

# Gender/Sexuality Activity Instructions

1. Project or print the Gender Galaxy and the Sexuality Galaxy.
2. Ask your students for their immediate reactions to the images. Tell them to write these down (or draw). Students can then choose to share with the group what they think of the images and what it means to them.
3. Go through the terms and images included in each Galaxy with your students. If using the online version, make sure you use each hyperlink to explore the various solar systems, neighbouring galaxies, and other space phenomenon.
4. Ask: How does this image allow for an understanding of gender and sex that is not binary? For level land 2 students you can re-word this question to: How does this image make you feel? Does it help expand how you see yourself in your own universe?
5. Explain that the interactive tool is meant to be self-exploratory and limitless. Each student can explore and narrate their own experience of assigned sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual and romantic orientations. The Gender Galaxy, for example, offers limitless combinations of masculine and feminine: notice how the two are not necessarily opposed to one another but instead exist within a universe of possibility. You can be very much of both genders, or very little. One does not take away or add to another. For many of your students, this will be a completely new idea. Take time to ask (and listen to) questions.
6. If you have the technology for each student to view the Gender Galaxy and the Sexuality Galaxy individually, allow them to access the link. If you do not have this technology, provide handouts for each galaxy and the definitions.
7. Ask your students to imagine themselves as existing within the Gender Galaxy and the Sexuality Galaxy and give them time to explore how they relate to the different planets, solar systems, asteroid belts, and neighbouring galaxies.
8. Ask students to imagine themselves as a space traveller (like the astronaut within the galaxies). Using the writing prompts, ask them to begin to write or draw their own story of planetary and space exploration. Make clear that they can use the images to facilitate their learning and self-discovery about gender and sexuality. Emphasize that there is no one story; there are an infinite number of stories that could be created individually and will be created by the diversity of experience within your classroom.
9. (Optional) Invite your students to share their story with the class as a drawing, in writing, or orally. If the Gender Galaxy and Sexuality Galaxy images provided do not speak directly to students' experiences, invite them to draw their own Gender and/or Sexuality Galaxies. As students share their stories, be mindful of reactions within the room and assumptions that you may make. Cultivate sensitivity to any disclosure taking place.



# Gender/Sexuality Activity Instructions

## Key Messages:

Although there are no clear answers to this activity, there are key messages that you can emphasize:

- Gender and sexuality are as vast and diverse as space itself.
- Everyone has a unique story when it comes to exploring assigned sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, and romantic orientation.
- All stories and experiences exploring assigned sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, and romantic orientation are valid.
- Gender identity and expression are fluid and ever evolving/changing.
- Sexual and romantic orientations are fluid and ever evolving/changing.
- Gender is something we have a choice around expressing.
- Respecting multiple gender expressions means avoiding assumptions about what gender expression says about a person's gender identity. Gender identity is internal and not something that you can tell about a person based on their appearance.

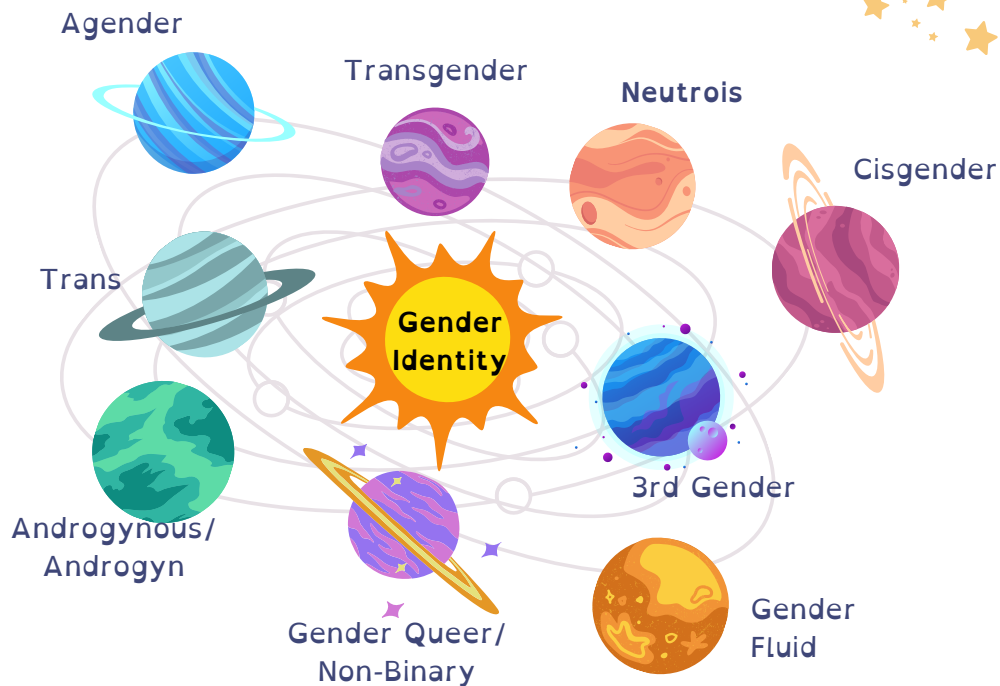
## Writing Prompts

- 1.If gender and sexualities were galaxies and I was a space traveller, I would ...
- 2.Self-exploration of my gender looks like ...
- 3.Self-exploration of my sexuality looks like ...
- 4.Self-exploration of my gender feels like ...
- 5.Self-exploration of my sexuality feels like ...
- 6.When I was little, my gender galaxy looked like ...
- 7.When I was little, my sexuality galaxy looked like ...
- 8.When I grow up, my gender galaxy may look like ...
- 9.When I grow up, my sexuality galaxy may look like ...
- 10.When I was little, my gender galaxy felt like ...
- 11.When I was little, my sexuality galaxy felt like ...
- 12.When I grow up, my gender galaxy may feel like ...
- 13.When I grow up, my sexuality galaxy may feel like ...
- 14.If gender were a galaxy ...
- 15.If sexuality were a galaxy ...



**Action Canada**  
**for Sexual Health & Rights** 2

# Gender Galaxy




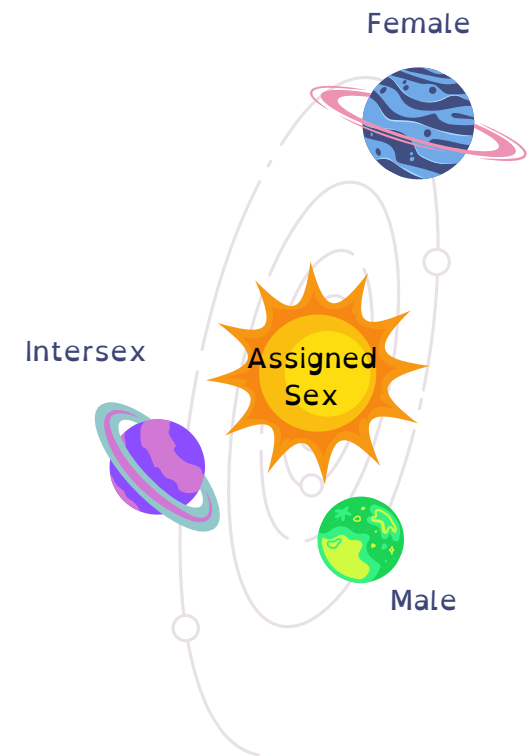
Gender Expression =  
Infinite Possibilities



Two Spirit /   
2Spirit Galaxy

Sexuality Galaxy 

 There's room for everyone here! Add your own planet, comet, moon, or nebula to make it yours!



# Gender Galaxy Definitions

**AGENDER:** people who identify as not having a gender or being genderless. They can exist outside of the gender binary, be gender non-conforming, and/or identify as trans.

**ANDROGYNOUS OR ANDROGYN:** people whose gender expression and/or identity is between, across (both), or outside of the binary and/or does not conform to gender norms.

**ASSIGNED SEX:** the word assigned is used because doctors will usually determine a baby to be either male or female at birth. Doctors assign sex based on characteristics such as chromosomes, hormonal profiles, and genitals. The ways that these sex characteristics can manifest in individuals' bodies is diverse and not as definite or binary as the categories of male and female suggest. Therefore, sex is not only assigned but the binary sex categories of male and female are socially constructed.

**CISGENDER:** people whose gender identity and assigned sex are the same (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth and identifies as a man).

**CIS MAN:** someone who identifies as cisgender and as a man.

**CISSEXISM:** systemic or individual behaviours, assumptions, and rules that grant preferential treatment to cisgender people.

**CIS WOMAN:** someone who identifies as cisgender and as a woman.

**CLOSETED:** a figure of speech used to describe a person who is keeping their sexual orientation and/or gender identity a secret from others. It is often used in a derogatory or disempowering way (someone who believes they know others' sexual orientations better than the person themselves).

**COMING OUT:** a figure of speech that refers to communicating your sexual orientation and/or gender identity to yourself and others.

**FEMALE:** one of the categories that babies are assigned at birth based on sex characteristics such as hormones, chromosomes, and genitalia.

**FEMMEPHOBIA:** the fear, aversion, hatred, and de-valuing of anything and anyone that is considered feminine, regardless of gender identity.

**GENDER:** refers to the ways that masculinity and femininity have been socially constructed and re-enforced by the dominant culture through norms, scripts, and stereotypes. Gender is socially constructed as a binary (usually through classifications of woman or man), even though this is not the reality of how gender is experienced internally (gender identity) and expressed externally (gender expression).

**GENDER BINARY:** describes the system in which a society classifies all people into one of two categories (men and women), each with associated stereotypes and norms.

**GENDER CREATIVE AND GENDER INDEPENDENT:** terms often used to describe children who do not conform to binary constructions of gender. Children who are gender creative or gender independent may or may not grow up to identify as transgender.

**GENDER EXPRESSION:** how a person publicly presents their gender. This can include behaviour and outward appearance such as how someone dresses, wears their hair, if they use make-up, their body language, and their voice.

**GENDER FLUID:** a term to describe someone who moves between binary constructions of gender and whose gender identity and expressions vary over time.



**GENDER IDENTITY:** refers to an internal sense or awareness that all people have. For most, it can be described as a kind of "man-ness" or "woman-ness." But gender is not limited to two; it is not binary.

**GENDER NON-BINARY AND GENDER QUEER:** umbrella terms used to describe someone whose gender identity and/or expression does not conform to the socially constructed gender binary.

**INTERSEX:** is an umbrella term used to describe people who have chromosomes, hormonal profiles, or genitals that do not typically fit into binary medical and social constructions of male and female. Biological sex, like gender, is not binary. Between 0.05% and 1.7% of people are born with intersex traits, although not everyone with intersex traits identifies as intersex (Free & Equal, 2015).

**LGBTQ+:** the LGBTQ+ acronym includes gender identities as well as identities related to sexual orientation. Fully spelled out the acronym contains lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer, with the plus indicating more identities such as asexual, intersex, pansexual, two spirit, and questioning.

**MALE:** one of the categories that babies are assigned at birth based on sex characteristics such as hormones, chromosomes, and genitalia.

**NEUTROIS:** people who identify as gender neutral. They may see themselves as fitting under the gender non-binary and/or trans umbrellas.

**OUTING (SOMEONE):** when someone reveals another person's sexual orientation or gender identity to an individual or group, often without the person's consent or approval. Not to be confused with "coming out."

**THIRD/3RD GENDER:** an umbrella term used to describe people who exist outside of the gender binary. For some people it means the construction of a new gender.

**TRANS:** an umbrella term to describe people whose gender identity and assigned sex are different. It can be used for a range of identities and experiences; every community and individual may define trans differently. Trans is a term that someone chooses to describe their own identity. It is not something you can tell or determine in others.

**TRANS-FEMININE:** someone who identifies as transgender and feminine.

**TRANSGENDER:** people whose gender identity and assigned sex are different. Transgender like all gender identities is internal and not something you can tell or determine in others.

**TRANS MAN:** someone who identifies as transgender and as a man.

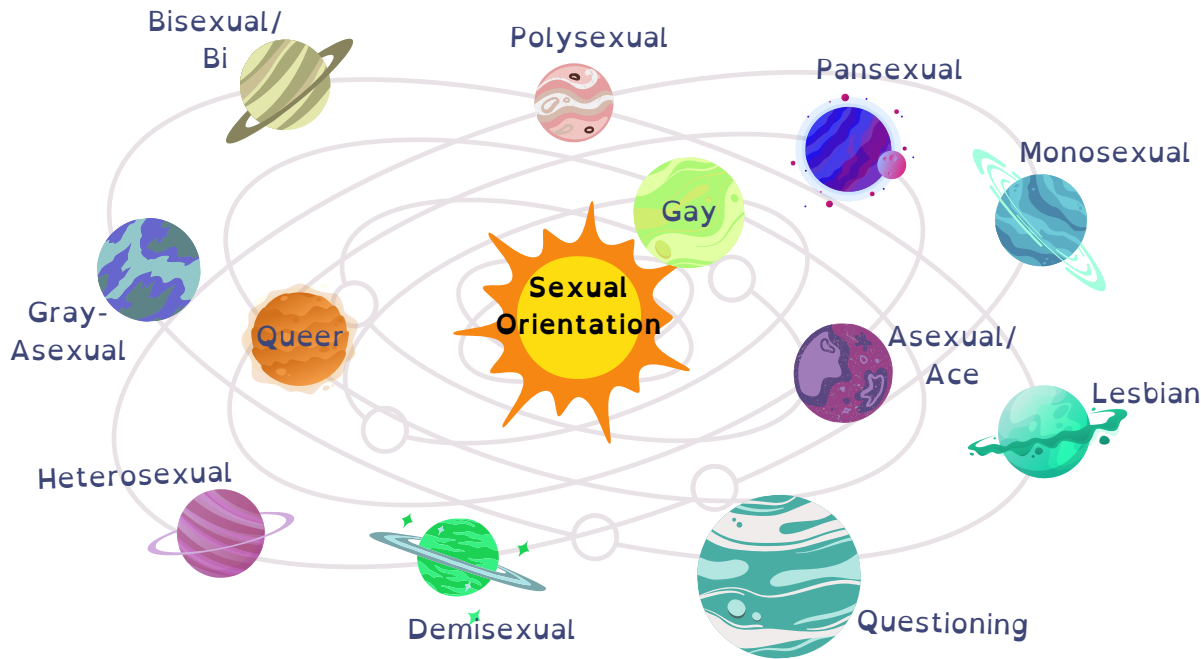
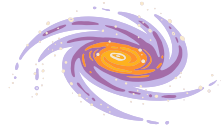
**TRANS-MASCULINE:** someone who identifies as transgender and masculine.

**TRANSMISOGYNY:** the intersection of transphobia and misogyny. It is misogyny directed at trans women, trans people, and gender non-conforming feminine people. This includes a range of negative attitudes and feelings such as prejudice, fear, discrimination, harassment, and bias towards trans and gender non-conforming people who either identify as women and/or identify as femme/feminine. Transmisogyny comes from outside and within the LGBTQ+ community.

**TRANSPHOBIA:** the systemic and individual oppression of people whose gender identity and gender expression do not conform to cisgender identities. This includes a range of negative attitudes and feelings such as prejudice, fear, discrimination, harassment, and bias towards transgender people and gender non-binary, gender creative, and gender non-conforming people.

**TRANS WOMAN:** someone who identifies as transgender and as a woman.

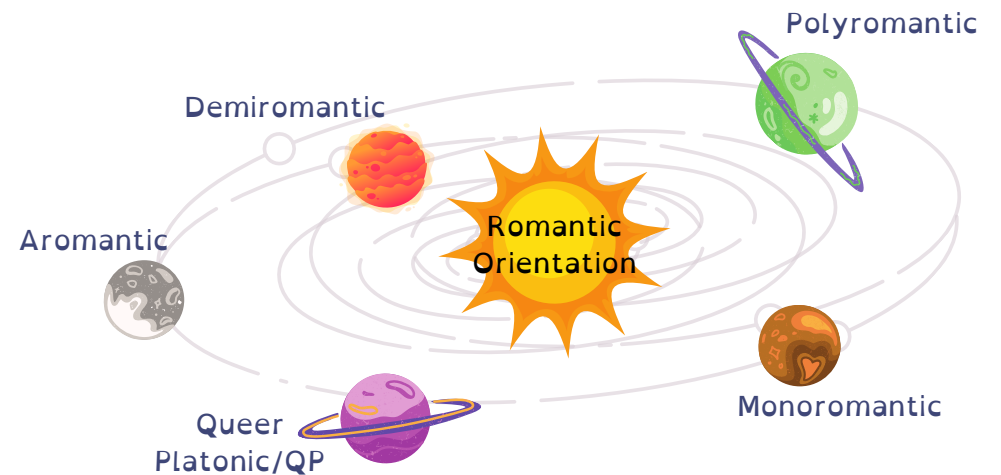
# Sexuality Galaxy



Two Spirit / 2Spirit Galaxy 

Gender Galaxy 

★ There's room for everyone here! Add your own planet, comet, moon, or nebula to make it yours!





# SexualityGalaxy Definitions

**AROMANTIC:** a person who generally does not feel romantic attraction or desire to any group of people, either within or outside of a relationship.

**ASEXUAL OR ACE:** a person who generally does not feel sexual attraction or desire to any group of people, either within or outside of a relationship.

**BISEXUAL OR BI:** a person who is attracted to more than one gender.

**BICURIOS:** a person who may not identify as bisexual or bi but is open to or curious about having sexual and/or romantic relationships with someone whose gender differs from their usual attraction.

**BIPHOBIA:** a range of negative attitudes, feelings, and fears towards bisexual people or bisexuality, which may include negative stereotyping or denial of the existence of bisexuality.

**COMING OUT:** a figure of speech that refers to communicating your sexual orientation and/or gender identity to yourself and others.

**DEMIROMANTIC:** a person who only feels romantic attraction to people with whom a close emotional bond has been formed.

**DEMISEXUAL:** a person who only feels sexual attraction to people with whom a close emotional bond has been formed.

**GAY:** a person who is primarily attracted to people of the same gender. Although it can be used for any gender, it is most often used for men who are attracted to men.

**GRAY-ASEXUAL:** a person who experiences sexual attraction but either not very often or only to a minimal extent.

**GRAY-ROMANTIC:** a person who experiences romantic attraction but either not very often or only to a minimal extent.

**HETEROSEXISM:** behaviors, assumptions, and rules that grant preferential treatment to heterosexual people. Heterosexism reinforces the idea that heterosexuality is somehow better or more "right" than homosexuality or queerness and/or ignores the existence of homosexuality or queerness.

**HETEROSEXUAL:** a clinical term for people who are attracted to people of a different gender, often referred to as "straight."

**HOMOPHOBIA:** the systemic and individual oppression of people whose sexual orientation does not conform to heterosexuality (and/or of people perceived to be LGBTQ+ ). This includes a range of negative attitudes and feelings such as prejudice, fear, discrimination, harassment, and bias towards people whose sexual orientation does not conform to (or is not perceived to conform to) heterosexuality.

**HOMOSEXUAL:** a clinical term for people who are attracted to the same gender. Some people find this term offensive because it was historically used to describe queerness as a disease that could be cured.

**LESBIAN:** a person who is primarily attracted to people of the same gender. It is most often used for women who are attracted to other women.

**LGBTQ+:** the LGBTQ+ acronym includes gender identities as well as identities related to sexual orientation. Fully spelled out the acronym contains lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer, with the plus indicating more identities such as asexual, intersex, pansexual, two spirit, and questioning.



**MONOROMANTIC:** a person who has romantic feelings for one gender.

**MONOSEXISM:** behaviors, assumptions, or rules that grant preferential treatment to monosexual people. Monosexism reinforces the idea that monosexuality is somehow better or more "right" than bisexuality or pansexuality and/or ignores the existence of bisexuality and pansexuality.

**MONOSEXUAL:** refers to people who are sexually attracted to one gender.

**OUTING (SOMEONE):** when someone reveals another person's sexual orientation or gender identity to an individual or group, often without the person's consent or approval. Not to be confused with "coming out."

**PANSEXUAL:** a person who desires intimate partnerships with more than one person. This identity can take many different forms and can include people who identify across various sexual orientations.

**POLYROMANTIC:** a person who is romantically attracted to multiple genders.

**POLYSEXUAL:** a person who is sexually attracted to multiple genders. This term can have different meanings to different people and often positions itself as different from bisexuality, pansexuality, and polyamory.

**QUEER:** an umbrella term to describe many different kinds of sexual orientations. Queer was historically used as a derogatory term for people who either were or were perceived to be LGBTQ+. In recent years, it has been reclaimed by some people within the LGBTQ+ community as a way of self-identifying and as a political statement against the oppression to which they have been subjected.

**QUEER PLATONIC OR QP:** refers to a very intimate friendship. It describes a kind of partnership that does not fit the traditional romantic coupling but can nonetheless be intense, emotionally intimate, and even romantically intimate.

**QUESTIONING:** for some, the process of exploring and discovering their sexual orientation.

**ROMANTIC ORIENTATION:** refers to the ways that people can experience romantic and emotional attractions. These may be separate from or connected to sexual and/or physical attraction. Sexual orientation and romantic orientation are not necessarily distinct identities; they are interrelated.

**SEXUALITY:** is an integral part of being human. It is a complex set of personal, social, and spiritual experiences that go beyond sexual activity. In other words, sexuality is not just about what our body does and what we do with our bodies, it is how thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles, and relationships are experienced and expressed (WHO, 2006a).

**SEXUAL EXPRESSION:** refers to the variety of ways a person expresses their sexuality, including the kinds of sexual activities they like to participate in. It is not the same as sexual orientation; someone may identify as heterosexual and express their sexuality in ways interpreted by others as queer.

**SEXUAL ORIENTATION:** refers to a person's emotional, romantic, and/or physical, and/or sexual attraction to others. Sexuality is complex and attraction can manifest very differently for different people. Categories are commonly used to understand our attractions, though are by no means inclusive of the vast variety of expressions that make up human sexuality.





# Two Spirit / 2Spirit Galaxy



**TWO SPIRIT (OR 2SPIRIT) is a unique term in many ways.**

- ★ It is used by some Indigenous people to self-identify, and can only be used by Indigenous people.
  - ★ Two Spirit can refer to sexual orientation, gender identity, and even describe roles and responsibilities specific to different Indigenous nations that may or may not be tied to sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
  - ★ Anishinaabe based, Two Spirit has been taken up by several Indigenous nations to describe complex experiences and identities as well as cultural roles and responsibilities.
  - ★ Not all Indigenous people who identify as LGBTQ+ use the term Two Spirit. Always ask what terms people would like to use for themselves.
- ★ For more information about the term Two Spirit and Two Spirit identities, visit [www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com/supportcircle.html](http://www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com/supportcircle.html)

Sexuality Galaxy 

Gender Galaxy 



# BEYOND THE BASICS

A Resource for Educators on Sexuality and Sexual Health



Beyond the Basics is a resource for educators on sexuality and sexual health. It offers the tools to teach young people about sexuality and sexual health from a sex positive, equity, and human rights perspective. It covers anatomy, consent, healthy relationships, and more! Choose from a wide range of chapters, modules, and activities that fit the different age, grade, and curricular goals for your students.

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[www.actioncanadashr.org/resources/beyond-basics](http://www.actioncanadashr.org/resources/beyond-basics)



Action Canada  
for Sexual Health & Rights

Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights' Gender and Sexuality Galaxies were designed to help educators teach about the diversity and intersectional possibilities of gender and sexuality. In 2023 the Grand Rapids Pride Center in Michigan saw a need to create a more readable version for neurodivergent individuals and those with visual impairments. Through Grand Rapids Pride Center, we connected with Michelle Swan, a freelance designer and digital marketer, who created these more accessible versions of the original design. During the process, she considered colour blind spectrums, dyslexia, ADHD, autism, and the use of screen reading devices. We are so grateful to Michelle for her time, expertise and passion for this work!

Connect with  
Michelle



click/scan

