

**"I KNEW WHEN I WAS TEN YEARS OLD"  
SEXUAL DIVERSITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN SWEDISH SCHOOLS.**



**HANS OLSSON,  
SENIOR ADVISOR SEXUALITY EDUCATION, RFSU**

# SHORT ABOUT RFSU

Swedish Association for Sexuality Education, founded 1933

- A non-profit, non-governmental organisation, without party political and religious affiliations
- Sexual and reproductive health and rights – information, education and advocacy work
- Regional, national and international level
- RFSU-clinic.
- RFSU Ltd – condoms etc. Made in Japan.



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EDUCATED TEACHER

SCHOOL INSPECTOR (A SPECIAL MISSION)

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL WORK

AUTHOR OF YOUTH NOVELS

DEVELOPED CURRICULA AND TEACHING MATERIAL



# TODAY'S PROGRAM

- Short about sexuality education in Swedish school curriculum.
- Discrimination Act.
- Short about what LGBT mean.
- Inclusion of LGBT in teaching and school environment.
  
- Talks and reflections.

## Questions from 11-12 year old pupils

Hello!

Why am I getting hard when I look at naked guys? It's not like I want to get together with them [relationship] or so. And what can I do to stop get a hard on? Is there any way to remove it, eh?

*Regards an 11 year old*

Hello!

Can you be in love with both boys and girls? I think I'm there but it feels as it's not really okay. How should you do then, with what you feel?

*From one who wonders*



**WHAT DO YOU THINK WHEN YOU READ THESE QUESTIONS?**

# WHO DEFINITION OF SEXUAL HEALTH

“Sexual health is an integral part of overall health, well-being and quality of life.

It is a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality, and not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity.

Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all people must be respected, protected and fulfilled.”

WHO, World Health Organisation

# SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN SWEDEN:

- SINCE 1955
- INTEGRATED IN ALMOST ALL SUBJECTS
- MAINLY TAUGHT BY TEACHERS





# EXAMPLES FROM THE CURRICULUM SCHOOL YEAR 4-6

## (10-12/13 YEAR OLDS)

### Biology, school years 4–6

- Human puberty, sexuality and reproduction and also questions about identity, gender equality, relationships, love and responsibility.

### Religion, school years 4–6

- Daily moral questions concerning identities and roles of girls and boys, as well as gender equality, sexuality, sexual orientation, exclusion and violation of rights.

### Civics, school years 4–6

- The family and different forms of cohabitation. Sexuality, gender roles and gender equality.

# EXAMPLES FROM THE CURRICULUM SCHOOL YEAR 7-9

## (13-15/16 YEAR OLDS)

### Civics, school years 7-9

- Youth identity, lifestyles and well-being and how this is affected by factors such as socio-economic background, gender and sexual orientation.

### Religion, school years 7-9

- How different life issues, such as the purpose of life, relationships, love and sexuality, are depicted in popular culture.

### Art, school years 7-9

- Pictures which deal with questions of identity, sexuality, ethnicity and power relations, and how these perspectives can be designed and communicated.

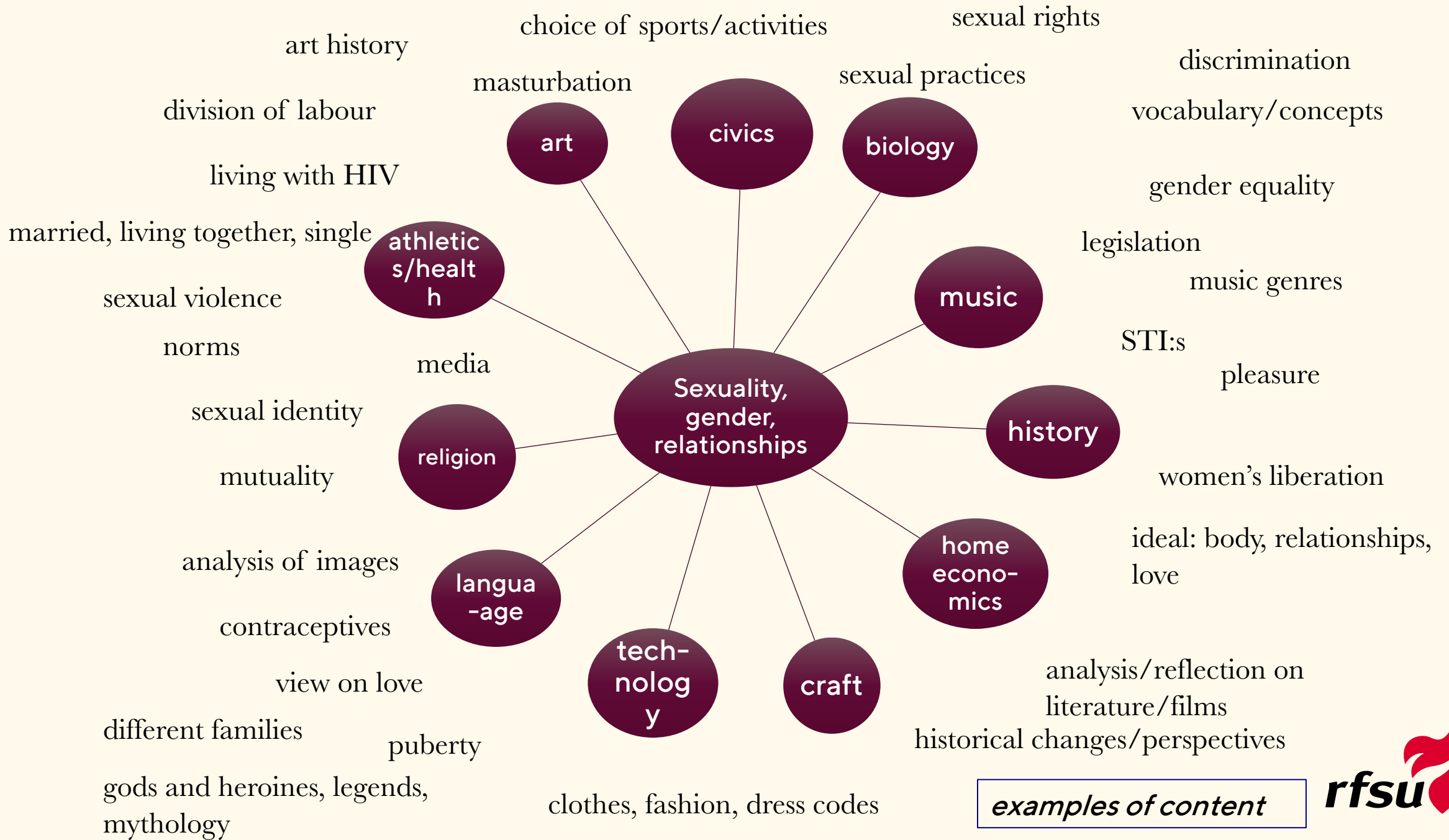
### Biology, school years 7-9

- Human sexuality and reproduction, and also questions concerning identity, gender equality, relationships, love and responsibility. Methods for preventing sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy at individual and global levels, and from a historical perspective.

# EXAMPLES OF GENDER (EQUALITY) IN THE CURRICULUM

- Everyone in the school should actively and consciously further equal rights and opportunities for women and men
- Schools has a responsibility to counteract gender patterns.
- Contribute to students developing their ability to critically examine gender patterns and how they can limit people's life choices and living conditions.





# WHAT SEXUALITY EDUCATION DID YOU GET IN SCHOOL?



# DEFINITION OF DISCRIMINATION

When a person is treated disfavouably or when a person's dignity is violated.

# SEVEN GROUNDS OF DISCRIMINATION

- sex
- (trans)gender identity or expression
- ethnicity
- religion or other belief
- disability
- sexual orientation
- age



# SEXUAL ORIENTATION

- A term that describes a person's identity regarding the focus of their romantic and/or sexual attraction.
- According to Swedish anti-discrimination legislation, there are three sexual orientations – heterosexual, bisexual, and homosexual.
- In reality, many people identify with other terms when it comes to sexual orientation.



# GENDER EXPRESSION

The way in which a person expresses their (gender) identity through presentation, accessories or behaviour that are socially associated with gender, such as clothes, body language, and hairstyle.

Regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity – can be a person who is heterosexual, bisexual, homosexual or transgender.

# TRANSGENDER

Transgender person: A person who does not identify with the sex assigned at birth.

An umbrella term for different kinds of identities.

Has *nothing* to do with a person's sexual orientation – a transgender person can be hetero-, bi-, homosexual.

# THE DISCRIMINATION ACT

In schools – a teacher or staff, for example:

- Can't ridicul a pupil for being heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual
- ... or transgender
- Can't stop two boys or two girls to dance together at a school dance
- Can't tell someone to dress "according" to their gender

# DISCRIMINATION CAUSES ILL-HEALTH

Poorer general well-being

More often

- Depressed
- Bullied
- Exposed to harassments and degrading treatment (also sexual)
- Suicidal thoughts and suicide attempt



# VULNERABLE

)

“When I was in middle school, I got the nickname Fifty-fifty. In the eyes of my classmates, I was both, girl and boy at the same time, out of all bounds and totally wrong. My classmates' image of me was decisive for how much I would be bullied.”



# SILENCE

AND TO BE INVISIBLE

“When I was 13 years old and understood that it would not change, I went to a chat site for gay guys. I wrote that I was seventeen, and got the number to a nineteen-year-old who wanted to talk. I wrote that number on a piece of paper and hid it.

I remember thinking that whatever happens, I have the number of a gay man here! If I call this number, I will hear the voice of a guy who likes other guys. Of course I did not call, because my not yet developed voice would have revealed me. Yet. I had a gay guy’s number written down.”



# ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS FOR THE WORK:

- How can we create and promote well-being of our children and teenagers?
- How can we support them in their development, including sexuality, gender and relationships?
- What are their needs and questions/issues concerning sexuality, gender and relationships?
- What knowledge, attitudes and skills *promote* sexual and reproductive health and rights?



# RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE ON LGBTQ IN EDUCATION

1. Democracy and rights issues
2. Health and safety
3. The right to education



- **WHAT EXPERIENCES DO YOU HAVE OF LBGTOI-ISSUES  
AT YOUR SCHOOL?**

# SCHOOL - A SAFE PLACE?



# THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

- Is it possible for a pupil/student to be open as gay/lesbian, bisexual or transgender person at school (if s/he wants to)?
- Can employees be open at the school (if they want to)?
- How are or can LGBTQ issues be visible in school? (the school environment, in everyday life, in teaching ...)
- Who can the pupils/students turn to if they need support?



# WHO IS IN THE CLASSROOM?

One may not know:

- what they feel
- what they think of
- about their fantasies
- who they fall in love with
- how they see themselves
- what they already have experienced
- who their relatives, siblings, friends are
- about their future lives ...

... even if they follow expected norms – or express themselves as heterosexual or non-transgender person.



# DISCUSS

- How can we create a safe school environment for LGBTQI-pupils?

# IT'S EASY TO GET GOOD



# HOW?



All staff at the school:

- What do we want to convey in terms of values to our pupils/students?
- How do we work against abusive treatment?
- What can different staff categories do?



**LEARN MORE AND REFLECT  
UPON YOUR OWN KNOWLEDGE  
AND VALUES**



# NORM-CONSCIOUS TEACHING

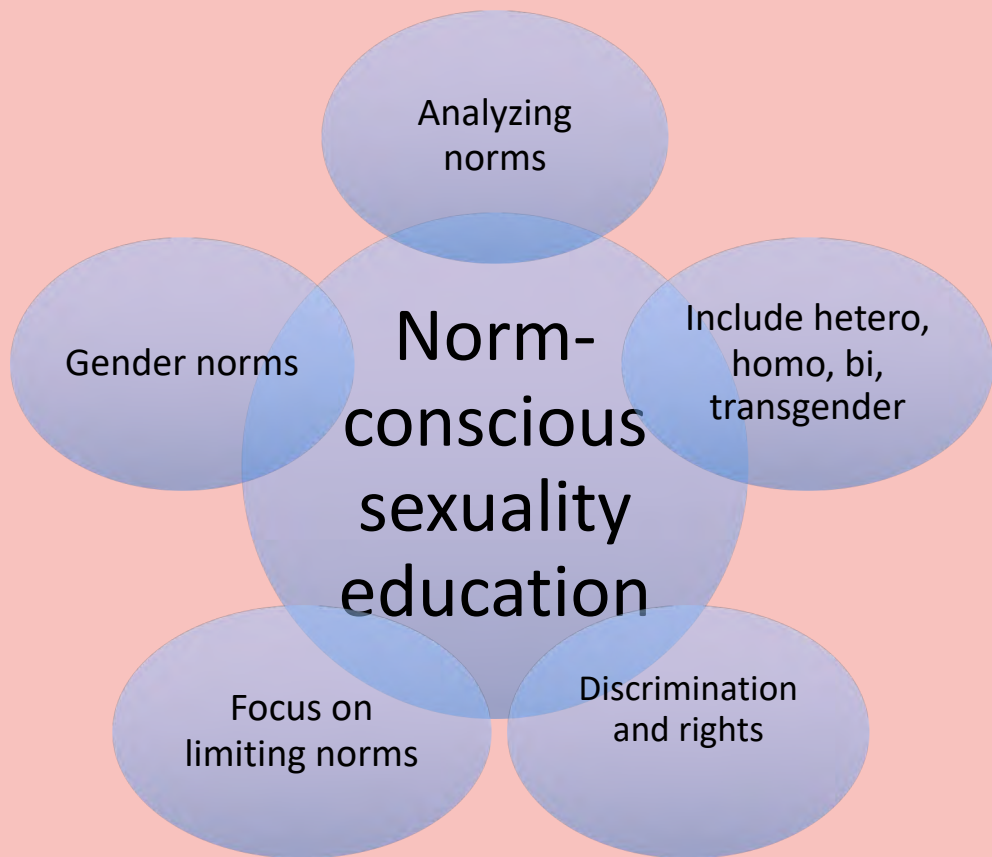


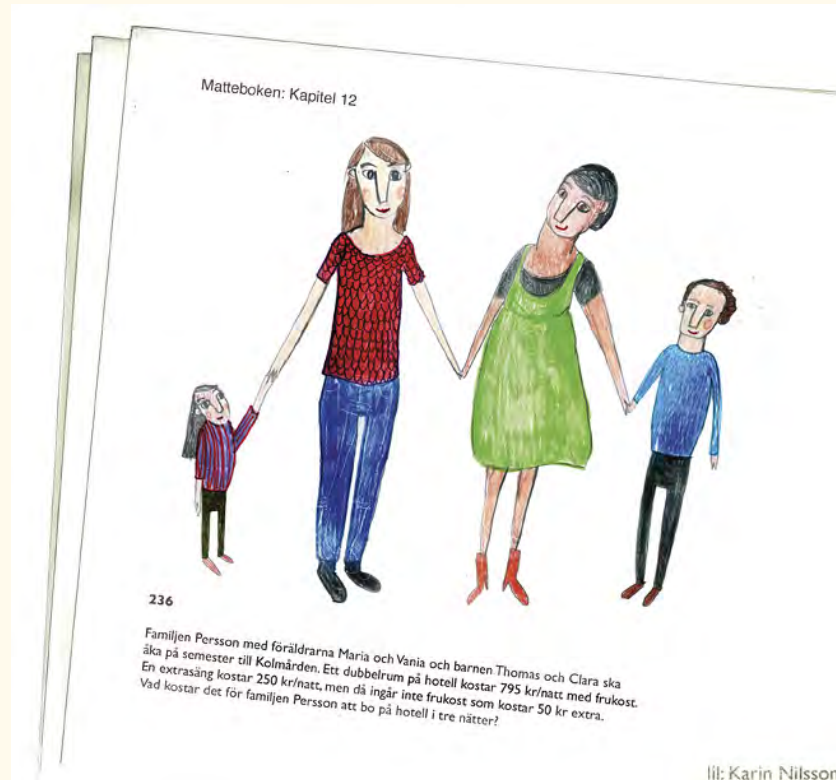
Foto: Daniel Ivarsson



# INCLUSIVE TEACHING

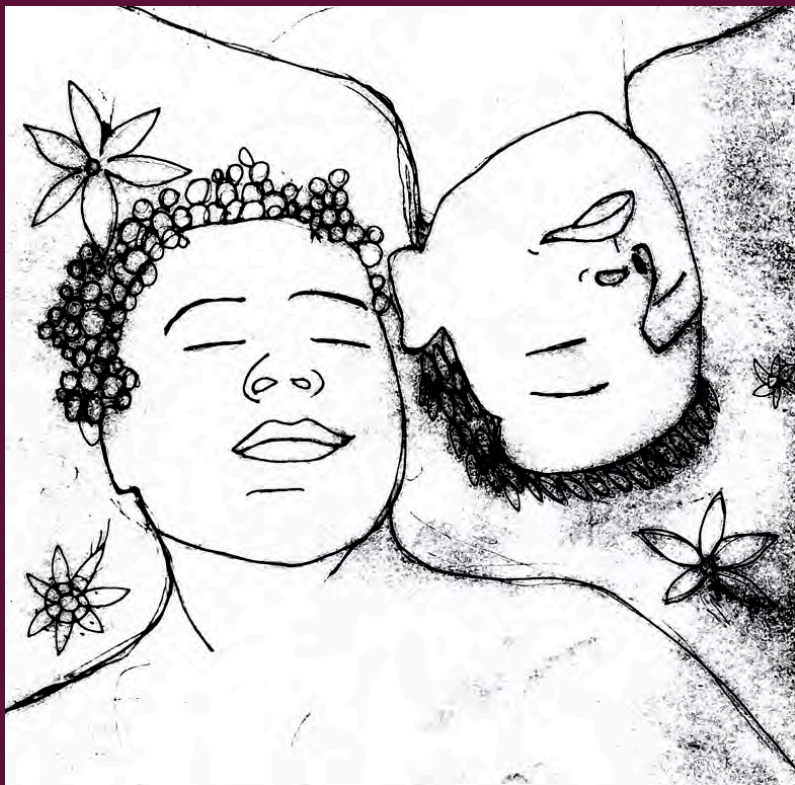
- Vocabulary/what words do we use
- Look at work plans and learnings objectives
- Integrate and make LGBT issues visible
- Review teaching materials.
- What examples are used in teaching?
- Books in the school library.
- The home page of the school – other school documents.
- Work with gender and equality - broaden the scope for action.
- Never question someone's identity.

# TEACHING MATERIAL



- What perspectives do they convey?
- What pictures are there? Do picture confirm stereotyped ideas of LGBTQ?
- What examples of LGBTQ-persons or -perspectives are here?
- How are they described (if)?
- Do we need to supplement teaching materials ourselves?

- The body and puberty
  - More similar than different between boys and girls – or boy bodies and girl bodies
  - Do not connect to reproduction
- Do not talk as if everyone wants children
- Getting children in different ways – eggs and sperm for fertilization
- Do not always assume that someone will fall in love with someone of the opposite sex
- Family in many different ways



“Sexuality isn’t a medical problem that has to be solved, but a part of our lives and humanity – with all its complexity of joys and sorrows, happiness and disappointments.”

Hans Olsson, RFSU