

Program Three: “There is no wrong way to have a body:”
LGBTQ Role Models and Body Image Issues

Materials

- Various LGBTQ Magazines
- Magazine cover worksheet (supplemental materials)

Opening Activity

- High points and hopes: Have students share something in their lives that has been going really well (high point) as well as something they are excited about (‘hope’).

Mini-Lesson/Warm Up:

1. Provide each student with a journal post-it note.
2. On the post-it note, ask students to respond to a journal reflection: Describe a time in which they did not feel comfortable in their physical body. Indicate to them that they can share as little or as much as they want, but to keep it appropriate.
3. Students will share their journals--first with their partner--then in a large group should they want to.
4. Facilitator: provide insight into the fact that everyone has body-image issues and at times, it is a result of external social factors.

1. Provide some facts about LGBTQ related body image issues:
2. <http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/eating-disorders-and-body-image-what-do-gender-and-sexuality-have-do-it>

1. Introduce the theory of “fat activism.”

· “The fat acceptance movement (also known as the size acceptance, fat liberation, fat activism, or fat power movement) is a **social movement** seeking to change the **anti-fat bias** in **social attitudes**. The movement grew out of the various **identity politics** of the 1960s and campaigns for the rights of fat people to be treated equally both on a social basis and on a **legal** one. Areas of contention include the **esthetic**, legal and **medical** approaches to people whose bodies are larger than the **social norm**.”

Live Out Loud Role Model Introduction

1. Students will be introduced to queer, feminist activist Hanne Blank who says, “There is no wrong way to have a body!”
 1. Being comfortable, healthy in your body is at the heart of fat activism.
 2. Students will discuss gay male-body image issues and how society treats the queer body.

3. "I'm fat, smart, opinionated, and politically active, and have been all these things since I was a teenager. I don't take well to being silenced or told that my ideas don't matter. And I've always thought that behaving badly toward people because of some aspect of their physical body -- whether that means their skin color, their height, their use of crutches, their weight, their gender expression, the scars on their skin, their gray hair, their biological sex, whatever -- is generally unjustifiable, that whole "can't tell a book by its cover" thing."
4. Students will watch Blank perform, "Real Women," and then participate in a short discussion. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0JjRi2mTl8E>
 1. What does the title of the piece, "Real Women," suggest about how society treats queer women and their bodies?
 2. Why might a queer, fat, woman face added levels of discrimination and pressure than her male counterparts?
 3. Can Blank be considered a role model for the queer community? What qualities in Blank's work demonstrates her as a mentor and leader?
 4. What are your thoughts on the queer "fat activist" movement?
 5. What would a piece called "Real Men" discuss?
5. Students will be introduced to Margaret Cho, bisexual comedian who often discusses issues of weight and racial identity.
 1. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rXclkCwcTyQ>
 1. Why is it important to celebrate our bodies?
 2. What does it mean to love yourself? To love your body?
 3. Why is there so much pressure in the LGBTQ community to be a certain way?
 4. What message does Margaret send in this video?

Activity

1. Students will be placed into groups of 3-5. In each group, students will receive an LGBTQ centered trade magazine (Next, Go Magazine, Advocate, etc). These can be found anywhere!
2. Students will be asked to browse the magazines and address some discussion questions.
 1. What type of language do you see being used in your trade magazine? Is it inclusive? Exclusive?
 2. Who is the audience of your magazine? Who holds the buying power?
 3. What are the images like in each publication? How are male, female, and trans* bodies represented?
 4. In your opinion, are there any apparent role models in the magazine?
 5. Are you represented in this magazine? Whether you're LGBTQ or an ally?
 6. Do you think a young LGBTQ teenager would benefit from reading these magazines?

1. In the same small group, students will create a new LGBTQ trade magazine! They will create the front page of their magazine including a title, articles inside, and an all inclusive image. (see supplemental materials).

Discussion & Share Out

1. Each group will share with the larger group their assigned LGBTQ trade magazine. They will briefly address their small groups discussion and provide further insight.
2. Students will also share their new LGBTQ trade magazine cover with the larger group.
 1. What's the goal of your magazine?
 2. Why would an LGBTQ teen want to read your magazine?
 3. Does your "faux" magazine represent individuals or stories that may serve as role models to LGBTQ youth?

Takeaway Actions

1. Create your own all-inclusive GSA trade magazine for your school! Live Out Loud will help organize and provide direction.
2. Write a letter to the editor of an LGBTQ trade magazine expressing your approval and/or disapproval of how LGBTQ people are represented.
3. Post on Facebook! Pose the question about LGBTQ body image to your friends on Facebook and see what they think!