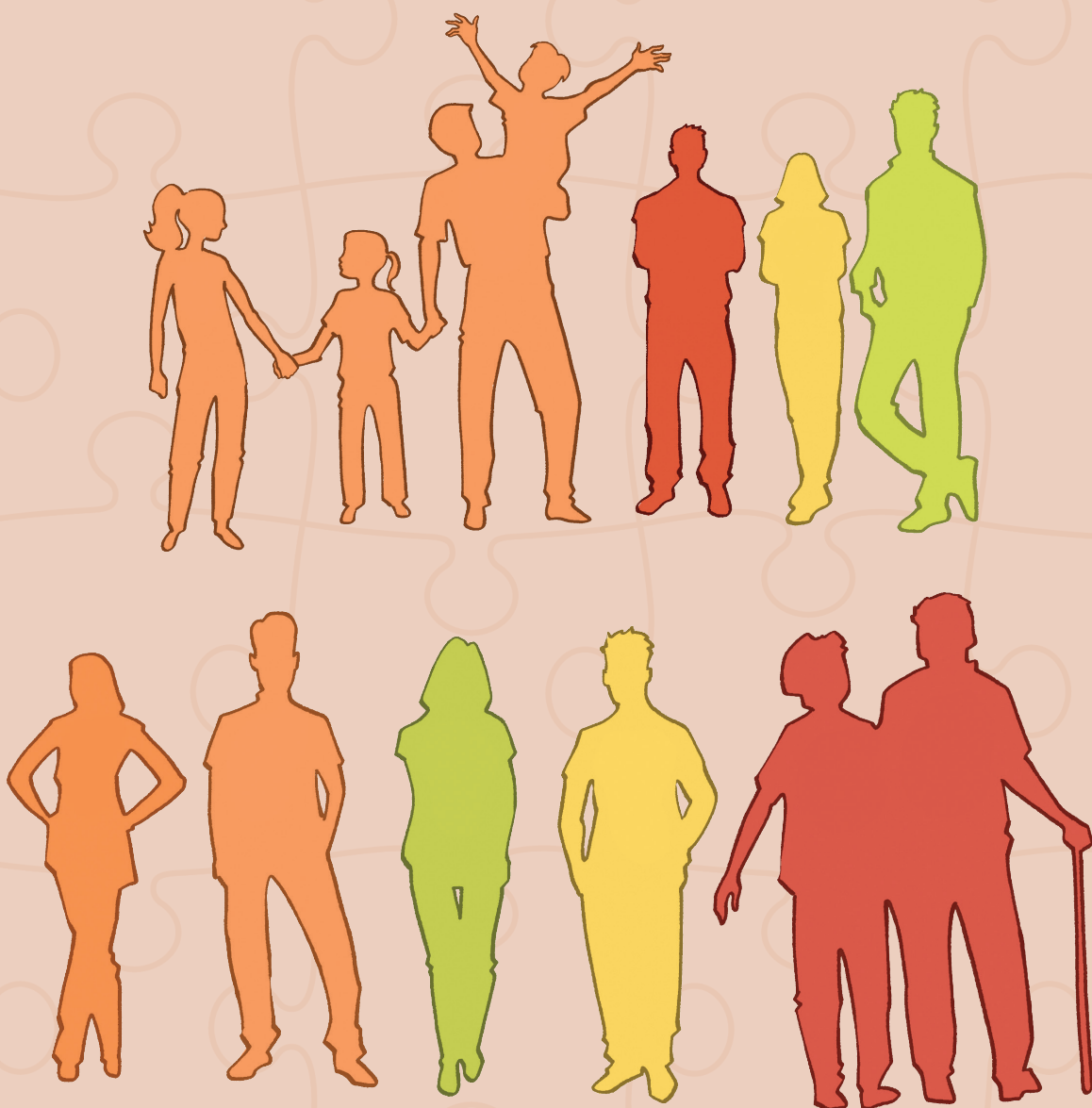


GENDER IDENTITIES



РЦСЕ

Ресурсни центар за специјалну едукацију

INTRODUCTION

This lesson plan is for educators and support people working with young people with intellectual disability and/or on the autism spectrum. It explores the topic of *Gender identities*, following the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGSE) framework. The lesson helps students learn about gender identity, gender roles, and how different cultures think about gender. It teaches that gender is a spectrum and supports students to understand and respect a wide range of gender identities. The lesson promotes inclusion, fairness, and kindness, and helps build empathy and support students' emotional and social well-being.

This lesson plan uses evidence-based practices (EBPs), which are recognised as best practice for teaching students with intellectual disability and/or on the autism spectrum. It supports teacher delivery through structured resources, scenario-based activities that incorporate peer modelling, and age-appropriate educational videos developed by [Amaze.org](https://amaze.org).

This lesson is part of *Sex education for students with intellectual disability and on the autism spectrum: A practical methodology guide*, a resource that supports educators to deliver accessible, inclusive, and trauma-informed sex education to students aged 15 and over with intellectual disability and/or on the autism spectrum. Grounded in evidence-based practices, the Guide promotes the rights of students to sexual autonomy, safety, and well-being, aligning with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Sustainable Development Goals, which call for inclusive education, gender equality, and good health for all. The lesson content also reflects the key concepts outlined in the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGSE), ensuring that teaching is comprehensive, rights-based, and responsive to the learning needs and aspirations of students with disability.

[Full Guide](#)

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Gender identities



What does it mean?

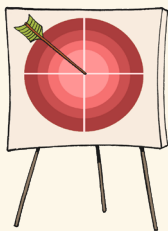
Teaching students about different gender identities involves explaining that gender is a spectrum and can differ from the sex assigned at birth. It includes educating students about various gender identities such as male, female, transgender, non-binary, genderqueer, and intersex. The goal is to help students understand and respect that people can identify in many different ways and that each person's gender identity is valid and important.



Why is it important?

Understanding different gender identities is important for high school students with intellectual disability and/or on the autism spectrum as it fosters inclusivity, empathy, and respect for diversity. This knowledge helps students recognise and value the varied ways people identify and express themselves. Research has shown that people on the autism spectrum identify with a broad range of gender identities, more than that of people without autism¹. People on the autism spectrum also have higher rates of gender-dysphoria². Therefore, it is important for young people on the autism spectrum to have the knowledge about gender identities, so they can feel understood and respected for who they are, which is essential for their emotional and social well-being.

Learning outcomes based on teacher's and student's perspectives



Learning outcomes

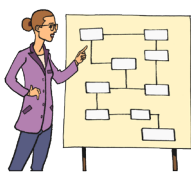
Students can give examples of different gender identities (male, female, trans man, trans woman, non-binary person, intersex person).

Students can describe transphobia.

Accessible learning outcome

I can explain different gender identities.

I can describe what transphobia is.



EXAMPLE LESSON PLAN

Topic: Gender identities

Note for teachers:

Teachers should use their professional judgement when teaching this topic as students in your class may be questioning their gender identity or living as trans or non-binary.

This is a topic that could bring up students' experience of being subjected to bullying, ensure that your classroom is a safe place for all students and that you model appropriate language and attitudes for all students to feel included.

Learning outcomes	EBP/teaching strategy	Resources needed
Students can give examples of different gender identities (male, female, trans man, trans woman, non-binary person, intersex person).	Peer modelling	Video player Appendix 1: How to be a good ally to people with different gender identities
Students can describe transphobia.		

Lesson sequence

Introduction: Ask students what they know about different gender identities.

Prompts:

- What are some of the different gender identities?
- Do you think that people can only identify as boys/men or girls/women?
- Have you heard the word 'intersex' before?
- Have you heard the word 'transgender' before?



Activity 1: Range of gender identities

As a class, watch [The range of gender identities](#) video on Amaze.org.

What did we learn from this video?

Prompts:

- What is a person's sex?
- What is a person's gender?
- Are they always the same?
- What are some of the different ways someone can identify?
- Do you remember the three rules that can help you:
 1. Don't make assumptions about someone's gender.
 2. Use affirmed names and pronouns.
 3. Be a friend or an ally.



Activity 2: My friend is transgender

As a class, watch the [My friend is transgender](#) video on Amaze.org.

Stop the video at 2:55, to facilitate a discussion.

What did we learn from this video?

Prompts:

- What did Jim say about gender and sex? Is this inclusive to people who are transgender or non-binary?
- Why did Cassie get upset with Jim and what he was saying?
- Do you think that what Jim said about their friend Glenda was kind and supportive?
- What do you think Jim could have done differently?

Watch the rest of the [My friend is transgender](#) video.

What did we learn from this video?

Prompts:

- Was it brave for Glenda to talk to Jim?
- Should Jim respect Glenda and not share their gender identity with other people?
- How could Jim have responded to Glenda using the rules:
 1. Don't make assumptions about someone's gender.
 2. Use affirmed names and pronouns.
 3. Be a friend or an ally.



Activity 3: How to be a good ally to people and their gender identities

The teacher will remind students of the three rules for being a good ally:

1. Don't make assumptions about someone's gender.
2. Use affirmed names and pronouns.
3. Be a friend or an ally.

The teacher distributes the [Appendix 1: How to be a good ally to people with different gender identities](#) to all students and reads a scenario aloud to the class, students can volunteer to come up and practice how to be a good ally based on that scenario. Teachers will prompt students to refer to the three rules of being a good ally.

Scenario 1: Your friend comes out to you as transgender	Scenario 2: Your friend is being bullied because of their gender identity
You have been friends with Taylor since you were in primary school. They asked to come to your house. They want to tell you something very important. They come out to you as transgender. They no longer want to use he/him pronouns and now want you to use she/her pronouns. They ask you not to tell anyone because they aren't ready for other people to know yet. Prompts: • What could you say to Taylor when they come out to you as transgender? • Think about things you could say to make them feel supported: • Thank you for sharing this with me • I am honoured that you feel safe to tell me this • Of course I will use the pronouns you identify with • I will not tell anyone, because that is your business and you should only tell who you want, when you are ready. • How could you support Taylor? • What kind of support do you think they may need? • Could you ask them what support they could need?	Your friend Alex identifies as non-binary. Alex is experiencing bullying at school because of their gender identity. People misgender Alex. They tease Alex for what they wear to school. Prompts: • Does Alex have a right to feel safe at school? • What could you do to support them? • What would you say to someone who is bullying Alex at school?

Conclusion: Recap what was taught in this lesson, emphasising the importance of being an ally and supporting friends who face challenges related to gender identity.

Ask students if they can tell you some of the different gender identities people might have.

Ask students to recall the 3 rules for being a good ally:

1. Don't make assumptions about someone's gender.
2. Use affirmed names and pronouns.
3. Be a friend or an ally.

Remind students that there is support available to them or their friends, whether from school counselors, trusted adults, or support organisations.



Teacher reflection

Reflect on the lesson asking yourself:

- Did the lesson cater to the diverse learning preferences and needs of the students?
- Did the students feel safe enough to openly discuss gender?
- How can I build on this lesson to support students to continue to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to gender identities and supporting their friends?
- Were there any parts of this lesson that should be recapped or repeated to help students consolidate their learning?

References

- 1 Dewinter, J., De Graaf, H., & Begeer, S. (2017). Sexual orientation, gender identity, and romantic relationships in adolescents and adults with autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 47, 2927-2934
- 2 George, R., & Stokes, M. A. (2018). Gender identity and sexual orientation in autism spectrum disorder. *Autism*, 22(8), 970-982. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361317714587>

Appendix 1: How to be a good ally to people with different gender identities

Scenario 1: Your friend comes out to you as transgender

You have been friends with Taylor since you were in primary school. They asked to come to your house. They come out to you as being transgender. They no longer want to use he/him pronouns and now want you to use she/her pronouns. They ask you not to tell anyone because they aren't ready for other people to know yet.

Scenario 2: Your friend is being bullied because of their gender identity

Your friend Alex identifies as non-binary. Alex is experiencing bullying at school because of their gender identity. People misgender Alex. They tease Alex for what they wear to school.