

### Exploring Self-Concept

**Time: 30 minutes**

#### Materials:

- [Self-concept and sexual orientation PowerPoint](#)
- SMART board or chalk board
- Blank piece of paper
- Crayons, markers, etc.

#### Instructions

- Hand out a blank piece of paper to all of the students.
- Begin by drawing an outline of a body on the SMART board or chalk board.
- Ask students to draw the outline of a body on a blank piece of paper, like you have drawn on the board.
  - Using crayons or markers is encouraged for the next steps.
- Cue the *sexual identity* slide in the self-concept and sexual orientation PowerPoint.
- Draw the symbols for a person assigned female at birth a person assigned male at birth, the combination of both (for trans/non-binary), or neither, on the body outline in the place where external reproductive organs and genitals would be.
  - Use this as a teaching point to discuss biological sex.
  - *Teacher prompt:* “**Biological sex** generally refers to the sex assigned at birth based on external genitalia, but it also includes internal reproductive structures, chromosomes, hormone levels, and secondary sex characteristics such as breasts, facial and body hair, and fat distribution.”
- Cue the *sexual orientation* slide in the self-concept and sexual orientation.
- Draw a heart in the chest of the body outline. **Optional:** hearts can be drawn in other areas in and around the body outline, such as near the brain or around the brain. This might represent emotional attraction.
  - *Teacher prompt:* “**Sexual orientation** (or attraction) is a term for the emotional, physical, romantic, sexual, and spiritual attraction, desire, or affection for another person. Examples of sexual orientations include but are not limited to: asexual, heterosexual, bisexual, gay, or lesbian. Sexual

orientation is much more accurately viewed as an attraction continuum that involves a range of gender identities, expressions, and biological sexes.”

- Cue the gender identity and gender expression slide in the self-concept and sexual orientation.
- Draw a brain in the head of the body outline and highlight that this represents ones’ gender identity. Then draw a circle around the outside of the body outline, as this represents gender expression.
  - *Teacher prompt:* “**Gender Identity** is how a person identifies based on their intrinsic sense of self with respect to being female, male, a combination of both, or neither, regardless of their biological sex.”
  - *Teacher prompt:* “**Gender expression** refers to the way an individual expresses their gender identity (e.g., in the way they dress, the length and style of their hair, the way they act or speak, the pitch of their voice, and in their choice of whether or not to wear makeup.) Understandings of gender expression are culturally specific and change over time.”
- Upon completing the following steps, ask students to complete their body outline with any designs, items, or things that represent them and that they think positively contributes to their self-concept.

Highlight for students that gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation are connected to the way they see themselves and to their interactions with others.

Understanding and accepting one’s own gender identity and sexual orientation can have a strong impact on the development of one’s overall self-concept. Being non-judgmental and accepting of a wide diversity of gender identities, expressions, and sexualities has a strong impact on, and is important to, the positive development of self-identities for oneself and others.

*Adapted from OPHEA: Lesson 1 – Developing a Positive Self-Concept*

**Note:** The *Self-Concept and Sexual Orientation PowerPoint* does not need to be taught before completing this activity, though it is highly recommended. This activity should be completed alongside the presentation, while teaching self-concept and sexual orientation.