

Project title: “The social inclusion of LGBT people. Public attitudes and evidence-based interventions to increase their quality of life”

Project code: RO-NO-2019-0412

Intervențion script WP 2

TEXT SCRIPT	OBSERVATIONS
<p>Dear teachers,</p> <p>As stated by the project team, in this training we will provide you with several pieces of scientific information (explained in a few words) about the sexual orientation of students, but we’ll also share with you the problems they may encounter, in order to better understand them and help them get through the challenges they face.</p> <p>Here are the topics covered: We will start by defining and clarifying the terms. Then we will discuss what we know about sexual orientation and sexuality. After that we'll look at what research tells us about children raised in LGBT+ families. Following that, there is a discussion on the effects of homophobia on LGBT+ children, as well as the tools we can use to combat discrimination and help LGBT+ students. Towards the end we will find out what students, teachers, and colleagues who are members of the LGBT+ community are telling us. At the end, we will see how we can exercise our empathy with LGBT students.</p>	

Project coordinator

Partner 1

<p>Part 1: Defining and clarifying terms</p> <p>Before we can talk about the effects of discrimination on LGBT students, but also what we can do to help them, it is important to define certain concepts and terms that we will be talking about in the sections to come.</p> <p>The term LGBT+ / LGBTQIA refers to the initials of various people who are part of this community, namely: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual.</p> <p>Thus, the LGBT community includes people with different sexual orientations, as well as people of different sexes and / or genders.</p>	
<p>Sexual orientation refers to sexual attraction and the desire to have intimate and / or sexual relations with other people. Thus, there are different types of sexual orientations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heterosexuality - sexual attraction to people of the opposite sex or gender • Homosexuality - sexual attraction to people of the same sex or gender. This term refers to both Lesbians (women or females) and Gays (men or males). • Bisexuality - sexual attraction to both sexes or genders • Asexuality - lack of or diminished sexual attraction to any gender or sex 	
<p>There is, however, an important difference between sex and gender, although the two terms are often used interchangeably. Sex is designated at birth, most often based on the baby's anatomy. Thus, it is a purely biological concept. At birth, people can be female, male, or intersex.</p> <p>Intersex people are born with physical, genetic or hormonal characteristics that "do not fit the typical definitions for male or female bodies" (according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights). For some intersex people these traits are evident at birth, while for others they appear later in life, often at puberty. There are many forms of intersex variants, the word being an umbrella term rather than a single category.</p>	

Project coordinator

Partner 1

<p>Gender, on the other hand, is a social construct that refers to several emotional and behavioral characteristics that are culturally associated with biological sex. Gender can also have several subcomponents - gender identity, gender roles, etc.</p> <p>Gender roles refer to social norms considered acceptable to a particular person, based on their assigned gender or perceived gender. For example, a girl may behave more boyishly as a child, dressing in trousers and playing football with friends, thus adopting a more masculine role.</p> <p>Gender identity, on the other hand, refers to a person's experience of their own gender. This may correspond to or differ from the sex assigned at birth.</p> <p>Transgender people are people whose gender identity does not match the gender assigned at birth. Cisgender are people whose gender identity corresponds to the sex assigned at birth.</p> <p>The term Queer, by contrast, refers to people who identify beyond traditional gender categories.</p>	
<p>As mentioned earlier, the purpose of this training is to help students in the LGBT community to successfully overcome the challenges they face.</p> <p>A major challenge is discrimination. We can mention several types of discrimination that the LGBT+ community faces: homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, etc.</p> <p>While our focus will be on homophobia (probably the most common and so there are several resources to address it), we want to highlight that all these types of discrimination are important. We hope that the things we address and the resources we provide in this training also translate to other discriminatory attitudes.</p>	
<p>Part 2. LGBT children and families</p> <p>When it comes to members of the LGBT+ community, many people are concerned that accepting them may have a negative effect on society or their own families. These concerns have not been supported by scientific studies.</p>	

Project coordinator

Partner 1

<p>For example, an analysis of 33 studies on 5272 children shows that children raised by same-sex parents do not end up being different from children raised by parents of both sexes. They do not differ in terms of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sexual orientation (they do not "become" gay) • gender identity (they do not "become" trans) • cognitive skills • psychological well-being <p>Homosexuality is not "contagious" and interactions with LGBT+ individuals do not harm children's development.</p> <p>In contrast, children raised by same-sex parents tend to have better relationships with their parents, according to studies.</p> <p>In conclusion, the data shows that homosexuality is not "contagious" and interactions with LGBT + personalities do not harm children's development.</p>	<p>Fedewa, A. L., Black, W. W., & Ahn, S. (2015). Children and adolescents with same-gender parents: A meta-analytic approach in assessing outcomes. <i>Journal of GLBT Family Studies</i>, 11(1), 1-34.</p>
<p>Part 3: More on sexual orientation and sexuality</p> <p>There are several theories and studies about the biological basis of sexual orientation. Although some indicate certain biological bases (genes, hormones, neural structures), they do not sufficiently explain sexual orientation and are almost exclusively focused on homosexuality in men, so they cannot give us a clear explanation, nor an overview of the situation.</p> <p>Instead, it is important to know that sexuality has a wide variety of functions and manifestations.</p> <p>For example, homosexual behavior exists in different cultures such as those in Southeast Asia, and various indigenous tribes in New Guinea, but also in different eras such as Ancient Greece.</p> <p>Moreover, homosexual behaviors also occur in different species such as swans, ducks, penguins, dolphins, elephants, and many species of primates.</p> <p>To date, homosexual behaviors have been observed in over 1,500 animal species.</p>	<p>Bartoş, S. E., & Rusu, A. S. (2011). <i>Psihologia sexualității. Idei de cercetare.</i></p>

Project coordinator

Partner 1

<p>In fact, individuals with homosexual behavior are a very important part of society in the animal kingdom. They "adopt" orphaned puppies who would not normally be able to survive on their own.</p> <p>Sex does not have a purely reproductive function, but also a socio-emotional regulation - we notice this trend in heterosexual and homosexual couples, but also in other animal species.</p> <p>In general, we cannot choose who we are attracted to - heterosexual people do not chose who they are attracted to, nor are LGBT + people.</p>	<p>Monk, J.D., Giglio, E., Kamath, A. et al. An alternative hypothesis for the evolution of same-sex sexual behaviour in animals. <i>Nat Ecol Evol</i> 3, 1622–1631 (2019). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-019-1019-7</p>
<p>Part 4: The negative effects of homophobia.</p> <p>It is very important to understand that homophobia can have negative consequences for young people, according to numerous psychological studies.</p> <p>Young LGBT individuals are 1.5 to 3 times more likely to commit suicide than their heterosexual counterparts.</p> <p>A meta-analytical study looked at 35 studies of over 2 million heterosexual young people and over 100,000 LGBT+ young individuals, all between the ages of 12 and 20. The results showed that for every heterosexual young person, the chance of committing suicide was</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.71 higher for young gay and lesbian • 4.87 higher for young bisexuals • 5.87 higher for young transgender people 	<p>Johnson, R. B., Oxendine, S., Taub, D. J., & Robertson, J. (2013). Suicide prevention for LGBT students. <i>New Directions for Student Services</i>, 2013(141), 55-69.</p> <p>Di Giacomo, E., Krausz, M., Colmegna, F., Aspesi, F., & Clerici, M. (2018). Estimating the risk of attempted suicide among sexual minority youths: a</p>

Project coordinator

Partner 1

<p>LGBT youths are also more prone to mental health problems such as depression or anxiety</p> <p>The evidence is overwhelming: an analysis of 199 studies from different countries shows that most studies on adolescents (97%) observed higher levels of depression among young LGB people compared to heterosexuals.</p>	<p>systematic review and meta-analysis. JAMA pediatrics, 172(12), 1145-1152.</p> <p>Oswalt, S. B., & Wyatt, T. J. (2011). Sexual orientation and differences in mental health, stress, and academic performance in a national sample of US college students. Journal of homosexuality, 58(9), 1255-1280.</p> <p>Plöderl, M., & Tremblay, P. (2015). Mental health of sexual minorities. A systematic review. International review of psychiatry, 27(5), 367-385.</p>
<p>How do we explain these negative effects?</p> <p>Numerous studies have shown that young LGB people have these experiences because they are exposed to prejudice, ridicule, physical and verbal aggression. In other words, they are not born with depressive inclinations and predispositions to suicide, but are exposed to continuous stress that leads to these manifestations.</p> <p>How do we know that young people's mental health problems are caused by these external factors (for example, a society that does not accept them)?</p> <p>One study looked at 396 LGB people for a year, and outside observers assessed how often these people were victims of homophobia. The results showed that people who had more such experiences had worse mental health outcomes after one year.</p>	<p>Johnson, R. B., Oxendine, S., Taub, D. J., & Robertson, J. (2013). Suicide prevention for LGBT students. New Directions for Student Services, 2013(141), 55-69.</p>

Project coordinator

Partner 1

<p>Another study of 34,653 adults over 4 years showed that LGB people in states that banned gay marriage were 36.6% more likely to develop disorders such as anxiety and depression.</p> <p>These studies show that being a victim of homophobia can lead to physical and mental health problems.</p>	<p>Frost, D. M., Lehavot, K., & Meyer, I. H. (2015). Minority stress and physical health among sexual minority individuals. <i>Journal of behavioral medicine</i>, 38(1), 1-8.</p> <p>Hatzenbuehler, M. L., McLaughlin, K. A., Keyes, K. M., & Hasin, D. S. (2010). The impact of institutional discrimination on psychiatric disorders in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: A prospective study. <i>American journal of public health</i>, 100(3), 452-459.</p>
<p>Moreover, LGBT youths who are not accepted by their parents and family are more likely to suffer, suggesting that their acceptance into families and schools is essential to avoiding mental health problems and suicide.</p> <p>Efforts to change the sexual orientation of young people are dangerous to the mental health of LGB young individuals and are banned in some countries and condemned by the scientific community.</p> <p>In fact, since 2009 most mental health professional associations have issued statements against conversion therapy, considering it unethical and unscientific.</p> <p>The best solution remains education to reduce homophobia in schools, families, and other social settings and to support these young people in a positive way.</p>	<p>Skerrett, D. M., Kølves, K., & De Leo, D. (2016). Factors related to suicide in LGBT populations. <i>Crisis</i>.</p> <p>Shidlo, A., & Schroeder, M. (2002). Changing sexual orientation: A consumers' report. <i>Professional Psychology: Research and Practice</i>, 33(3), 249.</p> <p>George, M. A. (2016). Expressive Ends: Understanding Conversion Therapy Bans. <i>Ala. L. Rev.</i>, 68, 793.</p>

Project coordinator

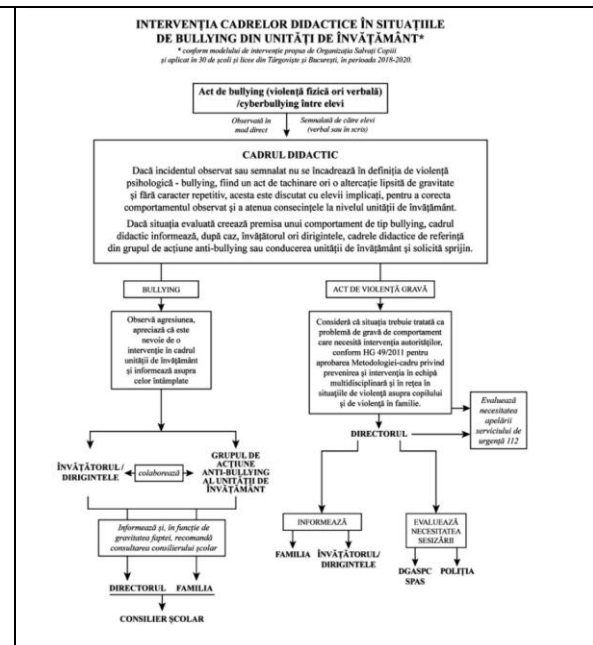
Partner 1

<p>For example, we can talk about bullying, a special case of discrimination.</p> <p>Bullying is defined as hostile/ exclusionary, ridiculing behavior aimed at humiliating someone else. The word "bullying" does not have an exact translation into Romanian, but it can be associated with terms such as intimidation, terrorization, brutalization.</p> <p>Children are bullied for many reasons, and sexual orientation is one of them. It is important to understand that bullying is not limited to just physical aggression. Bullying has several forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • verbal: threats, labeling, mockery; • psychological: isolation of the victim, spreading rumors; • physical: hitting, pushing. <p>We need to recognize these forms of bullying and be aware that LGBT students are often the target of such attacks.</p>	<p>Juvonen, J., & Graham, S. (2014). Bullying in schools: The power of bullies and the plight of victims. Annual review of psychology, 65, 159-185.</p>
<p>We will take a break from the presentation to ask you to do an exercise. Considering everything you've learned about homophobia and its effects, please imagine a day in the life of a gay student - write a few paragraphs about what this student is living and feeling on a school day. What are his / her thoughts and feelings that day?</p>	<p>7 min hourglass</p>
<p>One of the most important resources in Romania is the anti-bullying law, which has recently been passed: The law against psychological violence, or in legal terms Law no. 221/2019. It is also accompanied by methodological implementing rules approved in 2020.</p> <p>They stipulate that each school should have an anti-bullying action group with the role of "preventing, identifying and resolving acts of bullying."</p> <p>This law also details what we can do if we notice or are notified of a bullying incident. The school principals and head schoolteachers will also be involved.</p>	<p>https://www.edu.ro/normele-metodologice-de-aplicare-legii-impotriva-violentei-psihologice-bullying-au-fost-publicate-in</p>

Project coordinator

Partner 1

It is important to act, even if others do not. Only by acting can we help these young people and provide them with the support they need.



Additionally, other organizations have created various tools for teachers to combat bullying. Below are several links to lesson plans, examples of how to approach different situations, and additional documentation:

For example, the following website provides more free tools, lesson plans, and resources for anti-bullying education.

Many of these resources are in Romanian and can be downloaded for free.

<https://combatbullying.eu/ro/toolkit>

The resources will also be available in written form so that they can be more easily accessible.



Project coordinator

Partner 1

<p>Other resources you can use are: Resources from Save the Children to understand and counsel students who have been bullied</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.scolifarabullying.ro/homepage?type=PROFESOR • https://www.salvaticopiii.ro/ce-facem/protectie/protectie-impotriva-violentei/prevenirea-violentei-in-scoala/prevenirea-bullying-ului-in-scoli-si-gradinite <p>A best practice guide for preventing school violence co-funded by the European Union</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://cnnecta.ro/images/Media/BrosuraRO.pdf <p>A short guide to combating harassment and violence in schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/ro/pub/viewpoints/experts/tackling-school-bullying.htm <p>We know that these resources take time to go through, but the more we learn, the better we will be able to help those students who need help!</p>	
<p>Unicef has created an intervention model for bullying in general, which can also be applied in cases of bullying due to sexual orientation: https://www.unicef.org/moldova/media/3146/file/Bullying-ul%20in%20randul%20adolescentilor%20din%20Republica%20Moldova.pdf</p> <p>LGBT+ rights organizations also provide support to LGBT+ individuals by assisting them in filing complaints with the National Council for Combating Discrimination. Here you can find both useful contact information for reporting instances of discrimination, and a standard reporting form that contains basic information (e.g. type of discriminatory behavior, existing evidence such as witnesses, video / audio recordings, screenshots) https://mozaiqlgbt.ro/sesizare-cncd/</p>	

Project coordinator

Partner 1

<p>In addition, some organizations provide assistance in finding psychological counseling on topics such as “coming out,” romantic relationships, family relationships, discrimination, and homophobia: http://www.acceptromania.ro/consiliere-psihologica/</p>	
<p>Students who feel alienated may be encouraged to try to find a support group. The main LGBT organizations in Romania have Facebook pages that can help in this regard https://www.facebook.com/identity.education https://www.facebook.com/gendertalkromania/ https://www.facebook.com/AsociatiaPRIDERomania</p>	
<p>Now we want to show you some testimonials from members of the LGBT community</p>	
<p>Finally, we would like to ask you to take part in another exercise. Imagine now that, as a teacher, you are interacting with the student you previously imagined. For example, the student asks for your help in a discussion after class. Knowing what you know now about the LGBT+ community and how we can help LGBT+ students, please imagine this interaction in which you offer suggestions and support. What would you say to this student? Please write down the answers.</p>	5 minute hourglass
<p>The training session ends here. Thank you for your attention and please contact us if you have any questions or would like more information about the resources presented in this material.</p>	

Project coordinator

Partner 1