



Media Influences on Sexuality - Grade 12

75 minutes in length

Overall Expectations:

C3. Demonstrate the ability to make connections that relate to health and well-being – how their choices and behaviours affect both themselves and others, and how factors in the world around them affect their own and others' health and well-being.

Specific Expectations:

C3.4. Analyse the portrayal of different relationships in the media (*e.g., movies, song lyrics, television, print media, internet*) with respect to bias and stereotyping, and describe how individuals can take action to encourage more realistic and inclusive messaging.

Learner Outcome:

Identify the effects of social influences on sexuality; e.g., media, culture.

Materials:

1. Handout:

1. Sex in Advertising
2. Me vs. TV/Music

Introduction:

Our society is becoming increasingly complex. Students are presented with messages about sexuality and from a number of sources. It is important to help students identify and decipher these messages, determine which ones to listen to, and learn how to filter out the negative messages.

This lesson requires extra preparation time to find ads to use in *Activity C: Exploring Media Influences Using Advertisements*. Use ads from magazines, or the internet. The idea is to find highly sexualized ads. This approach is used by many companies to sell: clothing, cosmetics, cars, footwear, jeans, etc. If there is a recent ad or current event that has caused some controversy, it may also be helpful to include this as an example.

Approaches/Strategies:

A. Ground rules

Ensure ground rules are established before beginning this lesson. For classes that have already established ground rules, quickly reviewing them can promote a successful lesson. Some suggestion for ground rules include:

- We have personal boundaries that must be respected
- We have the right to “pass”
- We have a right to our own beliefs and opinions
- We are responsible for our own learning

Our questions or comments will be respected and taken seriously

B. Exploring media influence using advertisements (20-25 minutes)

Students increase awareness of the sexual messages presented in advertising and identify the effects of media influence on sexuality.

1. Introduce this activity using the following discussion questions:

How can we define “media”?

"Media" is a term for the industrial forms of mass communication. "Media literacy" is the ability to use critical thinking skills to analyze media messages- from music videos and Web environments, to product placement in movies and virtual displays on NHL hockey boards. It's the instinct to question what lies behind media productions— the motives, the money, the values and the ownership— and to be aware of how these factors influence content.

What are the different media industries that try to reach an adolescent audience?

Write down the different industries identified by the students.

Examples may include:

- Advertising
- Television
- Movies
- Music
- News
- Internet

Which of these industries presents messages about sexuality and sexual relationships?

- They all present messages about sexuality.

What kind of message does each of these industries send?

Discuss each industry, looking for similarities between industries.

- Divide the class into small groups.
- Explain that the class is going to examine the advertising industry and study the messages about sexuality that this industry sends to adolescents.
- Distribute the handout Sex in Advertising to each group.
- Encourage each group to choose an advertisement to analyze. These can be chosen from current magazines, or by using the ads you found through an internet search.
- Give groups time to analyze their advertisement based on the handout.

For more media and Internet education resources including lesson plans and activities visit the Media Awareness Network. [Media Awareness Network](#)

It is also interesting to discuss the inclusion or exclusion of diverse groups in these ads.

Ask each group to present their advertisement analysis to the class.

- Debrief this activity using the following questions:
 - In the ads we examined, what are the main messages about sexuality being sent to adolescents by the advertising industry?
 - Are these messages positive or negative?
 - Do the advertisements we have looked at send messages that reflect your values?
 - If the messages about sexuality given by the advertising industry are contrary to our values, what choices do we have?
 - Encourage the producers to change the message.
 - Discuss various ways to do so such as writing letters, speaking to people in industry, etc.
 - Stop buying the products.

C. Me vs. TV/Music (5 minutes today, 30 minutes homework, and 5 minutes next class)

Students can increase awareness of the sexual messages presented on television and identify the effects of media influence on sexuality.

1. Distribute the **Me vs. TV/music** handout for students to complete as a homework assignment.
2. Explain that students are encouraged to share this activity with a parent or guardian.
3. Dedicate time to debrief this activity during the next lesson.

Question Box (10 minutes)

Have students fill out questions and address them next class.

Take It Home

Complete the **Me vs. TV/music** handout.

Keep in mind that all students do not live in a “traditional” family nor do they have equal opportunities for open discussion within their “family”. Although it is best for students to complete this assignment with a supportive parent or guardian, it may not be possible. Be sensitive to the needs of your students.

Sex In Advertising

Name: _____

When sexuality is used in advertising, certain values and attitudes towards sex are being “sold” to consumers along with the products. The overriding question that must be asked when examining any advertisement is, “What underlying message is being sold by this ad?”

Step 1: Choose an advertisement to analyze.

Step 2: Use these questions to discuss the ad you are analyzing.

- 1. What product or service is the ad selling?**
- 2. Who is the target audience for this ad? (Include age range, culture, gender, race, socio-economic level.)**
- 3. What can the product or service actually do (vs. what it promises to do)?**
- 4. What does the ad suggest or imply that the product can do in addition to this?**
- 5. What underlying message or value is being sold by the ad? Is it obvious or subliminal?**
- 6. Do you agree/disagree with this message?**
- 7. What do people in the ad look like?**
- 8. What message does the ad give about sexuality?**
- 9. Is this a positive or negative message about sexuality?**

Step 3: Present your advertisement to the class.

Me vs. TV/Music

How much time do you spend watching TV or listening to music each week? When you add up the total, you might be surprised! So, what does television/music have to say to you? Comparing your life to that of characters or images shown on TV or heard about in music can be an interesting exercise. Choose a TV show/song of your choice. It can be a sitcom, a drama, or a segment of videos, or favourite song or one that speaks to you. Use the following chart to compare your life to the life of the characters represented by the TV show/song

ME vs. TV/Music

My real life:

TV/song life:

My after school life

TV/song after school life

My friends

TV/song friends

My parents/my friend parents'

TV/song parents/my friend parents'

My

TV/song

Share this activity with a parent or guardian, and discuss the following questions:

- How different is real life from the life portrayed on TV or in the song you chose?
- Do you agree with the messages about sexuality sent by TV or in the song?
- What messages about sexuality would you like me to have?