

Lesson Plan: Watch Me Exist

Lesson plan for ages 12+

Learning objective: To be able to show understanding of trans people's lived experiences

Teacher Notes: Please watch the film prior to the lesson and ensure that you give a content warning around suicide before you show it in class, and have resources available if someone needs them. Please also ensure that any transgender young people (and the class as a whole) is aware that the lesson is coming the week before you plan to do it.

Resources: Print out and cut up the keywords/definitions card sort (worksheet 1).
Watch me exist short film: 15 minutes:

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZdwTeGN71k&t=3s>

Private LINK: <https://vimeo.com/303616075/6b2288e96d>

Starter: 10 minutes

Ask students in pairs to match the card sort of keywords and definitions (from worksheet 1) to show that they understand and can use the correct terms throughout the lesson. Once complete, ask the students to give you the correct definitions for each term and ensure that you correct any misconceptions or incorrect terms. Discuss the terms and why it is important to use them correctly?

Main Activity 1: 20 minutes:

Ask students to watch the short film watch me exist and whilst they are watching they can write down:

- 1) How they are feeling throughout the short film? Why?
- 2) What are the challenges that trans people face? Do they face any similar challenges? How would they feel if they faced these challenges as well?
- 3) How could you support trans young people to overcome these challenges? Why is it important to do this?

Take feedback from the students about what they felt whilst watching the film. Ask them how they are feeling and what challenges young transgender people face? Ask them what could be done to stop this from happening again?

Main Activity 2: 10 minutes

Ask them to discuss in pairs how they think that the film could have ended differently? If more people had been supportive of Max (and not deadnamed them or misgendered them) do they think that things may have been different? Why? What 3 things could Max's family and the rest of society have done to recognise them as authentic? (e.g. used the correct pronouns, spoken to them about how they are feeling or being treated, ensure that they have support in school and social spaces if needed, discussed any part of their transition with them). What things can we all do

to ensure that transgender people feel valid and supported? Explain what Transgender awareness week is (a week that helps to raise visibility for transgender people and address the issues that the community faces). Ask the students why they think we have watched this short film today? (Make the link to Transgender awareness week if students don't make it and also briefly explain what transgender day of remembrance is (its on November 20th each year and honours the memory of transgender people that have died in acts of anti-transgender violence). Ask the class why they think TDOR is important?

Main Activity 3: 15 minutes:

Explain what an ally is to students (a person who commits to being respectful of each others differences and to challenging assumptions around gender and transphobia when they see it). Ask students to think about their school community and the steps that could be taken to ensure that trans young people feel safe and supported in school. Explain that they will have 15 minutes to design a school of the future were all trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming students are accepted. What 5 rules would they put in place to ensure everyone can thrive? Once complete discuss with them what could be done to create more inclusive spaces in your school and how they can be a better ally? Come up with a few practical steps the students, teachers and school could make to ensure that all transgender young people feel welcome and supported.

Teacher note: remind them to think about spaces in your school that are currently gendered or lessons in school that are gendered. What can be done to overcome this gendering?

Plenary: 5 minutes:

Ask students in pairs to decide one action that they are going to take forward from the lesson to ensure that they are a better ally to anyone who is transgender. Share these as a class and ask them to write them down. In the next lesson revisit these if there is time and briefly discuss them.

Worksheet 1:

Transgender	An umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms.
Transgender man	A term used to describe someone who is assigned female at birth but is a man. This may be shortened to trans man, or FTM, an abbreviation for female-to-male.
Transgender woman	A term used to describe someone who is assigned male at birth but is a woman. This may be shortened to trans woman, or MTF, an abbreviation for male-to-female.
Transitioning	The steps a trans person may take to live in the gender with which they identify. Each person's transition will involve different things. For some this involves medical intervention, such as hormone therapy and surgeries, but not all trans people want or are able to have this. Transitioning also might involve things such as telling friends and family, dressing differently and changing official documents.
Transphobia	The fear or dislike of someone based on the fact they are trans, including the denial/refusal to accept their gender identity.
Gender dysphoria	Used to describe when a person experiences discomfort or distress because there is a mismatch between their sex assigned at birth and their gender identity. This is also the clinical diagnosis for someone who doesn't feel comfortable with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Deadnaming	Calling someone by their birth name after they have changed their name. This term is often associated with trans people who have changed their name as part of their transition.
Misgendering	When you refer to a person using a pronoun that does not correctly reflect their gender.
Gender	Often expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity, it is largely culturally determined and is assumed from the sex assigned at birth.
Gender Identity	A person's innate sense of their own gender, whether as a man, a woman or something else (see non-binary below), which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth.
Non- Binary	An umbrella term for people whose gender identity doesn't sit comfortably with 'man' or 'woman'. Their identities are varied and can include people who identify with some aspects of binary identities, while others reject them entirely.
Pronoun	Words we use to refer to people's gender in conversation - for example, 'he' or 'she'. Some people may prefer others to refer to them in gender neutral language and use pronouns such as they/their and ze/zir.