Lesson 6: Sexuality: Influences, Expression, & Our Health (part 2)

Teacher Note
Lesson 5 and lesson 6 can be combined into one day if necessary. If combining into one day, show chapters 4-13 (end) straight through without discussion.

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will understand how gender-role pressures and homophobia affect all young people’s lives.
2. Students will explore connections among issues of gender, sexual orientation, race, culture, class and other aspects of identity.
3. Students will explore the idea of gender as a spectrum.
4. Students will know they are not alone in the challenges they face by drawing parallels between their experiences and those of students in the film.
5. Students will develop empathy for others.

AGENDA

5 minutes  Do Now
45 minutes  Straightlaced Video and Discussion
Homework  Key Quotes Reactions

MATERIALS

- Straightlaced DVD
- Straightlaced Video Guide
- Worksheet: Guide for Reflective Viewing
- Homework: Key Quotes Reactions

CALIFORNIA HEALTH EDUCATION STANDARDS

1.10.G Recognize that there are individual difference in growth, development, physical appearance, gender roles, and sexual orientation.
2.5.G Evaluate how culture, media, and other people influence perceptions about body image, gender roles, sexuality, attractiveness, relationships, and sexual orientation.
5.5.G Use a decision-making process to analyze the benefits of respecting individual differences in growth and development, physical appearance, gender roles, and sexual orientation.
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BEFORE THE CLASS
For this lesson, teachers use the video “Straightlaced,” which is available for teachers from the School Health Programs office at (415) 242-2615. Some school-based Wellness Centers have a copy as well. The DVD is available for purchase from groundspark.org

DO NOW 5 minutes

Materials
- Every student needs a notebook, journal, or paper and a pen
- Flipchart or whiteboard and markers

Activity
Write on board and have students complete the open ended statements:
- What I love about my gender is...
- What is challenging about my gender is...

If there is time, have a few students share their responses with the class.

STRAIGHTLACED VIDEO & DISCUSSION 45 minutes

Materials
- Straightlaced DVD
- Worksheet: Guide for Reflective Viewing

Activity
Show chapters 9 – 13(end) of the Straightlaced DVD. If there were students absent for chapters 4 – 8, give a brief overview of the film before starting. Pass out the Guide for Reflective Viewing worksheets and have students follow along with the film by taking notes on the worksheet.

The topics covered in these segments include: LGBTQ experience and stereotypes, how attitudes towards LGBTQ people affect all youth, family dynamics, gender-based harassment/bullying/violence, speaking up and becoming an ally.

You can show chapters 9 – 13(end) in a row, or pause between chapters for a discussion. Below are some suggested questions to guide your discussion:

- What do you think are some of the most powerful stories from this segment? Why?
- How would you describe the challenges and the opportunities of having a sexual or gender identity that falls outside the box?

Teacher Tip:
For quieter groups: have students form pairs or small groups and discuss these questions.

Be Real. Be Ready.
What do you think made a difference between the sad or hard time people talked about and the more positive and empowering experiences?

How do you feel about some of the more tragic stories in the film – the girl who turned to drugs and ended up in jail, the student who faced violence and harassment at school, the young man who committed suicide? What can be done to prevent such traumas?

What ideas do you have for taking action in relation to the issues in the movie? What would you like to see change? How can you help make that happen?

**HOMEWORK**

*Key Quotes Reactions*
Chapter 9 “We’re Not Sex Crazy!” Duration: 7 minutes
Gay, lesbian and bisexual students are frustrated by assumptions that all they think about is sex, and by the stereotype that whenever gay people see someone of the same gender they want to have sex with them. An African-American cheerleader shares the isolation she feels—as the only black person on her squad and the only bisexual. Some squad members worried that when she touched them during cheerleading routines, she was making sexual advances. Another cheerleader stays strong in her friendship with the targeted girl. Straight students grapple with the implications for them if they are known to hang out with LGBTQ students. Others talk about how hard it is to figure out their own sexuality when there is so much stigma around being gay.

Chapter 10 “Rejection, Fear and Violence” Duration: 8 minutes
A student tells her story of coming to terms with the fact that she is attracted to other girls. Rejection from her family led to her grades dropping, drug use and jail time. Eventually she came to accept herself and returned to run for student body president. A male student in a rural community had a hard time coming out because of the rampant anti-gay sentiment in his town; at times he pretended he was interested in girls. He wished he could bring his boyfriend to the prom but didn't, out of fear they would be jumped. Other students describe being subjected to physical violence because of their gender expression or sexual orientation, while staff members at their schools did little or nothing to help.

Chapter 11 “Expanding Gender Identities” Duration: 4 minutes
A student who always felt more feminine than other boys decides to claim a transgender identity. She courageously started coming to school in feminine clothes and wearing makeup. Other students were a little confused at first, but think Rae is cool and are happy to be her friend. Rae makes it clear that she isn’t a gay guy, but that her gender really is female.

Chapter 12 “Speaking Out and Taking Action” Duration: 5 minutes
Students share courageous moments of speaking up and taking a stand to interrupt anti-gay behavior, or any disrespectful behavior, at school. Girls mustered the strength to stand up to older male students. Males conquered their fears that other students would think that they were gay if they took a stand. A closing collection of student shots from the whole film brings this message home. Rae goes to the prom with the support of diverse friends. The lesbian student wins the election. The ballet dancer sums it up: “If you want to dance, dance. If you want to sing, sing. Do what makes you feel good.”

Chapter 13 “Why We Agreed to Be Filmed” Duration: 2 minutes (Clips interspersed through credits)
“I wanted a chance to speak my mind,” explains a straight student who overcame fears that he would be perceived as gay for participating in this film. One student notes that he could lose his Eagle Scout status for participating. Another files a lawsuit to stop the harassment he experienced at school. The hot dog vendor shrugs off a customer mistaking her for a male. The final student says he won’t raise his kids to be homophobic. Being different is a good thing.
**Worksheet: Guide for Reflective Viewing**

Name:________________________________________________________ Period:______________

Date:____________________

**Directions:** While you watch the film, use this guide to record your thoughts about what you hear the youth in the film saying.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Youth Feel Limited by Gender Pressures:</th>
<th>Examples of Resistance or Action for Change:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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**Other Thoughts & Questions:**

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*Be Real. Be Ready.*
Homework: Key Quotes Reactions

Name:________________________________________________________________
Period:______________________ Date:_____________________

Directions: You will be given two key quotes from the Straightlaced DVD. Write a 1-paragraph long reaction to each quote.

Quote #1: write or tape your quote here:

Reaction:

Quote #2: write or tape your quote here:
Reaction:
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Key Quotes

Following are a number of key quotes from *Straightlaced*. They can be used in a variety of ways to help spark conversation.

**KEY QUOTE #1  Be Like Them**

“I want to be like them in a way, but I don’t. I want to be myself. I want to feel safe. I just want to feel kinda loved, in a way. I want to feel appreciated.” —Sedrick, Chapter 1

**KEY QUOTE #2  There’s a Chick—Cool!**

“Whenever I dress like a girl, I feel that people are judging me all the time. Do they think my boobs are big? Do they think they are small? Do they think my butt’s big? But when I dress the way that I do, I am comfortable because I know I’m not showing anything. I know they’re not going to be thinking that. They’re just, ‘Oh, there’s a chick. Cool. Whatever.’” —Briseida, Chapter 1

**KEY QUOTE #3  Billboard**

“You see a really hot girl on the billboard, you know, she has really long legs. She’s usually blond and blue-eyed. It’s kinda icky that you could even post up ads like that in public, where kids can see ’em, ’cause they’re really seriously like half-naked. And I’m never going to be like that, simply said. I’m not going to lie to myself. But I don’t think that’s what’s beautiful, either.” —Winnie, Chapter 1

**KEY QUOTE #4  I Like Being Different**

“I really don’t care what others think, because, I mean, I’m me. I like being different.” —Tuju, Chapter 1

**KEY QUOTE #5  Manicures**

“I like getting manicures. It’s really relaxing. It’s great. A couple of people have said, ‘That’s gay, guys shouldn’t get their nails done.’ But then I ask them why and they can’t tell me. I came from Brazil, and in Brazil it’s normal for guys to try to look good and, you know, get their nails done and have fresh haircuts. To me it’s just natural, ’cause I was born and raised that way.” —Edilson, Chapter 1

**KEY QUOTE #6  No Barbies**

“My family always raised me to try to be tough. If they would happen to, as a kid, see me playing with Barbies, they would take away that Barbie and pass me a ‘male toy.’” —Israel, Chapter 2

**KEY QUOTE #7  Choir**

“In lower school, I participated in a choir, and I was just one of the few guys in there, and so people would go, ‘Oh, he’s gay, he’s a pussy, he sings.’ I mean, I stopped. At a young age, when people make fun of you, it really gets to you. I really enjoyed being in the choir, and it was a lot of fun. And it would have been nice to go for a few more years.” —Ivan, Chapter 2

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PHOTOCOPY BEFORE CUTTING

KEY QUOTE #8  Skinny = Pretty

“There are many girls who would starve themselves to lose weight or get skinny. It gives you a complex when you see other girls, models and stuff. They’re so skinny, they’re so pretty, we want to be like them.” —SUPNEET, Chapter 2

KEY QUOTE #9  Too Big/Too Strong

“I’ve had to deal with a lot of people telling me that I’m too aggressive, that I’m too big and too strong and too loud and my voice is too deep and that I’m too this. It’s like they are saying, ‘You’re too you!’” —JESSICA, Chapter 4

KEY QUOTE #10  Smart Girls

“Some guys say that I talk too much and that I have an opinion about everything. There was this experience with this one guy. We were getting to know each other, and he was really cool and stuff. There was this topic that came up about a book, and I started telling him what I thought about it. And then after a while, he’s like, ‘You’re too smart. I don’t want to talk to you anymore.’ And I was like, ‘Are you serious?’” —NORMA, Chapter 4

KEY QUOTE #11  Show No Love

“Guys make fun of that, when another guy shows that he cares about a girl and, if he’s romantic, guys will try to criticize you based on that. They’ll be like, ‘No, I won’t show no love,’ but deep down inside they do. Trust me, I know for a fact.” —SHAWN, Chapter 4

KEY QUOTE #12  Pushing the Envelope

“Everybody thinks, you know, a guy is supposed to be a guy, he’s supposed to be straight. A girl is supposed to be a girl, she’s supposed to be straight. And not a lot of people talk about gender roles and how the envelope is pushed half the time and how other people do other things.” —CHIP, Chapter 5

KEY QUOTE #13  Just Not Female

“I’m just not female. You know, my body may be, and other people may think that that’s how I identify. All I know is that it doesn’t match.” —VERE, Chapter 5

KEY QUOTE #14  Spectrum

“My experience is that there’s not two genders. There’s really a spectrum. And part of growing up is finding out where you fit on that spectrum.” —SKYE, Chapter 5

KEY QUOTE #15  Gender Messages Everywhere

“I think that I have felt like I don’t fit into a specific gender for my entire life. I mean it comes up every day. Going to the bathroom, I have to decide whether I want to go to the male restroom or the female restroom. In buying clothes, I have to go to the boys’ section or the girls’ section of the store. It just feels like everywhere you go, there are gender messages. There’s no real way to make a decision in the world without having to think about gender.” —ERIKA, Chapter 5

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“I feel that it’s ironic that people always say it’s a free country, we can do what we want, people are free. When it really seems like it’s not the case. I know a lot of people who go to school and they’re really afraid to act as they truly are because of what people are going to think or what people are going to say to them or even they’ll get beat up by some people for acting as they are. So a lot of people really aren’t free because they can’t show their true selves.” —JOHN, Chapter 7

“I try to attract as little attention as possible. When I walk to school from the bus stop, I just try not to make any movements that are, like, feminine. I try to keep my movements very straight and rigid. I feel like I’m always on the defense, I always have to be putting up fronts.” —TERRY, Chapter 7

“You’re not outwardly forced, but deep down you feel this extreme pressure that is so real and so strong that it’s pretty much like someone else is controlling you.” —ADAM L, Chapter 7

“I came here from Vietnam when I was 7. I see men who can walk around holding hands in another country and everybody would be fine with it. It’s just a friendship thing. Whereas in America, if you’re within a three-foot radius of me, it’s like, ‘No, you’re attracted to me,’ and we’ll be perceived as being gay.” —LE, Chapter 7

“I’m taught to see [women] as nothing but an object. And taught to see them as this thing that is only there for their outward beauty.” —ADAM L, Chapter 8

“When a man runs around or sleeps with a lot of women, he’s a player. All the boys give him his props. But when a woman tends to sleep around, she’s a whore, a slut or a ripper.” —KIMBRE, Chapter 8

“You have all these images from music and media that you should be having sex and be sexual, but at the same time you have all these pressures that you should not be sexual, so you’re sort of trapped.” —ALANA, Chapter 8

“People think that the whole gay community is sex crazy and they just want sex and that’s all they think about. They assume that when you say that you’re gay, they think, ‘Oh, do you like me?’ And I’m like, ‘Um, no.’” —TYMARA, Chapter 9

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**PHOTOCOPY BEFORE CUTTING**

**KEY QUOTE #24  Touch Me? I’m Swinging**

“I am not homophobic, I’m cool with people that are gay, but if you’re right there and nobody else is around, and I know you’re gay, I will be cautious. I’m just gonna be in my head, like, ‘Is this dude trying to hit on me?’ You’ll always have that thing in your head saying, ‘Hey man, you know, we’re cool, but if you touch me, I’m swinging.’” —ISRAEL, Chapter 9

**KEY QUOTE #25  Powerful Tool of Control**

“Having your sexuality questioned is a very powerful tool in controlling someone. And I think that’s mainly why people say it. ‘Cause it’s so easy to control someone by questioning something that they don’t know, by making fun of something they can’t help. It not only sparks, is being gay wrong? But it sparks, Am I gay? Am I homosexual? If everyone’s telling me this, is that what’s the truth?’” —ADAM, Chapter 9

**KEY QUOTE #26  Who Am I May Change**

“I can’t say if I am gay or straight, if I’m attracted more towards men or women. At this moment I can have a notion of what I am, but for all I know that could change a year from now.” —SOPHIE, Chapter 9

**KEY QUOTE #27  Accustomed to Intolerance**

“When I’m the only black cheerleader or the only bisexual person, I’ve become accustomed to people being a little intolerant.” —JESSICA, Chapter 9

**KEY QUOTE #28  Downward Spiral**

“My freshman year I got a 4.0, my sophomore year I got a 3.9, and I felt confident enough to tell my mother that I was a lesbian. I thought that by doing good in school and making her proud, that would change things, but it didn’t. She told me that she loved me, but that she couldn’t accept who I was, and we didn’t talk for a year. So then I lost it. I went out of control. I started doing crystal meth. I did cocaine, weed, alcohol, everything, you know? I was caught. I went to jail. All my accomplishments, they were thrown away.” —BRISEIDA, Chapter 10

**KEY QUOTE #29  Closet/Prison**

“What I am doesn’t really make a difference. It’s who you are inside. I mean, you know how people say you’re hiding in the closet? It’s not a closet, it’s sort of like a prison.” —BRISEIDA, Chapter 10

**KEY QUOTE #30  No Help From Teachers**

“I was extremely scared. It got to the point where I wouldn’t go and eat lunch. I would go to a teacher’s room instead. I wasn’t comfortable using the bathroom anymore on campus. If I would go to the restroom and there was another student in there, I would turn around and walk out. I had a group of teachers on campus that I was comfortable talking with. They would listen and they were sympathetic, but none of them stepped up as an advocate for me. No one stepped up to make sure I was gonna be safe.” —LANCE, Chapter 10

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PHOTOCOPY BEFORE CUTTING

**KEY QUOTE #31** Always Felt Different

“Growing up, I’ve always felt like I was different from everybody, more feminine than other boys. When I was 10 years old, people started noticing, and they were really judgmental. They were like, ‘Oh, why are you acting that way?’ And I just said, ‘I don’t know, it’s just the way I am.’” —RAE, Chapter 11

**KEY QUOTE #32** Speaking Out Is Hard

“I wanted to speak up, but I didn’t. I didn’t really know what to say.” —MIKE, Chapter 11

**KEY QUOTE #33** Stand Up to Your Friends

“It’s one of the hardest things to do in the world to stand up to your friends and say that something is not OK with you. But through the years I’ve become more comfortable with myself to the point where I really don’t care if my friends think that I’m gay if I say something is not OK with me.” —ADAM S., Chapter 12

**KEY QUOTE #34** Greatest Hope

“My greatest hope is that in the future women and men really will be equal. If a woman could be a CEO and be really a powerhouse without being called a bitch. If a man could design clothes without being labeled as gay.” —GENIE, Chapter 12

**KEY QUOTE #35** I Know Who I Am

“I know who I am today. I’ve grown into who I am. And I wouldn’t trade that for the world. But if I could be who I am without going through all that harassment, I would accept that in a heartbeat.” —LANCE, Chapter 12

**KEY QUOTE #36** Making a Difference

“It really does make a difference when somebody breaks away and tries to communicate with someone when you can see that they’re different.” —JESSICA, Chapter 12

**KEY QUOTE #37** Do What You Love

“If you want to dance, dance. If you want to sing, sing. Do what makes you feel good.” —ALEX, Chapter 12

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