



Secondary | Year 8 +

Diversity Role Models Teachers' Resource

Theme: Asexuality, Bisexuality and Representation



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Overview

How To Use This Resource

This resource accompanies a video or series of videos from our inspiring Role Models sharing their personal stories. Each resource covers a different topic area and comes with discussion questions, challenge questions, suggested activities and challenge activities. Further notes for teachers are written in italics or in boxes.



Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Define 'asexuality'.
- Analyse how the lack of representation in media can impact asexual and bisexual people.
- Explain what intersectionality is and how it shapes how we experience and understand the world.

Notes

Students may be introduced to new terms in this topic, the definitions of which are in the 'useful definitions' section of this resource.

Curriculum Links

- **English:** Creative and non-fiction writing.
- **PSHE/RSE:** Respectful relationships, stereotypes, bullying, identity, intersectionality.
- **Media studies:** Creating media, social media, and impact of representation in media.

Suggested Age

All materials should be reviewed by teaching staff to ensure they are appropriate and can be adapted to suit your class needs.

Diversity Role Models recommend this resource for Year 8 and above.

Overview

Summary of stories

Yasmin's Story

Yasmin talks about her experience discovering her asexuality and explains the difficulties she had in finding the language to express it. She highlights the lack of representation within schools and the media as a reason that her peers, and teachers, did not understand this part of her identity and that led to bullying. Yasmin also notes the barriers she faced as a black woman and the racist stereotypes attached to this.

This story discusses acephobia and racism.



[**▶ Watch Here**](#)

Kirsty's Story

Kirsty is bisexual and discusses growing up being very assured of her sexuality. She mentions hearing negative language both inside and outside of school about same-sex relationships. She also mentions how representation can help someone's 'coming out' story.

This story discusses homophobia and racism.



[**▶ Watch Here**](#)

Top Tips

For facilitating positive discussions in your classroom

1. Working Agreement

As a group, set some simple agreements for how to engage with the lesson. This could include:

- The importance of listening to each other and respecting all of our views
- Taking turns and not having to answer if you don't want to
- Using appropriate and respectful language
- Trying to build dialogue not debate

Cover the importance of confidentiality, but be sure to explain the school's safeguarding policy and explain when, why, and with whom you may need to share something that is said in the lesson.

2. Facilitate: Basketball Not Tennis

Create space for young people to explore and express their views with each other, not just with the teacher.

- Consider including small group or pair discussion, plenary, role play or creative approaches.
- Consider the layout of the room and how small groups or circles can help build dialogue between students. We're aiming for ideas to be bounced around the room like a basketball, not back and forth with the teacher like tennis!

Be sensitive to the needs of each individual and share clear ways young people can get support if they have been impacted by any of the issues discussed. Be wary about sharing your personal views but ensure that you reflect the school values, policies and laws in relation to equality and inclusion.

3. Managing Questions

It's important that young people feel empowered to ask the questions that are important to them. Consider some techniques that could give young people the confidence to ask questions, such as by writing them down rather than asking them aloud.

Not all questions need a whole class answer on the spot. If you need more time to think, or feel that a question would be better answered outside of a whole-class setting then say: *'That's a brilliant question and deserves a good answer, let me take some time and get back to you with an answer'*.

4. Distancing Techniques

Our videos are a great way of sharing an engaging and impactful narrative, that is relevant to pupils' lives while not making the issue too personal for pupils. This allows young people to engage in an objective way, avoiding defensive reactions, while still exploring ideas around empathy, allyship, and identity. It will also help you manage challenging questions as you could suggest some of the ways others might feel rather than having to share your view or your personal experiences.

5. Questions For Dialogue And Deep Engagement

Ask open and stretching questions, or better still, get the young people to come up with their own. You could ask young people to generate questions for the Role Models featured and then consider how each might answer.

We've compiled some questions aimed at building empathy and encouraging discussion on the key themes. Remember to ask probing questions to draw out more depth and reflection from pupils such as *'That's brilliant, could you expand and tell us why you think that?'*. Consider asking philosophical questions such as *'Why do you think that is right/ wrong?'* too.

Suggested Questions

See appendix for a worksheet featuring these questions.

Yasmin's Story

1. What did Yasmin say changed in Year 8?

There was more of a focus on understanding ourselves, understanding others and having a sense of identity.

2. How did Yasmin describe her all-girls school environment?

A pretty liberal space, LGBTQ+ friendly.

3. Did people Yasmin knew believe asexuality was a valid identity?

Yes, but not for a Black person.

4. As well as acephobia, what other prejudice did Yasmin say she experienced when trying to explain her identity?

Racist stereotypes.

5. Why does Yasmin think that representation in schools is important?

Because it is when people start to work out who they are. Without representation, it's difficult to gain more information and feel validated.



Suggested Questions

See appendix for a worksheet featuring these questions.

Kirsty's Story

1. **How does Kirsty describe her sexuality?**

Bisexual and queer.

2. **How did her dad's friend upset her?**

He was making mean comments about gay people and people that aren't white.

3. **Why couldn't Kirsty talk to her teachers about being bisexual?**

There was a piece of law that meant they weren't allowed to teach about LGBTQ+ people or relationships and they could have got into a lot of trouble if they did.

4. **What was Kirsty's speech called that she used in a speaking competition in high school?**

Respecting Differences.

5. **What does Kirsty do within the LGBTQ+ Solicitor's Network?**

She gives advice to other lawyers on how to speak to LGBTQ+ clients.



Challenge Discussion Questions

1. What does 'asexuality' mean?
2. Yasmin mentions not having been taught about asexuality in PSHE or any of her classes, resulting in her not being given 'official information'. What do you think she means by this? How could access to this information have helped her during school? What are the dangers of not receiving accurate information from school?
3. Yasmin discusses the pressure she felt to 'articulate' her sexuality. Where (or who) do you think this pressure was coming from?
4. Kirsty uses both 'queer' and 'bisexual' to describe herself. Why do you think some people may identify with more than one label? How is this linked to the idea of intersectionality?
5. Yasmin spoke about not being believed and going 'back into the closet'. In what other ways can bullying impact a person's life? How can it impact relationships and friendships?
6. Yasmin talks about having gone to university and even getting a master's degree. How do you think bullying could affect a person's academic performance?
7. Kirsty mentions a Netflix show called 'Heartstopper' which features representation of lots of different identities, including an asexual character. On the other hand, Yasmin recalls seeing no representation in school or the media. How do you think a show like the 'Heartstopper' in mainstream media could have helped Yasmin?
8. Using your knowledge of asexuality, can you think of what 'aromantic' might mean?

Activities

1. Kirsty wrote a speech called “Respecting Differences”. Thinking about who is at your school, write a speech, a poem, or a song with the same title. **Do not name names**, but try to include different protected characteristics people have within your school. Present (or perform!) the piece to your class.

2. Yasmin describes feeling pressure to have to explain her sexuality. Draw a pressure chamber filled with pressures someone might feel when coming to terms with their sexuality and expressing that. Then draw bubbles coming out with ways you can be an ally and help relieve that pressure. See *appendix 1 and 2 on page 15 and 16*.

3. Both Role Models mentioned media in their stories. Something that is much more popular nowadays is social media. Create a TikTok style video on how to be an ‘ally’ to fellow students who are LGBTQ+.

4. Choose an example of an LGBTQ+ representation in the media. In small groups, discuss whether this representation is positive, realistic, or whether it reinforces negative and harmful stereotypes.

Pick two examples, one realistic and one that reinforces stereotypes. Have a short discussion about what makes them positive/negative. Write letters to the creators of both. For the former, explain how the realistic stereotype is helping LGBTQ+ people and thank them. For the latter, explain how the character may be reinforcing negative stereotypes and what effect this could be having on LGBTQ+ people, and suggest changes.

Extension: Can you think of any asexual representation?

Extension Ideas:

Using [this resource](#) from Diversity Role Models for guidance, explore different role models in your life or in the world today, and think about what makes them a role model. Pick out a few people and think about how they are similar and how they are different from one another, and who would find them inspirational.

Challenge Activities

1. Write “Agree” on one side of a piece of paper and “Disagree” on the other with a line down the middle (*see appendix 3 on page 17 for an example*).

Put a statement on the board such as “*LGBTQ+ representation in the media has progressed*” or “*LGBTQ+ representation in the media is mostly positive*”. Give the students some time to do independent research and think about their position, then, in pairs, the students have to argue depending on which side of the paper they are sitting on (irrespective of their personal opinion). After a few minutes, rotate the sheet and give a shorter amount of time to argue for a different position. Encourage them to try and not repeat what has already been said.

2. Kirsty mentions not being able to talk to her teachers about her sexuality due to a piece of law. This was called Section 28. Using [this article](#) and independent research, create an interactive timeline of the history of Section 28 and the effects it had on LGBTQ+ people and its legacy.

3. Think about the media you consume. In pairs, pick your favourite book/TV show/film etc. Identify an openly LGBTQ+ character and answer the questions found on page 18 of this pack from [Amnesty International](#). As an extension, write a short reflection about your answers to those questions and feedback your findings to rest of the class. *See appendix 4 on page 18 for a worksheet featuring these prompt questions.*

4. “*People believed [asexuality] was a real thing, but they didn’t believe that it was a real thing for a black person*”.

Here, Yasmin hints at stereotypes that are attached to different protected characteristics and intersectionality. Research a historical figure like Audre Lorde, Justin Fashanu, or James Baldwin and explore their lives and works. Discuss the intersectionality of being black and a part of the LGBTQ+ community. How did they use their work to address the intersectionality of race, gender, and sexuality? In what ways did they contribute to the movements happening at the time, e.g. feminism, and civil rights? Create a presentation about them and their works on intersectionality/stereotypes.

Extension Ideas:

Do some independent research on the term ‘intersectionality’ and Kimberlé Crenshaw, who coined the term in 1989. Think about what Crenshaw does in her line of work and why having a word like intersectionality is important.

Organisations

Organisations that provide further support and resources for staff and students on Bullying.

These links are to support teachers to access further information, lead discussions or to signpost to students for research and support. Diversity Role Models can take no responsibility for the content hosted on other organisations platforms or shared directly, and we recommend that all signposted resources be checked for suitability by staff before use.

NSPCC

The NSPCC understands how difficult it is for children to talk about bullying. Professionals can contact the NSPCC Helpline by calling **0808 800 5000**, **emailing help@NSPCC.org.uk** or **completing their online report abuse form**.



The Anti-Bullying Alliance has lots of videos and resources for young people who might be a victim of bullying, or know someone who is being bullied.

View the resources **[here](#)** or visit their website at:
<https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk>

AVEN (Asexual Visibility and Education Network), hosts a large asexual community and has lots of resources on asexuality.

Visit their website here: **www.asexuality.org**



Useful Definitions

Acephobia

A prejudice or discrimination towards people who are asexual.

Ally

A (typically straight and/or cisgender) person who supports and respects members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Aromantic

Experiencing little or no romantic attraction to others and/or a lack of interest in romantic relationships/behaviour.

Asexuality

Experiencing little or no sexual attraction to others and/or a lack of interest in sexual relationships/behaviour.

Bullying

The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online. Bullying could constitute abuse.

Intersectionality

How different aspects of a person's identity, such as their race, gender, sexuality, disability, neurodivergence, religion, socioeconomic status, among others, can overlap or intersect.

Protected Characteristics

A group of differences outlined in the Equality Act (2010) which are protected from discrimination by law. This includes race, age, and religion/belief.

Stereotype

A fixed, over-generalised belief about a particular group of people.

Appendix

Printable worksheets for use with students and example activities for staff.

1. Pressure Chamber Example
2. Pressure Chamber Worksheet
3. Debate Example
4. Amnesty International: LGBTQI Media Resource *Question Worksheet*
5. Yasmin's Worksheet
6. Kirsty's Worksheet

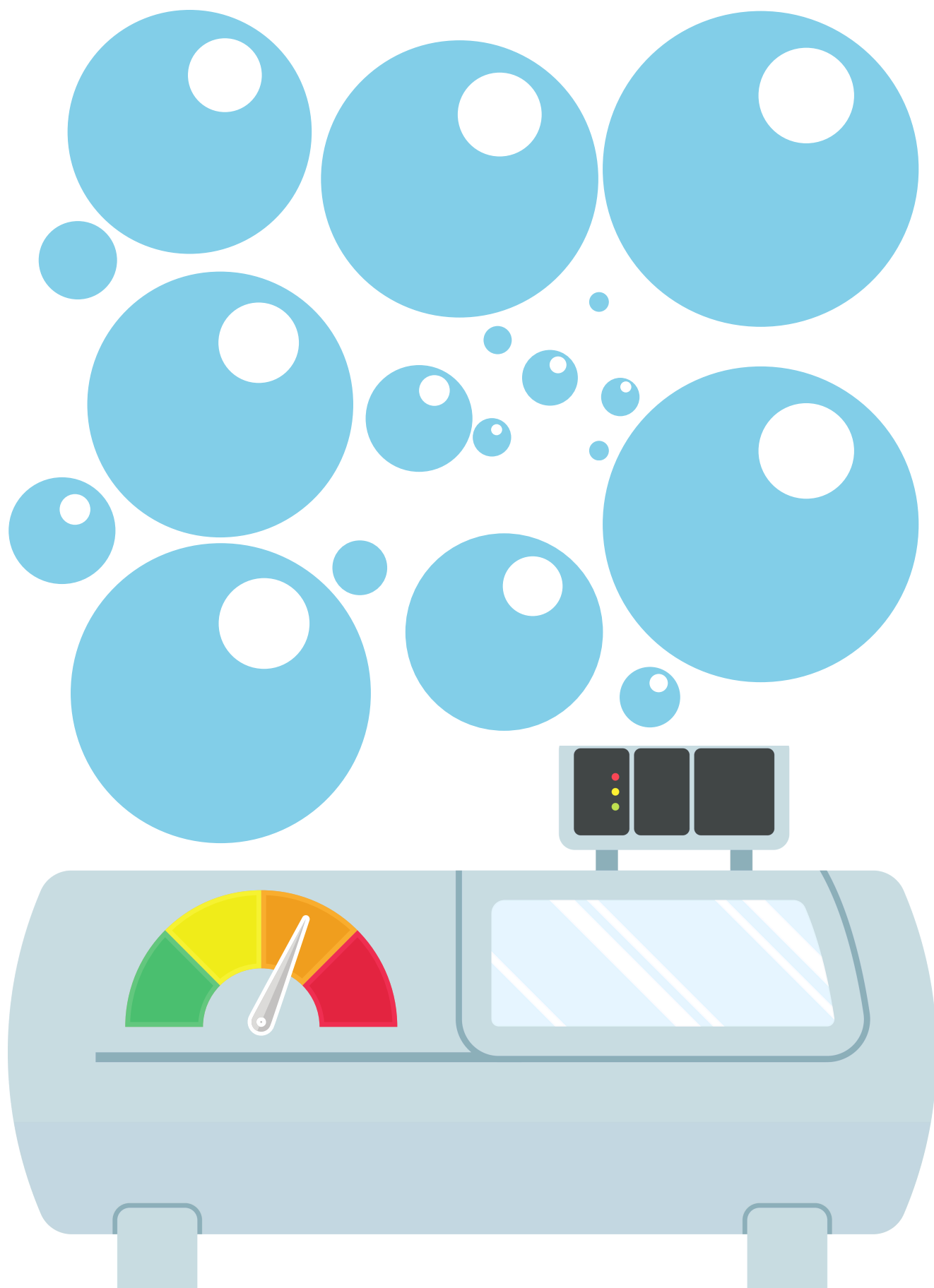
Note: Resources can be printed out in greyscale to save on coloured ink.

Pressure Chamber Worksheet **EXAMPLE**

Example filled out (blank version available as a worksheet on page 21)

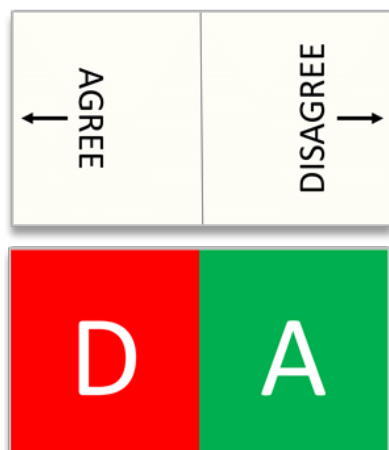


Pressure Chamber Worksheet



Debate EXAMPLE

Example sheets

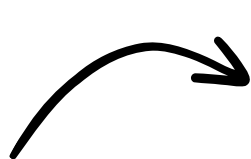


“LGBTQ+ representation in the media has progressed”

Over the years, there has been a notable increase in the visibility of LGBTQ+ characters in various forms of media.

While there may be more representation, some harmful stereotypes persist in media, perpetuating misconceptions.

Example debate



LGBTQ+ Representation in the Media

Think about the media you consume. In pairs, pick your favourite book/TV show/film etc. Identify an openly LGBTQ+ character and answer below.

- **Does this example show realistic and positive LGBTQI+ representation? How? Are any aspects of their behaviour stereotypical?**
- **Does the film/TV or radio show/book have at least two named LGBTQI+ characters? If yes, do they have conversations with each other unrelated to being LGBTQI+?**
- **Are they lead or regular characters, and how much of the story is about them? Are they in a position of power? Do they hold healthy relationships with others?**
- **Do you know their backstory? Are you told enough about them to be empathetic and interested in their contributions?**
- **Is the character killed off at some point? Do they cause problems for heterosexual characters?**
- **Would you recommend this story to an LGBTQI+ person?**
- **Do you agree with this representation?**

* activity and questions taken from [Amnesty Internationals LGBTQ+ and Rights Resource Pack](#)

Yasmin's Worksheet

1. What did Yasmin say changed in Year 8?

2. How did Yasmin describe her all-girls school environment?

3. Did people Yasmin knew believe asexuality was a valid identity?

4. As well as acephobia, what other prejudice did Yasmin say she experienced when trying to explain her identity?


5. Why does Yasmin think that representation in schools is important?


Kirsty's Worksheet

1. How does Kirsty describe her sexuality?
2. How did her dad's friend upset her?
3. Why couldn't Kirsty talk to her teachers about being bisexual?
4. What was Kirsty's speech called that she used in a speaking competition in high school?
5. What does Kirsty do within the LGBTQ+ Solicitor's Network?


Contact Details

Get in touch

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