

So Attractive

A Lesson Plan from *Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum*
Fostering responsibility by respecting young people's rights to honest sexuality education.

NSES ALIGNMENT:

SO.8.INF.1 – Analyze how peers, media, family, society, culture, and a person's intersecting identities can influence attitudes, beliefs, and expectations about sexual orientation

SO.8.IC.1 – Demonstrate ways to communicate respectfully with and about people of all sexual orientations

TARGET GRADE: Grade 7

TIME: 50 Minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Laptop
- LCD Projector
- Screen
- Charades cards
- So Attractive handout for each student

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Analyze how external influences impact a person's attitudes, beliefs, and expectations about sexual orientation [Skill]
2. Demonstrate at least one strategy to communicate respectfully with and about people of all sexual orientations [Skill]

LESSON RATIONALE:

This lesson provides a clear explanation as to what sexual orientation is and how a person's internal and external influences can impact how their expectations, beliefs, and attitudes around sexual orientation. This internal review of individual influences can identify areas for each person to support people. This includes learning and practicing how to communicate effectively and respectfully about sexual orientations with all people.

ADVANCE PREPARATION:

Prior to the lesson please print copies of the so attractive handout for each student and please open and cue up the so attractive power point slide deck for the class.

NOTE TO THE TEACHER:

You will find that there are students in your class with very strong beliefs and opinions around sexual attraction and these students could use this class as an opportunity to share those beliefs. It is important to be clear that respect is the expectation in the classroom, so refer to your ground rules if you find a student sharing their beliefs to belittle or take away from others. Also, clearly express what is opinion vs. fact. For example, 'Thank you student A for sharing your opinion, the facts are...'. Maintaining a safe learning environment for students is paramount so do everything to ensure that accountability and swift re-direction happens each time.

PROCEDURE:

STEP 1: Start the class by saying, "Today we are going to start our class by playing charades. As a quick reminder, charades is a game when a person tries to get a group of people to guess a word by acting that word out. The person doing the acting cannot make a sound and the rest of the class will shout out their guesses at what our volunteer is trying to show you. So, can I get a volunteer who is willing to try and get their peers to guess our sample clue?"

So Attractive

Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum

Once a student volunteers, show them the word “Attractive” written down on a card or piece of paper. Confirm that they are comfortable and then let them start acting so that the class can guess. If needed you can provide hints to the class if it is taking a long time for them to guess the correct word.

After charades, ask the following questions to process the activity.

Ask the volunteer:

“What was it like to act out attractive?” The volunteer student might respond with hard, easy, strange, etc. Whatever word they say, follow up with why. For example, ‘Why was it hard?’ in order to get them to process the experience in a more critical way.

After the student explains why, then ask, **“So what did you do to get your peers to guess the word correctly? How did you adjust?”** Thank the student volunteer for being brave and participating.

Ask the students who guessed:

“What was it like to interpret our volunteer’s excellent acting skills?” The students might respond with a one-word response. Whatever they say follow up with a question asking ‘why’ they feel that way just as before. After they explain why then ask, **“So what did you do to figure out the clue?”** Thank the students for participating. Say, **“We are going to watch a short video so please pay close attention and continue to think about your clues around attraction. <https://youtu.be/wrUYs2FnrgA>”**

Say, **“Attraction or being attracted to someone is an amazing and strange feeling. You might find that you enjoy being around the person a lot, you are interested in that person, you feel happiness or excitement whenever they are present, or the simple thought of that person can have an impact on you. Who someone is attracted to does not mean they will act on that attraction. A person can be attracted to someone and just want to be friends, have a romantic relationship, a sexual relationship, or some combination of any of these. Sometimes a person might want to explore their sexual orientation, or who they are attracted to sexually so they can identify themselves as gay, straight, bisexual, asexual, the list goes on. This is a personal choice for each person and not something a person needs to do. The internal sense and desire a person can have that pulls them to another person is a natural part of being human and these relationships can add a lot of happiness and even heartache to our lives. Relationships are a lot of work and while they can sometimes be rewarding they are challenging.”**

(10 minutes)

STEP 2:

Say let’s do a quick brainstorm, **“What can impact or influence who we find attractive?”** Students might say, ‘appearance, how they treat others, what they like to do, how they treat me, etc.’ Say, **“All of these things are absolutely true and they might influence who you find attractive. But did you also know there are some influences that are less obvious and have a big impact on whether you consider a person to be attractive? These are**

So Attractive

Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum

called external influences and today we are going to look at five common external influences: peers, media, family, society, and culture. These external influences help to shape our values and beliefs from the moment we are born and subsequently impact our decision making on a lot of things including who we might find attractive. These external influences shape our attitude – or how we feel, our beliefs – what we think to be true, and our expectations – what we look for in ourselves and others. Let’s take a look at how these all come together.”

Distribute the Attraction Influences handout to each student so they can complete it independently. Students should analyze or review how each of the five external influences impact their personal attitudes, beliefs, and expectations around attraction. Tell students that you are going to give them about ten minutes to complete the handout and then you will come back and process as a large group.

Say, **“On the handout you will see five external influences listed on the left of the paper and then space to share at least two messages per influences that you have heard regarding sexual attraction or orientation. If you can list more than two, feel free to add as many as you can.**

Once the students have completed the task, ask the following processing questions:

“What did you notice while analyzing your external influences? Was there an influence that has a larger impact, one that has a smaller impact on who you find attractive? Why do you think that is?”

How have these influences shaped who you are attracted to? Do you see that your personal attitudes, beliefs, and expectations are aligned with those who influence you or opposed? How does that impact you and who you are attracted to?”

Thank students for their hard work on the activity.

(25 minutes)

STEP 3:

Say something like, **“Each person is going to have different influences on how they see the world. We just saw that with our last activity. Our own attitudes, beliefs, and expectations will change and evolve as we grow and learn. As a result, we will always encounter people who have different attitudes, beliefs, and expectations than our own. It is okay to have a difference of opinion but sometimes it takes practice to be able to hear and talk about differing opinions. Doing this is a skill though and that means it can be practiced.**

Let’s take a look at some strategies we can use when we are communicating with someone who has a different opinion than our own. For this next part of class, you are going to work in trios.”

Open the So Attractive power point presentation on communication strategies and walk through the content in the slide deck. Then ask students to decide who will be partner A, B, and C and provide the following instructions, **“We are going to practice our strategies to communicate with someone who has a different opinion. This is just an exercise and**

So Attractive

Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum

no one here should disclose how they truly feel about the topic. Person A will agree with the statement, Person B will disagree with the statement, and Person C will serve as the mediator and remind everyone of our strategies. What questions do you have?"

Project the statement and role slide on the power point presentation and allow the students about 10 minutes to work on the exercise. If time permits, ask students to rotate roles.

After the activity say, **"Okay as a class we are going to reset and everyone is back to their own personal opinions about all topics and we are back to focusing on the facts here at school and the fact is that a person' sexual orientation is not a choice and cannot be controlled or changed. This kind of practice with communicating with people with differing opinions can be important if you are hoping to maintain a relationship with someone and show them the respect that they deserve you can continue to practice these strategies which can be applied to any kind of difference of opinion. I encourage you to continue exploring your personal beliefs at home with trusted adults in your life."**

(13 minutes)

STEP 4:

Say, **"In closing it is important to know that who someone is attracted to is really and truly none of your business. It should not dictate if and how you interact with that person. Everyone is deserving of respect and someone's personal opinions do not get to infringe on another human's basic rights. Thanks for the hard work. Have a great day."**

(2 minutes)

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON:

Objective 1 is completed in Steps 2 and 3 and Objective 2 is completed in Step 3. Both objectives are reinforced with the homework.

OPTIONAL HOMEWORK:

Bring home your So Attractive handout and start a conversation with your caregivers about what external influences are the strongest in your life and then compare what external influences were the strongest in their lives when they were your age.

So Attractive Handout

Share some messages you have received about sexual attraction or orientation from each of the listed external influences in the chart below.

