

How Do You See Me?

A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum
Fostering respect and responsibility through age-appropriate sexuality education.

TARGET GRADE: Grade 11/12

TIME: 50 Minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Flipchart sheets (prepared as indicated)
- Flipchart markers - one per student
- Making tape
- Whiteboard and dry erase markers
- Pens or pencils in case students do not have their own
- Extra sheets of 8 ½ x 11 paper in case students do not have a notebook with them

ADVANCE PREPARATION FOR LESSON:

- Prepare sheets of flipchart paper with one of the following headings on each:
 - Blonde-haired, blue-eyed cheerleader
 - Teen dressed in tight, revealing clothing
 - Teen dressed in traditional Muslim clothing
 - Teen wearing baggy clothes, earrings, sunglasses
 - A student walking with his girlfriend
 - Same-sex couple, both carrying band instruments
 - Overweight teen with multiple piercings and tattoos
 - Quiet teen with plain clothing who is a really good student
 - A boy wearing makeup
- Before students arrive, post the flipchart sheets around the room with the bottom half of each folded in half taped up over the headers so they are not revealed.

***Note to the Teacher:** This lesson can yield very rich, at times intense, discussions. This is part of the activity and can be quite powerful. To prepare, make sure students know that the idea behind this activity is to explore the impact stereotypes have on how we may see ourselves and how those self-perceptions might impact our decision-making about sex. Try to tolerate the intensity of the discussions as they come up, while paying attention to the students who may be quieter during the activity.*

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

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

1. Describe at least two preconceived notions about particular categories of students. [Knowledge, Affect]
2. Describe at least two connections between negative self-image and sexual decision-making. [Knowledge]
3. Write at least one positive, affirming message for students who may be feeling poorly about who they are. [Skill, Affect]

A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE:

Language is really important and we've intentionally been

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markers to you, and return to their seats. Going around the room, ask for volunteers to read what is on each sheet. Once you have gone through all the sheets ask, "What was it like to do that, to create the lists, and then hear them read aloud? What was [add in student responses, e.g. interesting] about it?"

Note to the Teacher: Responses to the activity can range from apathy, to sympathy, to empathy, regarding what is actually represented on the sheets.

Ask, "What do you notice about what is up on the lists?"

Go around the room and reflect on what has been written down. A good deal of discussion will happen at this point. Once it has come to a lull, move to the next question.

Say, "Please don't answer this next question aloud, just think about it in your own heads. Look around the room again at the headings. As you re-read them, ask yourself, what gender did you assume each of these people to be? How did you come to that assumption? What about race or ethnicity? What did you assume? Why?" (17 minutes)

STEP 3: Ask, "Where do we get these messages from – the idea that a person who is described in this way [indicate a header] is thought to be this way [indicated the brainstormed list]?" Probe for: The media, family, other friends, etc.

Ask, "Do you think there is pressure to fit into any of these categories? Which ones? Why or why not?"

Ask, "When you read these lists, what do you see that has to do with sexuality?" After a few responses ask, "How could these have an impact on a person's sexual decision-making?" [A person who doesn't feel good about themselves or their appearance may have sex before they want to, or with someone they shouldn't in order to feel better. Someone who does not feel important may be so grateful to have someone interested in them that they might not practice safer sex. Someone who has such an inflated sense of their own importance may feel that they are entitled to sex, etc.]

Ask, "If someone were here right now who represented someone on one of these sheets, how do you think they would feel reading all these?" [Responses will depend on what is generated on each list, but there tends to be more negative reactions than positive]. (9 minutes)

STEP 4: Ask students to take out a sheet of paper and something to write with. Say, "I'd like you to imagine these students are in the room right now. What would you want to say to them? You may wish to just keep one or two of them in mind. Don't put your name on the paper, but write down what you'd say. What would you want to hear if any of these were you? I'll give you about three minutes to write something down."

After about 3 minutes, collect what the students wrote, mix them up, and then redistribute them to the class. Go around the room and ask each student to read aloud what is on their sheet, not disclosing whether they coincidentally received their own. (7 minutes)