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Authors	Juan Escalona Corral

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Introduction

This competence framework is the 4th Intellectual Output of the project **Sexual Diversity in Social Domain Sensitivity Vocational Training (SENSE) No. 2018-1-NL01-KA202-038973**, and it aims to propose a set of competences that are needed both by the students and teachers for the inclusion of diversity, both amongst peers and with future clients at their workplace. The project is coordinated by the organization Stitching Global Alliance for LGBTI Education (GALE) based in the Netherlands. The project further sees the collaboration of the following European organizations:

- Fondazione Centro Studi Villa Montesca (Italy)
- I.I.S. Liceo Città di Pietro
- Formacion Para el Desarrollo e Insercion, Sociedad Limitada – DEFOIN (Spain)
- Eurotraining Educational Organization (Greece)
- ROC Van Amsterdam – ROCVA (Netherlands)
- European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training – EFVET (Belgium)
- CESIE, European centre of studies and initiatives (Italy)
- Associazione Euroform (Italy)

Societies and the labour market are changing rapidly and it is clear that VET students increasingly need generic 21st century skills to be able to have a future chance for a job in changing markets. The acquisition of such key transversal competences is an important priority in the European VET strategy (ET2020).

The goal of the framework is to support a focused dialogue on how to raise the quality of VET education on sexuality and diversity, and to start discussion on how to enhance formal competence requirements of VET students. The partners in this project confirm that formal competence requirements for VET students are different in all of our countries and there is room for improvement. Also, a discussion across countries and on the European level will be beneficial to enhance the European response to intolerance and to promote constructive and professional responses to intolerance and polarization.

The discussion on the framework serves to:

1. Create an awareness of 'deep' diversity skills, including sexual diversity sensitivity
2. Create or strengthen the need to review institutional, or national formal VET competency requirements for students
3. Support the development of new or adapted curricula to enhance diversity education in VET
4. Support exchange and deepen the discussion of experiences, curricula and competence frameworks at the European level

The implementation and work on the skills described in this framework has two outcomes, in the short term and in the long, and both affecting the classroom and the work setting where the VET students will provide services to LGBTI customers. The outcomes are the following:

1. **Inclusion of LGBTI students in the classroom**: By raising the issue of sexual diversity and implementing the tools proposed in this framework, the classroom will become a more open space where LGBTI students can feel safe, therefore promoting their inclusion.
2. **Respect for the diversity of LGBTI customers/users of the companies where the VET students will work**: When VET students join the labour market; they will have to provide services to diverse customers, and specifically to LGBTI customers. For example, while studies on "older lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) adults in residential care point to their discrimination, invisibility and the taboo on LGBTI lifestyles" (LEYERZAPF, VISSE, DE BEER & ABMA, 2016), a VET student that has the diversity competences described in this framework will be able to provide care attending to the specific needs to the LGBTIII+ users.

About this framework

This competence framework defines the competences needed by Vocational Education and Training teachers to be able to raise a discussion on LGBTI issues in the classroom. Those competences will be divided in interpersonal and intrapersonal.

The competences chosen are partly the same that can be found in the Students Competence Framework, since we do believe that teachers need to have this set of competences to being able to transfer them to their students. But while in the Student's Competences Framework, the focus was on how to work on those competences in the classroom context, in this framework we will focus on the needs of the teacher that wishes to work on those competences, especially if that work will be based on the activities proposed in the Student's Competence Framework.

In order to do so, we will include 3 sections for each of the competence: its definition, the relevance to the promotion of LGBTI issues in the Vocational Education and Training classroom and the related knowledge a teacher needs in order to implement it in the classroom. This framework can be used as an additional tool to the Teacher Training designed in this project.

Use of singular "they"

In this framework we will use the *singular* "they" as the gender neutral pronoun instead of the generic "he". We are doing so in order to include both people who may identify with the pronouns he or she as well as to those who identify with a non-binary identity. We will use the inflected forms for they (them, their and theirs) except for the reflexive form "themself", which even though it is grammatically incorrect, its use can be found when it "is intentionally used for someone whose preferred pronoun is they" ("Themself", 2019) as it is the case in this framework

Specific competences for the promotion of LGBTI diversity in the classroom

Coping Skills

Intrapersonal competence

Definition

A good level of this competence means that like students, teachers are able to carry out a series of actions, or a thought process used in handling a stressful or unpleasant situation or in modifying one's reaction to such a situation. It typically involves a conscious and direct approach to problems, in contrast to defence mechanisms.

Having achieved this competence they will:

- Recognise stressors and their sources
- Apply appropriate strategies to deal with the stressors (e.g. positive thinking, taking an objective viewpoint rather than a personal perspective, anticipate the stressor and react in a measured fashion, develop a social support network, learn to communicate their emotions, be physically active, etc.)
- Be able to decide on whether to directly address the stressor or, alternatively, deal with the feelings the stressor generate

For teachers to be able to teach this competence to students, they need to:

- Be aware of factors that possibly limit the copings skills of LGBTI and cisgender/heterosexual students
- To create a safe learning environment in the classroom
- To encourage and support learning positive coping skills to replace immature defence mechanisms (Lewis & White, 2009)

Relevance

When someone is in a stressful situation, there is a higher probability of that person acting aggressively, often deflecting their anger (Linsky, Bachman & Straus, 1995) which can lead to hate behaviour towards those who diverge from the normative. Being able to use coping skills can help us manage stressful situations that can emerge from the discussion of LGBTI diversity

Related knowledge

Discrimination on LGBTI students can have the following consequences that we must try to avoid.

		Bullied in School % (n)	Not Bullied in School % (n)
Self-harm	Yes	56.5% (178)	44.4% (164)
	No	43.5% (137)	55.6% (205)
Ever seriously thought of ending own life	Yes	76.2% (237)	58.6% (212)
	No	23.8% (74)	41.4% (150)
Ever seriously tried to take your own life	Yes	36.3% (113)	17.6% (64)
	No	63.7% (198)	82.4% (299)

Source: Higgins et al, 2016

Self-Control

Intrapersonal competence

Definition

A good level of this competence means that teachers can support students to be able to manage their self-emotions and actions consciously.

Is the ability to be in command of one's behaviour (overt, covert, emotional, or physical) and to restrain or inhibit one's impulses.

Having this competence means that they:

- Are aware of the risks and negative consequences that may result from carrying out harmful behaviour
- Increase their commitment as a person
- Are able to transform abstract objectives into small stages or tasks that they have to fulfil
- Are able to modify their impulses and act according to what they know should do.
- Train their memory in order to repeat actions

For teachers to be able to teach this competence to students, they need to:

- Be able to help student to recognise their feelings and how these impact their professional performance
- Be able to facilitate class activities in which students can learn how to experiment with self-control, like games and role-play

Be able to help students to deal adequately with tensions that may exist between street culture, home culture, school culture and future professional demands

Relevance

Sometimes teachers find it difficult to deal with students who bring a street culture into the school (Redde et all, 2009), and when bringing up LGBTI diversity, strong reactions can be experimented from some students. Students can have strong and violent reactions to diversity, and we need to have self-control to deal with them in an appropriate and effective manner.

Related knowledge

There are two possible ways in which people can react when someone deviates from the norm. When people feel uncomfortable they experience the "fight or flight" response:

- When they "fight", their first impulse is to go against who deviates from the norm, is an aggressive response.
- To "flight" is, on the other hand, to turn away from it, to ignore and not recognise that reality.

These are pre-cognitive responses that have "evolved as a survival mechanism, enabling people and other mammals to react quickly to life-threatening situations" (Understanding the stress response - Harvard Health, 2011). As teachers, we need to be able to always deal directly with such emotions by giving them space but not judging them.

If we do ignore these emotions, we are in fact validating them. GALE labels those attitudes as a Magnum ice cream, with frozen emotions inside and cognitive arguments as a chocolate layer covering up the emotions. While the easy path is to deal with the arguments and ignore the emotions, the most effective tool to end with discrimination is to acknowledge and work with these emotions in the classroom.

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(GALE, n.d.)

Self-Awareness

Intrapersonal competence

Definition

A good level of this competence can help students and teachers to understand their place/role in the living environment compared to others, as well as being able to understand what they are feeling at any given time.

This competence is extremely important for teachers since they are implicit role models in the learning environment and having a good competence can help them transfer both this and other competences to their students.

Having this competence means that they:

- Demonstrate the ability to identify clearly their skills, values, interests and core strengths/weaknesses/opportunities;
- Accurately judge their own performance and behaviour;
- Understand other people, how they perceive them, their emotion, attitude and identity, and their responses to them;
- Recognise their own competences, feelings and attitudes even without external recognition.

For teachers to be able to teach this competence to students, they need to:

- Dare to show students that they themselves are sometimes also in doubt about values, norms and choices; that you are not only "the objective expert" on everything
- Show how they strife for more self-awareness

Test their self-awareness in dialogue with other, including with students

Relevance

Be aware of what you know about LGBTI. Sometimes you may be asked questions that you may not know the answer to. When that happens is better to openly say "I don't know yet, but I'll look into it and get back to you" rather than giving incorrect or vague answers. There are plenty of open resources online where you can get the information the students have asked.

Related knowledge

The It Gets Better Project LGBTIQ+ Glossary compiles the definition of the main LGBTI terms, including the following:

> **"Gender Expression (GE).** The external manifestations of gender, expressed through such things as names, pronouns, clothing, haircuts, behavior, voice, body characteristics, and more.
>
> **Gender Identity (GI).** One's internal, deeply held sense of gender. Some people identify completely with the gender they were assigned at birth (usually male or female), while others may identify with only a part of that gender, or not at all. Some people identify with another gender entirely. Unlike gender expression, gender identity is not visible to others.
>
> **Sex (S).** At birth, infants are commonly assigned a sex. This is usually based on the appearance of their external anatomy, and is often confused with gender. However, a person's sex is actually a combination of bodily characteristics including chromosomes, hormones, internal and external reproductive organs, and secondary sex characteristics. As a result, there are many more sexes than just male and female, just like there are many more genders than just male and female, as well.
>
> **Sexual Orientation (SO).** The desire one has for emotional, romantic, and/or sexual relationships with others based on their gender expression, gender identity, and/or sex. Many people choose to label their sexual orientation, while others do not." (It Gets Better Project, 2019)

The whole glossary can be accessed and downloaded for free at **https://itgetsbetter.org/blog/lesson/glossary/** where you can find additional resources and videos explaining each of the key terms.

Self-Esteem

Intrapersonal competence

Definition

A good level of this competence means that students are aware of and believe in their own abilities and personal value, and that teacher role-model this and help students to develop self-esteem.
It is the ability to identify and being conscious of your potentials, as well as being constructive about your limitations.
Anyone that has more self-esteem and is more at peace with themself is less likely to adopt inappropriate defensive behaviour against what is different from them.
Having this competence means that they:

- Are able to have a positive outlook about themselves
- Are able to say no
- Are able to see overall strengths and weaknesses and accept them in a positive way
- Are able to express their needs

For teachers to be able to teach this competence to students, they need to:

- Prepare themselves for open or even rude questions of students, and to think how they will deal with this (open, avoidant or which kind of diplomatic mix)
- Know when LGBTI students need "normal" support or when they need to be referred because the challenges they face should be considered "complicated"
- Know how to address students who are hiding their sexual orientation or gender identity
- Know how to coach LGBTI students in a sensitive way towards more self-esteem – when necessary
- Know how to coach cisgender and heterosexual students who feel threatened by diversity other than their own assumed identity

Relevance

Teachers can have a low self-esteem due to "lack of parental support, poor or lack of administrative support, and uprising of unmanageable classrooms due to students' behaviour and lack of interest in learning" (Mbuva, 2016). To being able to address LGBTI diversity in the classroom, we need a high level of self-esteem to being able to set boundaries, deal with different sorts of behaviour and do meaningful work that does not stay on the surface of the issue.

Related knowledge

Sexual minority individuals experience higher rates of mental health problems than heterosexual people. It has been suggested that minority stress (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minority_stress) explains this disparity, partly by elevating rates of general psychological risk factors such as low self-esteem.(Bridge, L., Smith, P., & Rimes, K. A. (2019). Numerous scientific studies have shown that minority individuals experience a high degree of prejudice, which causes stress responses (e.g., high blood pressure, anxiety) that accrue over time, eventually leading to a reduction of self-esteem and poor mental and physical health.

Minority stress may not be clear when it happens; one of the key aspects is that the stressors are experiences by the person themselves and by their environment as "normal" and "non-problematic" (for example, labelling continuous name-calling as something that just happens among youth, that youth just have to ignore it and that it is not meant in a discriminatory way). However, the accumulation of these relatively low-level stressors, eventually leads to burn-out, which is often not recognized as related to homophobia or transphobia.

Additionally, there has been evidence that LGBT people have higher risks of suffering from not only anxiety and other mental illnesses due to minority stress, but also physical health conditions such as certain types of cancer, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes or asthma (Lick et al., 2013)

In states with a discriminatory or non-protective legislation, this may add to a sense of helplessness and a feeling there is no recourse to discrimination. On another level, a work or school culture that promotes or endorses lower of higher levels of heteronormativity, may also be a breeding ground for minority stress and low self-esteem.

Self-Confidence

Intrapersonal competence

Definition

A good level of this competence demonstrates to others that students and teachers really know how to do things and accept the consequences of their own decisions.

It is the trust in one's abilities, capacities, and judgment, as well as the belief that one is capable of successfully meeting the demands of a task.

A person with low self-confidence feels hurt more easily and may react aggressively to it.

Having this competence means that they:

- Feel comfortable with new circumstances in their life;
- Feel happy with their own decisions;
- Are secure in themselves;
- Accept the consequences of their own decisions;
- Are able to instil confidence in other people in their decisions.

For teachers to be able to teach this competence to students, they need to:

- Feel confident they can discuss sexual diversity with students, and on a wider plane, to reflect with them on varying values and norms in all areas
- They need to be able to use interactive methods that enable experiential learning of students, like having a true dialogue rather than a discussion or debate, and role-play or games to explore and build confidence
- Because at times this may be a sensitive topic, teacher need the ability to assess risks involved in offering such programs and prepare themselves for criticism, so they are confident in how to handle opposition

Relevance

In order to address such a complex topic in the classroom, we need to be confident in our knowledge, and we therefore need to thoroughly prepare for the classroom. Reading additional materials, research papers, watching explanatory videos or consulting with LGBTI teachers or organisations can help you grow confidence to start a conversation on LGBTI diversity in the school.

Related knowledge

In the Teacher Training we developed as part as the second intellectual output of the SENSE project, we proposed the *40 questions* activity. This activity helps you prepare to some of the most common questions students may ask when discussing sexual diversity in the classroom.

Bear into mind that some of the proposed questions are biased and do not seek an answer rather than disrupting or boycotting the activity, and we need to be prepared for answering our students as well.

The questions we proposed in the activity are the following:

What is transvestism?	What is transgender?	What is cisgender?	What is intersex?
Men on man, women on women, that does not 'fit' does it?	How do you know you are gay or lesbian?	Do you become gay because of seduction?	Is there a therapy or medicine against same-sex attraction?
Why do they need to have these pride demonstrations?	Man on man, women on women, it does not fit, does it?	Name-calling for gay is only a joke is it not?	Why do gay people have their own bars?
How do gay people have sex?	Do lesbians use bananas to have sex?	Is it not very shameful for parents?	Are lesbians always such rough bitches?
Are all gays effeminate?	Can bisexuals not make a choice?	Is it not dirty?	Can you trust bisexuals?
How can people reconcile homosexual preference with their religion?	Homosexuality is forbidden by Islam (or the Bible), is it not?	If a lesbian has sex with a man, can she become normal again?	How do you know which gay/lesbian is the male or the female in the relationship?
Do all lesbian women hate men?	Is homosexuality natural?	Is being gay or lesbian a fashion?	Do lesbians use bananas for sex?
Why do LGBTI people want to be different?	Why can transsexuals not behave like a real man/woman?	Do gays have short relationships?	Are gay men always hunting for sex?
Why are people trying to confuse young people with gender ideology?	How do homosexuals divide tasks when they live together?	Can you change your sexual orientation?	Did you ever have sex with someone of the same sex?

(Polytarchi, 2019)

Accepting feedback and criticism

Intrapersonal competence

Definition

It is the ability to listen to other perspectives, and perform self-evaluation.

A good level of this competence will help students and teachers to learn from previous personal experiences - both positive and negative ones - and increase their chances of success in integrating in the school, and in general social life.

If a young person is used to accepting feedback and criticism, they might also find it easier to accept other realities other than their own, including LGBTI realities.

Having this competence means that they:

Understand that other people could have a different point of view on the same topic which could be beneficial for them;

Listen to the opinion and comments of their teachers and classmates positively and accepts this feedback;

Understand that feedback is not disapproval or a personal attack, but it is given so that they can improve as a person;

Are able to take on board advice that has been given to him/her and use it for further personal development.

For teachers to be able to teach this competence to students, they need to:

Be a role model by accepting criticism in a gracious way, even by students

Be able to identify didactic methods for teaching active emphatic listening, giving and accepting feedback and dealing with more direct criticism

Relevance

As mentioned before, we may not know all about LGBTII diversity when talking to our students. We must be open to be corrected when we put our foot where our mouth is, and we must be ready for learning further.

Related knowledge

In the SENSE project we have created the ***Teacher training, sexual diversity in VET: a trainers' manual*** (Polytarchi, 2019). With that training, you will get an introductory learning on LGBTII diversity that can be applied to the VET classroom.

Diversity Awareness

Interpersonal competence

Definition

A good level of this competence means that students and teachers are able to embrace (and to be open to discuss) the uniqueness of all individuals along several dimensions such as race, religious beliefs, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, physical abilities, political beliefs, and socio-economic status, and the recognition that cultural (etc.) factors limit the expression of diversity.

Having this competence means that:

- Diversity awareness skills extend beyond mere tolerance to encompass exploration of such individual differences, respecting them, and ultimately nurturing a healthy relationship with the individual despite the differences
- A harmonious environment where mutual respect and equity are intrinsic, protecting the school diversity

For teachers to be able to teach this competence to students, they need to:

- Make a analysis of the level of openness to different types of diversities in their classrooms
- Be able to distinguish between different levels of tolerance, acceptance, interests and willingness to reconsider own value frameworks
- Be aware of diversity pedagogy methods

Relevance

We need to understand how and why diversity is oppressed and what tools does society uses to inflict such oppression on those who do not conform to the norm, which in our society is being heterosexual and cisgender.

Related knowledge

Heteronormativity is defined as "what makes heterosexuality seem coherent, natural and privileged. It involves the assumption that everyone is 'naturally' heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is an ideal, superior to homosexuality or bisexuality" ("heteronormativity", n.d.).
To understand how this oppression works, GALE has developed the OGLO model (Dankmeijer, 2018) which structures the heteronormative oppression system under four key elements:

- **Openness:** when a student does not conform to the norm and expresses it openly, his classmates may react negatively, telling him to keep it more private or even hidden. There is difference between the allowed degree of openness of heterosexual romantic or sexual experiences as compared to others.

- **Gender:** those students who do not conform to the established gender rules and roles are perceived as inferior to their peers. This affects even more effeminate men.
- **Lifestyle:** the norm is that relationships ought to be monogamous and based on procreation. They are everlasting and reproduce gender patterns in which men have a dominating role over women. Relationships that do not follow these rules are not considered adequate.
- **Orientation:** Everyone is heterosexual unless proven differently. Other sexualities need to be explained. But if explained with pride, they may be dismissed as provocations.

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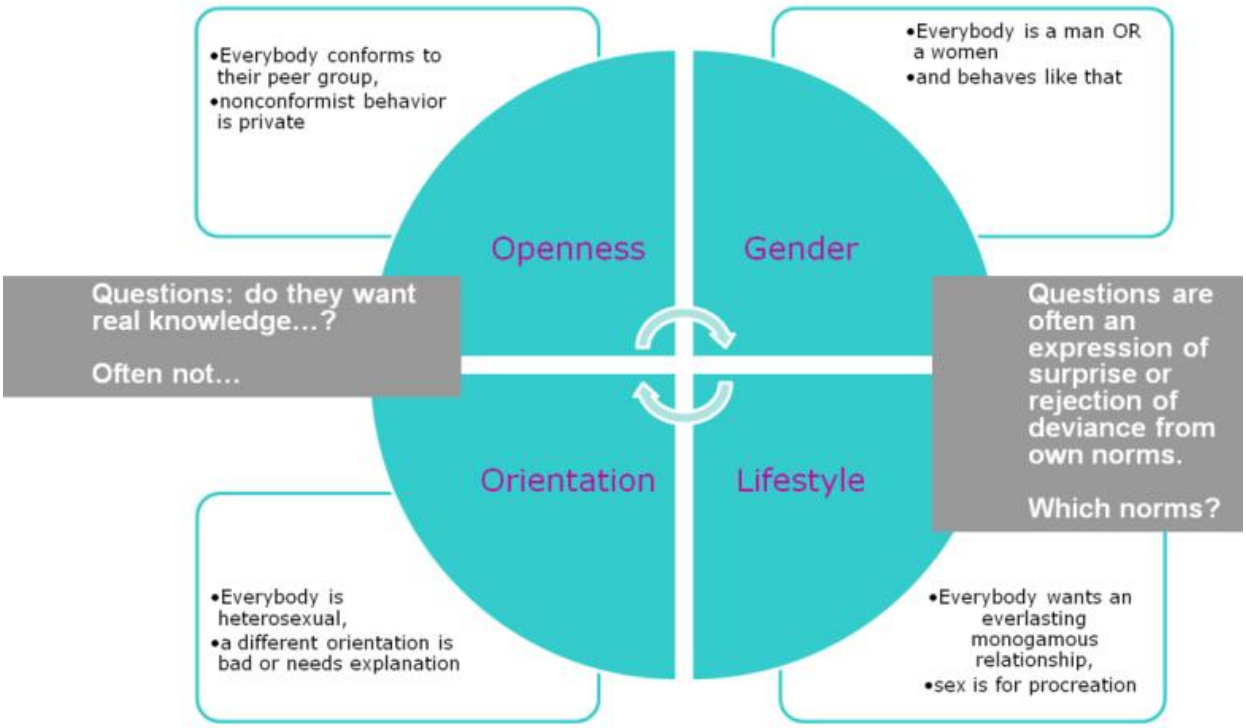


(Dankmeijer, 2018)

Respect and dignity awareness

Interpersonal competence

Definition

A good level of this competence can help to understand, respect and be tolerant with all people around accepting all kinds of diversity. This competence will allow to interact effectively with all people and support diversity (race, age, ethnicity, gender, educational level, socio – economic status, mental and physical abilities, religious and political beliefs); to recognize and accept both dimensions of diversity – personal and organisational – in the school. Finally be able to recognize the person first and rely on stereotypes of diversity.

Having this competence means that they:

- Are able to demonstrate a fair, objective and an open attitude toward those whose opinions, beliefs, practices are different from them;
- Are open minded to other cultures, religions and ways of life;
- Are able to recognise and support people with a variety of diversity situations and empowering them
- Recognise and accepts both dimensions of diversity – personal and organisational – in the school.

For teachers to be able to teach this competence to students, they need to:

- To be able to explain the difference between recognition of diversity and stereotyping
- Be able to instil a sense of professionality in students which includes the recognition that all clients and customers deserve dignity
- Be able to communicate to students that without this professionalism, they will not be able to get their diploma/degree
- To agree with colleagues and VET management on minimum standards of professional tolerance, how this is monitored and tested and how the VET institute communicates with students about this in a transparent and integer way

Relevance

While diversity awareness is a competence that is focused on the concept of diversity, this competence focuses on the individuals. We need this competence to take into consideration the needs of each of our students, taking into account their circumstances (including their being LGBTII) and their individual needs.

Related knowledge

As a teacher that openly shows support to the LGBTII collective, the situation in which a student comes out to you may occur. According to the *Safe Space Kit* (GLSEN, 2019), these are some tips that you can put in practice when offering support to a student in that situation:

WHAT NOT TO SAY WHEN SOMEONE COMES OUT TO YOU:

▼ **"I knew it!"** This makes the disclosure about you and not the student, and you might have been making an assumption based on stereotypes.

▼ **"Are you sure?" "You're just confused." "It's just a phase — it will pass."** This suggests that the student doesn't know who they are.

GLSEN, 2019

- Offer support but don't assume a student needs any help.
- Be a role model of acceptance.
- Appreciate the student's courage.
- Listen, listen, listen.
- Assure and respect confidentiality
- Ask questions that demonstrate understanding, acceptance and compassion
- Remember that the student has not changed
- Be prepared to give a referral

This same guide also offers some additional considerations to take into account when a student coms out to you as trans (GLSEN, 2019):

- Validate the person's gender identity and expression
- Remember that gender identity is separate from sexual orientation

Respect for others

Interpersonal competence

Definition

A good level of this competence means that students have a respectful way of treating or thinking about something or someone. They have respect for others despite the differences they might exist between you and the others.

Having this competence means that they:

- Are able to respect other people point of view
- Are able to respect actions from other people

The added teacher competences for this are similar to those mentioned under "diversity awareness" and "respect and dignity awareness".

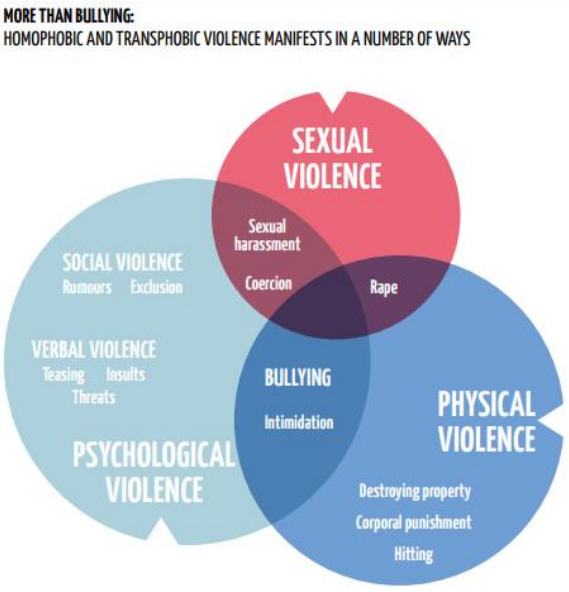
Relevance

We must understand the violence that our LGBTII students may suffer, in order to be prepared to answer to harassment and bullying in an effective manner.

Related knowledge

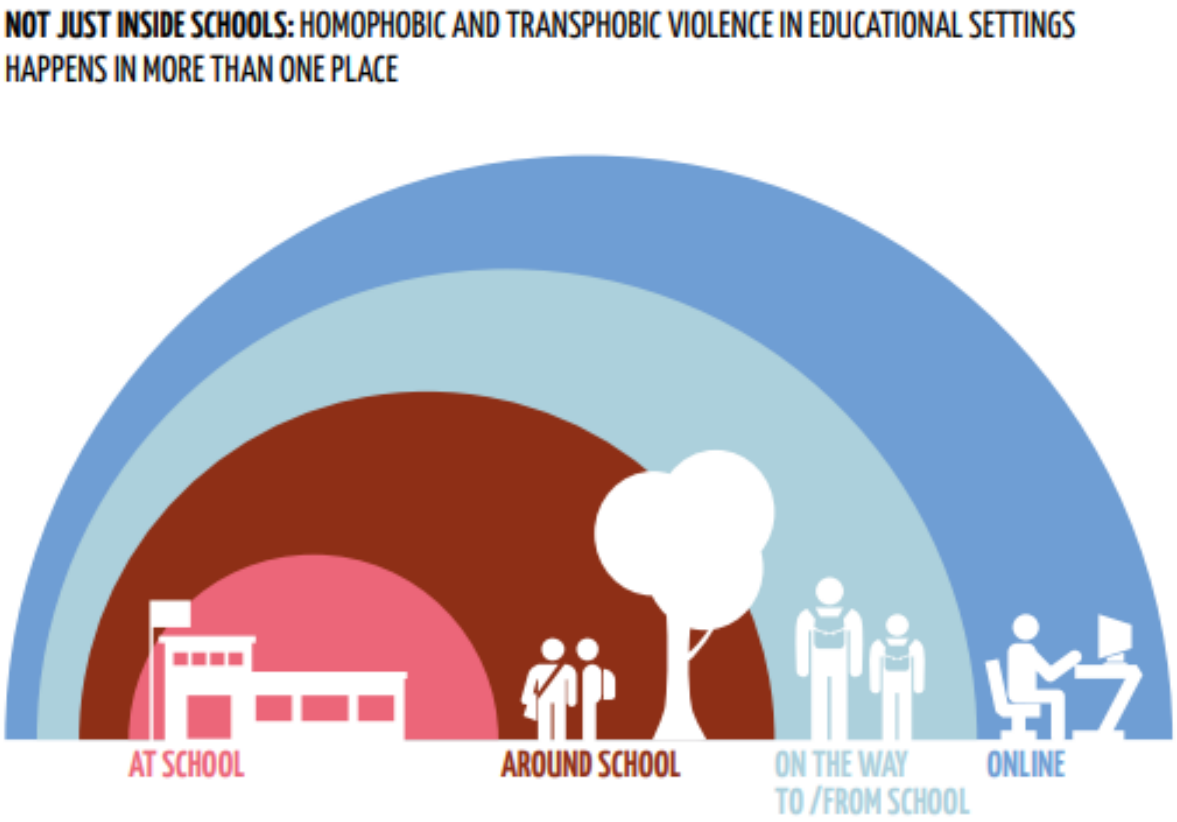
SOGIESC-based violence

The SOGIESC-based violence (violence based on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics)" is rooted in cultural norms and expectations about gender and gender roles"(Council of Europe, 2018) and it can take the following forms:



(UNESCO, 2016)

It takes relevance that both sexual and psychological violence can happen in an online environment. It takes more relevance to understand where this violence can take place:



(UNESCO, 2016)

Adaptable

Interpersonal competence

Definition

A good level of this competence shows the ability to accept changes and new circumstances in personal life; understand that things change and be able to adapt, as well as being able to manage multiple tasks and set priorities in life.
Having this competence means that they:

- Understand that things change at a far greater speed than ever before;
- Are able to accept changes or new circumstances in their life;
- Are able to manage multiple tasks and set priorities in their life;
- Are able to adapt to changing conditions.

For teachers to be able to teach this competence to students, they need to:

- Be aware of the recent improvements in the lives of LGBTI people, legally and socially, especially the changes that are relevant to the profession the students are studying for
- Understand the way this impacts on the professional skills of students and future workers
- Know how to work with students of potential diversity conflicts in their future work environments

Relevance

Society is in constant change. LGBTI people are more visible, and diversity training is included in most European countries education laws. We must provide a training according to the times we are living, and that includes adapting our teaching to include LGBTI diversity in our classrooms.

Related knowledge

In order to adapt our teaching to include LGBTI diversity, in the SENSE project we have developed the Curriculum Consultancy, which is a methodology to advise VET course teams on how to integrate diversity and sexual diversity in a spiral curriculum. To implement the SSC (SENSE Spiral Curriculum), teachers need to:

- Be able to create and maintain a safe, inclusive and enabling learning environment so that all learners of different cultural and religious backgrounds, abilities, gender identities and sexual orientations feel protected, included and empowered to participate
- Be able to use the SSC to promote sexual and gender-based violence)
- Be able to establish rules about respect, confidentiality and questions
- Be able to use a wide range of interactive and participatory student-

centred approaches1 and tools to help learners stay engaged, acquire knowledge, stimulate reflection and communication and develop skills
- Be able to communicate with confidence and in a non-judgemental way
- Be able to use appropriate language that is understood by the learners, that feels comfortable and takes into account different cultural and religious backgrounds, abilities, gender identities and sexual orientations
- Be able to discuss openly various gender-sexuality-related topics and issues with learners in an age-appropriate and development-appropriate, culturally sensitive and multi-perspective way
- Be able to refrain from imposing personal views, beliefs and assumptions on learners
- Be able to analyse and critically discuss social and cultural contexts and factors that influence sexuality and sexual behaviour of learners
- Be able to respond appropriately to provocative questions and statements
- Be able to employ a diverse range of interactive and participatory educational activities that actively engage recipients.
- Be able to reflect critically and constructively on and understand personal feelings, beliefs, experiences, attitudes and values (including biases and prejudices)
- Be able to reflect on and better understand others' feelings, beliefs, attitudes and values regarding sexuality
- Be able to support learners in developing critical thinking
- Be willing to work in partnership with external sexual health professionals.

Additionally, you can use the following resource on how to deal with diversity:

- **https://www.forbes.com/sites/lyndashaw/2016/03/20/7-ways-to-handle-diversity/#4fa07dc46e9a**
- **https://www.hrzone.com/engage/employees/team-diversity-how-to-work-with-people-who-are-different-to-you**
- **https://careers.gazprom-mt.com/blog/5-tips-handling-objections-understanding-differences-opinion/**
- **https://www.stonewall.org.uk/power-inclusive-workplaces**
- Sexual orientation and gender diversity in the workplace handbook: **https://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0023/196034/PiD-Sexual-Orientation-Gender-Diversity-Handbook.pdf**

Empathy

Interpersonal competence

Definition

A good level of this competence means to be able to put yourself in the position of the other and feel their point of view; coming closer to someone, and understanding others better. To be empathic means to allow yourself to feel your emotions - not necessarily by expressing them right away.

Having this competence means that they:

- Are able to put themselves in the place of other
- Are able to deeply understand others situations
- Have the capacity of not making judgments from other people actions
- Are able to have the same feeling that other person has.

For teachers to be able to teach this competence to students, they need to:

- Know what true empathy is
- Know how to motivate students to want to exercise empathy for LGBTI people and issues (this may be different for boys and girls, because boys have learned that being extremely masculine and non-emphatic protects then from being seen as weak and "gay")
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Relevance

Empathy is a prerequisite for real understanding and tolerance; and it is different than pretending or tolerance-at-a-distance. It is very important that the group makes ground rules before discussing issues related to this topic, such as you don't have to say anything, don't be negative about comments others and keep private comments in the group.

Related knowledge

We can ask our students to propose the rules they think are needed to have an open, honest and respectful discussion. The rules they may propose are amongst the following:

- We listen to each other
- We don't interrupt each other
- We don't judge each other
- No questions are stupid
- Personal stories or feelings are not shared beyond this group without

permission

- We respect each other's views
- Ask questions
- Be open to new ideas
- Give and receive feedback

The teacher should check if the main rules are mentioned. Commonly, basic ground rules are about four aspects:

1. Respect (don't judge people because you don't like them or their comments)
2. Don't cross the line (of someone else)
3. Without violence (this includes communication)
4. Approachable (be able to give and receive critical feedback)

But setting ground rules is just a beginning for a dialogue in which empathy can be exercised. For a better understanding of true empathy we would like to advise to check out "non-violent communication", see

- **https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonviolent_Communication**
- **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sjA90hvnQ0**
- **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWdQ7mKsQIc&list=PLPNVcESwoWu4lI9C3bhkYIWB8-dphbzJ3&index=4**

Additionally, and to create a better environment for LGBTI students, GLMA (Snowdon, 2013) recommends the following:

- Develop key policies and procedures to support transitioning students, staff and faculty
- Designate a point-person for transgender related needs
- Ensure that diversity statements are inclusive of LGBT people
- Allow LGBT students and employees to self-identify on institutional surveys and forms
- When holding celebrations of diversity or planning a calendar of diversity events, be mindful of LGBT inclusion
- Encourage formation of an LGBT student, staff and/or faculty group and meet with its members or representatives regularly
- Appoint an LGBT point-person or high-level LGBT advisory group
- Create an institutional website and/or brochure with LGBT-related information and resources

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