heteronormative language. For example, use the term “partner” instead of “boyfriend” or “girlfriend.”



Use gender-neutral language and avoid gendered language. For example, instead of saying “then the male would remove his penis from the vagina” say “then the person would remove their penis from the vagina, mouth, or anus.



Avoid values-based language or delivery. For example, refrain from saying things like, “you shouldn’t engage in anal sex.” Instead, stick to science-based facts: “every kind of sex comes with risks, so if choose to have sex, it’s important that you use a barrier like a condom or a dental dam every time to protect against pregnancy and STDs.”



Clarify that “sex” means oral, anal, or vaginal sex. If it is assumed that “sex” only means vaginal sex then some youth who do not engage in vaginal sex might think that the knowledge and skills being learned are not applicable.



Clarify that identifying as LGBTQ doesn’t mean that you don’t have to worry about pregnancy. Anyone who has “penis in vagina” sex is at risk for pregnancy.



When discussing contraceptives, don’t assume that youth who identify as LGBTQ don’t have to worry about contraceptives. Clarify to the students, “it’s not who you are or who you love that puts you at risk for pregnancy, but the behaviors you engage in.”



As you discuss different families and what family structures look like, include examples of LGBTQ families. Avoid the assumption that every young person has one mother and one father.



Respond quickly and clearly to offensive or homophobic remarks or slurs. Send a clear and consistent message that it’s never ok to be disrespectful to someone based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.



Introduce personal gender pronouns at the beginning of the sex education program and continue to use participants' personal pronouns throughout the program.



Review sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and biological sex prior to beginning the program so there is a baseline understanding of terms and concepts.



In role plays, change names of role players to be gender-neutral. In discussions and debriefs, challenge youths' assumptions about gender and ask questions like, "how would this situation be different or the same if the couple were both males, both females, or transgender youth?"



Always establish group agreements or ground rules prior to beginning the program. Create agreements that create a safe space for all. Include items like, "always show respect" and "no put downs or slurs."



Encourage students to use examples in vignettes, skits, and activities that reflect experiences of LGBTQ youth.