

**GENDER EQUITY FOR ALL**  
**GENDER EQUITY FOR ALL**  
**GENDER EQUITY FOR ALL**

# **SEX ED. WITH A LGBTQIA+ FOCUS**

*Project Empowerment Volume 1, Article 7*  
*September 18, 2022*

**GENDER EQUITY FOR ALL**  
**GENDER EQUITY FOR ALL**  
**GENDER EQUITY FOR ALL**

# SEX ED. WITH A LGBTQIA+ FOCUS

BY SOFIE HANSEN



## THE UNANSWERED QUESTIONS OF SEX ED

*Does your school offer a sex ed class?*

*Did your school discuss sex ed that encompassed everyone?*

*Is there any knowledge on sex ed that is taught beyond general anatomy?*

In the United States, there is not a standard for sex education. Some classes only teach about anatomy, while some include information about the LGBTQIA+ community and consent. Others only teach about abstinence.

These include information on consent, the LGBTQIA+ community, as well as abstinence. Only thirty states mandate sex ed, and even then, the curriculum varies.

In the US, six states require LGBTQIA+ sex education, and five more require some sort of education on gender identity and sexual orientation. Eight states completely ban LGBTQIA+ sex education.

One of the key issues with sex education is the lack of information about consent. Learning consent is the most important aspect of being sexually active. When schools take that away, they take away students' knowledge that they can say no. Even at the university level, consent is not taught well, so it is vital that students know what consent is.

Consent is defined as an open agreement between people who plan to engage in sexual activity. When consent is not given, you should feel open to removing yourself from the situation. Consent is about what you are comfortable with. People can revoke consent, just like you can, so respect their lack of consent just as you would want others to respect your own.

You have the right to say "no" to anything if you are not comfortable engaging in sexual activities. It might seem awkward at first for someone to ask before kissing someone, but it's better to have a moment of awkwardness at first than for someone to be forced into a situation they don't want to be in. Even after the 'yes' is given for a kiss, the person might not want to have sex afterward. By asking for consent at every step, the person who might not be ready to have sex is able to say no.

There is no situation in which a person should not first be asked for consent before something occurs. Consent is the most important aspect of having a comfortable relationship. Consent builds trust.

Religion is also a major factor in the way sex education is taught. In more religious communities, it is more common for abstinence to be taught instead of practical sex education. However, this is ineffective; the less knowledge students have about sex, the more likely they are to experiment sexually, which is the opposite of what these communities are aiming for. This type of culture can also encourage victim blaming because of how shunned having sex is.



## SEX EDUCATION: THE BASICS

The basis of sex education begins with puberty. Puberty can begin at any age ranging from 8-13, but it truly depends on the individual. One of the main things to keep in mind while reading this section is that no two bodies or experiences are the same, so if some information does not apply, then don't be too concerned.

People with uteruses and ovaries primarily begin puberty by getting a period. Periods last anywhere from 3-7 days and occur once a month. They are often accompanied by cramps causing pain and discomfort for just a couple of days of the period. However, it is important to note that too much pain should not just be brushed off. According to Healthline's' article [How to Handle Severe Menstrual Cramps](#), “[s]evere cramps, however, tend to begin earlier in the menstrual cycle and last longer than typical cramps do.”

If you or someone you know experiences severe menstrual cramps, make an appointment with a doctor or gynecologist. If you genuinely feel that something is wrong regarding both menstrual cramps and any other health issues, advocate for yourself, and do not let doctors dismiss your problems as being “overdramatic.” It can cause issues in the future.

Another important part of sex ed is the knowledge of birth control and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). To keep yourself and your partner healthy, make sure to wear protection to limit the possibility of spreading or contracting an STI.

This ties into the usage of birth control –condoms are a form of birth control, but they are not the only type. There are many types of birth control, ranging from pills, implants, and shots to dental dams and condoms (both internal and external), to surgical procedures.

The first category of birth control --the pills, implants, and shots-- can have side effects like nausea, headaches, weight gain, period loss, mood swings, and a lessened sex drive. The second category can break or be tampered with. Surgical procedures can work, but they are expensive, and can be reversed.

As such, some people have to try more than one method of birth control until they find the right one, so in this situation, it is key to remain patient. When exploring protection, the LGBTQIA+ community should also be addressed. Items such as condoms and dental dams can be used to protect from STIs and other issues that result from unprotected sex.

## SEX EDUCATION WITH AN LGBTQIA+ FOCUS

Sex Ed for LGBTQIA+ individuals is not just about telling students about how to have sex safely, but it's also about understanding different gender identities and sexualities.

There is nothing to be gained from telling a cisgender lesbian that her cisgender female partner should use a condom on a penis that neither one has. That changes when objects like vibrators or strap-ons are used. In these situations, it is incredibly important to use condoms on them and to clean them off after every use. When engaging in oral sex, products like dental dams are used to limit the transmission of STIs and bacteria between parties. Both before and after vaginal penetration with either a hand or fingers, one needs to wash their hands thoroughly to ensure that there are not any harmful bacteria on the hands.

Once again, sex ed is different for transgender individuals. A transgender man can still experience a period, and it is important to discuss periods for all individuals, as anyone can have one, regardless of gender identity. The Human Rights Coalition has a great resource here that covers all aspects of safe sex for transgender individuals. A similar sentiment of "use protection" is discussed throughout the entire article, regardless of gender identity and assigned sex at birth.



Using protection remains the key factor in all styles of sex. Sex between two cisgender males also requires protection to limit the transmission of STIs. Negative stereotypes against gay men make it seem like they are the only people who can get and transmit STIs, but that is untrue. Just as with any other type of sex, protection is important for all parties to remain healthy. Having sex with a male individual as a male individual does not mean that that person is automatically at a higher risk of developing or contracting an STI.

Anyone can contract an STI without protection, posing yet another reason why consent is so important. Besides making sure that your sexual partner(s) are comfortable, you can also make sure that all parties know if there is a risk of contracting an STI.



## **ASEXUALITY AND SEX ED**

When talking about sex, sexuality, and the LGBTQIA+ community, the asexual community is often left out. Within the asexual spectrum, there are different orientations to discuss. People within the ace community can be aromantic, but they do not have to be (aromantic individuals are people who do not feel romantic attraction to others). Nor do aromantic individuals have to be asexual. There are also demisexual, gray-asexual, and ace-flux individuals.

Within this, there are three main types of asexuality:

Sex-repulsed asexuals, who do not feel sexual attraction to others, and who are repulsed by the thought of sex. People who are sex-repulsed do not want to hear about, look at, talk about, or think about sexual situations.

Sex-neutral asexuals are indifferent to sex. They do not experience sexual attraction, and their feelings about sex are neither negative nor positive.

Sex-positive asexuals think that sex is “a healthy part of human experience.” They see sex as necessary, and they do not mind when other people talk about sex, even though they themselves don’t experience sexual attraction to other people.

Additionally, just because people on the ace spectrum do not experience sexual attraction, does not mean that they can't have sex. Some asexual people do. Some people have sexual attraction, even though they do not have a romantic attraction to other people. Some other people on the asexuality spectrum will only develop a sexual attraction to other people when they have formed a connection with them.

Therefore, it is important to bring up protection and consent once again. If you are asexual and you engage in sex, make sure that protection is involved in staying healthy! If you are in a relationship with an asexual person, get their consent, regardless of whether it is sex or not, just to make sure that they're comfortable.

It's important to discuss the asexual community within Sex Ed because there are far too many people who are told that they'll find someone eventually or even that there's something wrong with them for not wanting sex. There isn't.

Sex Ed is a place for everyone, and everyone should have the ability to have sex ed that accurately fits them. All students deserve proper sex education, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Ultimately, sex ed is a lot like sex. It should be conducted in a way that helps the person receiving it instead of just focusing on going about it in a way that might only be beneficial for one party.

Sources:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sexual-health/sexual-health-for-lesbian-and-bisexual-women/>

<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/lgbt-inclusive-sex-education-means-healthier-youth-and-safer-schools/>

[https://transline.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/article\\_attachments/213758968/Trans\\_Safer\\_Sex\\_Guide\\_FINAL.pdf](https://transline.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/article_attachments/213758968/Trans_Safer_Sex_Guide_FINAL.pdf)

<https://www.hrc.org/resources/safer-sex-for-trans-bodies>

<https://sexetc.org/sex-ed/info-center/stories/?pageNum=4&topic%5B%5D=stories-lgbtq&topic%5B%5D=stories-sex>

<https://www.glsen.org/sexed>

<https://www.hrc.org/resources/a-call-to-action-lgbtq-youth-need-inclusive-sex-education>

Sources continued:

<https://www.asexuality.org/en/topic/122662-whats-the-difference-between-sex-positive-sex-negative-and-sex-repulsed/>

[1] <https://www.ncsl.org/research/health/state-policies-on-sex-education-in-schools.aspx>