

ORIGINAL EDUGUIDE FOR

imm!®

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Letter From The Writer

ABOUT THE WRITER

My mission in life is always threefold: to educate, to inspire, and to spread joy. I spent the first decade of my career as a special education teacher and school leader, and have made it my mission to uplift those for whom society has not afforded a loud enough voice. From public schools in New York City, to private education in Hong Kong, to educational consulting in Los Angeles, I have learned that students across time and borders have much more in common than some may initially expect. When it comes down to it, students want to be heard, seen, and valued.

I firmly believe that everyone has something to offer, a story to tell, and work hard to create environments in which students are educated holistically, are empowered to make their own decisions, and have fun doing it. For a learning environment to be holistic, it must be both inclusive and supportive, balancing high expectations with an understanding that a one-size-fits-all approach simply does not work. Fairness, after all, is not everyone getting the same thing; it is everyone getting what they need in order to be successful.

Hello, and welcome to the official EduGuide for imi, a free web app built for and with LGBTQ+ teens that helps them explore their identity and support their mental health. We are lucky to live in a time that places more awareness on mental health and the necessity of supporting it. That being said, there are insufficient resources to specifically support LGBTQ+ students on their mental health journey. That's where imi comes in!

LGBTQ+ teenagers face a unique set of challenges that extend far beyond the process of simply coming out. As educators of young LGBTQ+ people, it is important for us to consider the multitude of pressures, both external and internal, that our students may experience. From online communities to family expectations, it can be challenging for young people to sift through all the messaging they receive. Everyone's journey is different, and it is of paramount importance for us to remember that a one-size-fits-all approach simply does not work. imi does an excellent job at breaking things down and providing flexible opportunities and resources for personal development.

The lessons in this EduGuide focus on helping LGBTQ+ students and those who educate them become familiar with the many resources that imi provides. This EduGuide is designed for all middle and high school aged students, but contains specific insight for LGBTQ+ students who may need additional support on their journey toward self actualization. As you undergo this work with your students, we encourage you to exercise patience and remember that success looks different for everyone. That being said, imi contains tried and true strategies that can help young people develop more self-awareness, feel more comfortable in their own skin, and become empowered with tools for stress management.

Similar to the [Gradual Release of Responsibility model](#) that many of us use in our classrooms, this EduGuide aims to help students explore imi in a safe space where they ask questions and feel the support of a community that cares. Rather than simply sharing the links, our goal here is to guide students to a point where they can eventually use (and even share) these resources independently.

Andrew Wailes, M.Ed.

EduGuide Overview

imi is a web app with guides built for and with LGBTQ+ teens to help them explore their identity and support their mental health.

imi was created through a collaboration of LGBTQ+ organizations - including [Centerlink](#), [Hopelab](#), and [It Gets Better](#) - and hundreds of LGBTQ+ young people from across the country. It's a tool for LGBTQ+ teens, by LGBTQ+ teens and their allies.

This EduGuide consists of 5 lessons designed to introduce educators and students to imi. These lessons are built to offer engaging, community-building support that aims to empower students to use imi independently in the future. We also, as always, recommend using these activities and resources to inspire larger conversations about acceptance and queerness - the experience of having a sexual or gender identity that does not always correspond to established norms.

Before launching this unit with your students, we highly recommend familiarizing yourself with imi. The guides you can find there are organized into the following four categories: stress, queerness, stigma, and gender. If you need support in understanding what these and any other relevant terms mean, please do not hesitate to visit It Gets Better's [LGBTQ+ Glossary](#).

Time Needed

Each activity can be taught in a single class period (about 45 minutes), though you may want to factor in an additional 30 to 60 minutes for any extension activities or deeper conversations.

Audience

This EduGuide is intended for middle and high school students between the ages of 13-18, though we welcome you to adapt it for younger and older audiences if you believe it's appropriate to do so. We hope this guide is inviting for both LGBTQ+ people and allies alike.

Setting

These lessons can be used in small or large groups. Some connector activities and some group activities may be best suited for a small group, so if the lesson is facilitated with a larger group – divide the large group into small groups (6-8 students) to complete the activity.

While we encourage in-person discussions, all activities included below can be conducted in a virtual environment. Facilitators will want to make use of break-out rooms for smaller group activities, with shared documents or online boards to facilitate collaboration.

Participant Support

We encourage you to make these workshops absolutely voluntary. We think a basic agreement for the space of these workshops should be that everyone is here because they have decided to be here and anyone can choose not to participate in a part of the lesson.

Additionally, depending on the experiences shared by students during the lesson, individual follow-up may be needed. As students share challenges they currently face or anticipate facing, they may need to have individual discussions for support and intervention. If a school counselor is facilitating the lesson, plan an individual session to follow up with the student to determine the level of support needed for the student. If a teacher or other educator is facilitating the lesson, report the concern to a school counselor who can follow-up with the student individually. It's always best to remind students before they share about their experiences that all staff are mandated reporters, and are required to report suspected abuse or neglect.

If the student has an IEP or receives any additional support, be sure to include special education teachers or support systems in the conversation. Let the student know you are sharing the concern so trust is not broken.

Common Core Standards

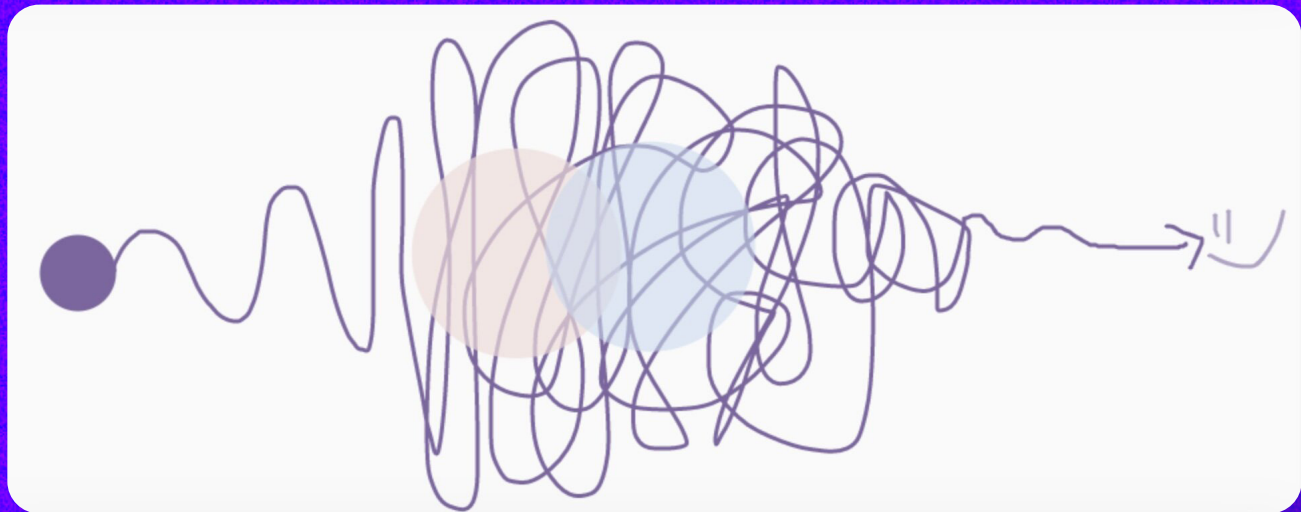
- Craft and Structure - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-12.4-.6
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-12.7
- Production and Distribution of Writing - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-12.6
- Range of Writing - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-12.10
- Comprehension and Collaboration - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-12.1-.3
- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-12.4-.6

Launching the EduGuide

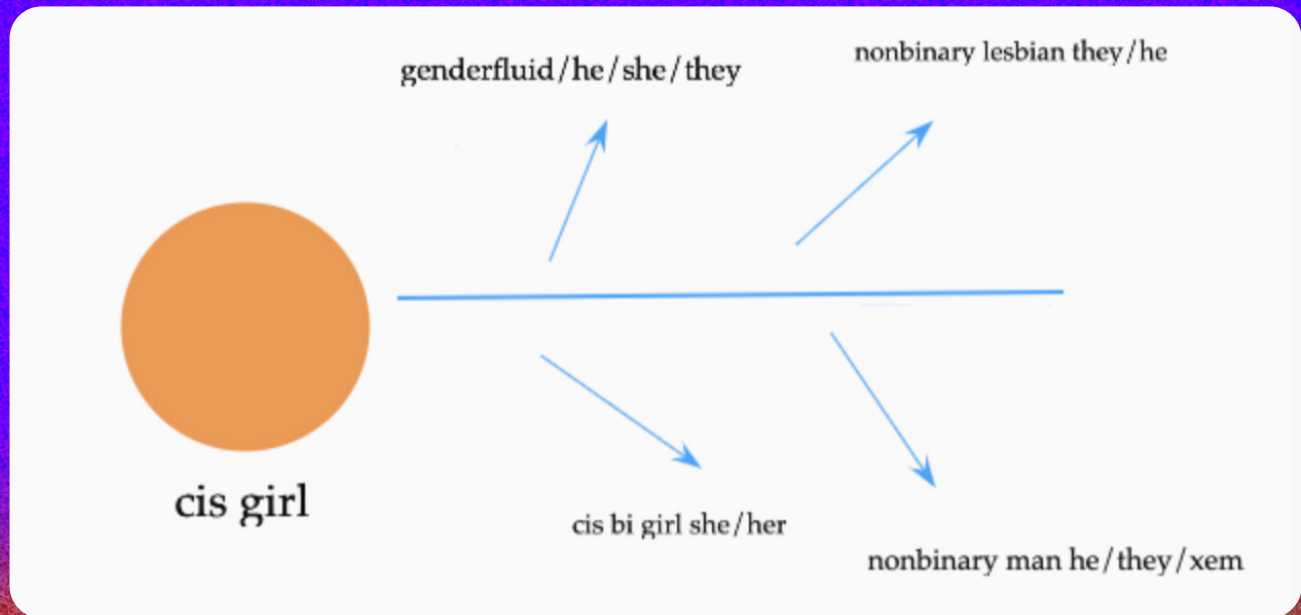
<p>Total Time</p>	<p>30 minutes</p>
<p>Materials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projector for images • Sticky notes (preferably in different colors)
<p>Community Agreements</p>	<p>Conversations in this and all It Gets Better EduGuides will require maturity and sensitivity. Staying curious, while keeping all comments respectful, will be the key to a successful learning experience. If you have not already established these or similar guidelines in your learning environment, consider soliciting student ideas for community guidelines and agreeing to the shared expectations. Once established, please be mindful and remind students of these agreements before each lesson.</p>
<p>Overview & Activation</p>	<p>Please follow these steps as you launch the unit.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Distribute</u> two different colored post-it notes to each participant. On the board, <u>post a question</u>: <i>How do you feel?</i> 2. <u>Say</u>: <i>“Too often, we are expected to go through life and suppress our emotions. The work in this unit is going to ask us to be reflective as we work towards better supporting ourselves and those in our community. On a post-it note, take a few seconds to jot down how you feel. Think of a few adjectives.”</i> 3. <u>OPTIONAL</u>: <u>Ask</u> students to share what they have written on their post-it notes. This is not necessary at this point in the activity, and requires a certain level of trust in your learning environment. Only do this if you feel it is appropriate. 4. <u>Say</u>: <i>“Now we’re going to expand our vocabulary on this question a little bit. The goal of this is to build self-awareness on our path to self-actualization.”</i> 5. <u>Project</u> a graphic of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (such as this one from Simply Psychology) for students to see. <u>Explain</u> to students how the hierarchy works. Essentially, you must work your way up, achieving each level below before you can progress to the one above (e.g. you can’t work on your self-esteem if you do not know where your next meal is coming from). For further information on Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, check out this article from Simply Psychology or similar articles from other reputable sources. 6. On a separate post-it note, <u>direct</u> students to write where they are on Maslow’s Hierarchy. This will be collected by you (the facilitator) and will provide valuable information as you tailor your approach to your audience’s needs. Collect post-it notes. 7. <u>Lead</u> a discussion about Maslow’s Hierarchy, and how queerness can play a role in it. <u>Encourage</u> students to draw on personal experience. Questions may include: <i>How might queerness present challenges or advantages to moving up Maslow’s hierarchy of needs?</i> 8. <u>Say</u>: <i>“It can be easy to feel alone as an LGBTQ+ individual. imi is a free online resource with tools to support you in each of these four categories: stress, queerness, stigma, and gender.”</i> 9. <u>Project</u> the imi homepage for students to see. <u>Direct</u> them towards the four major categories: stress, queerness, stigma, and gender. Ask them to consider where these fall on the hierarchy. 10. <u>Say</u>: <i>“Our goal by the end of this unit is for you to engage with and understand the multitude of resources that imi provides. Imi can be used independently, but we are going to launch this work together.”</i>

LESSON #1: Drawing Your Gender Journey

<p>Objectives</p>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate the difference between sex and gender. • Navigate the imi web app. • Draw on personal experience to construct visual representations of their gender journeys. • Share their journeys with peers, identifying commonalities and reflecting on their experiences.
<p>Relevant Concepts/ Vocabulary</p>	<p>From It Gets Better's LGBTQ+ Glossary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sex - At birth, infants are commonly assigned a sex. This is usually based on the appearance of their external anatomy, and is often confused with gender. However, a person's sex is actually a combination of bodily characteristics including chromosomes, hormones, internal and external reproductive organs, and secondary sex characteristics. As a result, though many people think of sex as being binary, or just male and female, there are other variations in sex, such as those who are intersex. • Gender identity - One's internal, deeply held sense of gender. Some people identify completely with the gender they were assigned at birth (usually male or female), while others may identify with only a part of that gender, or not at all. Some people identify with another gender entirely. Unlike gender expression, gender identity is not visible to others. • Gender expression - The external manifestations of gender, expressed through such things as names, pronouns, clothing, haircuts, behavior, voice, body characteristics, and more.
<p>Teacher Preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch the video and preview the activity in advance to see if there are any areas or concepts you may need to clarify for your students. • Gather materials (below).
<p>Materials/ Supplies Needed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • imi - Reflect on your own gender journey • Students should each have a device (can be a phone, tablet, or personal computer) with access to the internet.
<p>Total Time</p>	<p>45 minutes</p>



Ness, he/she/they, 18, HI – “So I was assigned the gender like, you know, female. But as I went growing up like middle school was when I started questioning. Like am I truly like female of my feminine side? And I started becoming a little bit more masculine, but I would try to cover it up by being feminine and kind of clouded how I felt. And as you see throughout growing up, it gets more clouded. And I just kind of wanted to cover it up saying like, oh, yeah, I’m a girl. But growing up, being fully grown, I became at ease with being gender fluid and really fine any pronouns. And you don’t have to stress about if you’re female or male, like you don’t have to just choose one. Choose whatever you want.”



William, he/they/zem, 18, FL – “So in the beginning, I used to identify as a cis girl. And then around in seventh grade, I was gender fluid. I didn’t really know what the word meant, but obviously with reflection, I knew that I was gender fluid. But then that I identified as a cis bi girl who used she/her. And then for a very long time, I identified as a nonbinary lesbian, these they/he pronouns. And yeah. So then very recently, I found out that I was a nonbinary man, probably around like, I don’t know, a year ago. So now I use he/they/zem.”

Time	Activity	Description	Group Configuration
5 min	Welcome and Agreements	Welcome students to the space and ask a student to review group agreements that have been established. Share today's lesson plan's objectives.	Entire group
5 min	Defining Key Terms	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Before sharing the lesson's key terms, <u>ask</u> students to articulate the difference between sex and gender. This can be done through a Think-Pair-Share, post-it reflection, or other sharing protocol. NOTE: The concepts of sex and gender are often wrongfully confused with each other. Take some time to ensure students understand the difference between the two. 2. <u>Share</u> definitions of Relevant Concepts (above) to prepare students for the day's activity. 3. <u>Say</u>: "Today's lesson will focus on gender. Gender, like sexuality, exists on a spectrum. Gender is not a binary—it's more of a journey which can evolve and grow and change over time. There can also be emotional ups and downs that are important to acknowledge. Even if you consider yourself cis-gender, meaning you identify with the gender you were assigned at birth, try to be open-minded when it comes to reflecting on your gender experience." 	Entire Group
10 min	Let's Learn	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have the group <u>watch</u> the Genna video together. 2. <u>Debrief</u>: Lead the group in a brief discussion of Genna's experience. Questions to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the catalyst for Genna's reflection on femininity? • What was a big signifier in Genna's gender journey? Why was that meaningful to him? • What do you think about the question Genna posed to himself about whether femininity (or masculinity) is inherent? 	Entire Group
5 min	Exploration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Guide</u> students to the imi guide webpage on their individual devices. 2. <u>Say</u>: "As you can see, the support on imi is organized into four major categories: stress, queerness, stigma, and gender. We will be exploring all four together during this unit." 3. <u>Guide</u> students to the Gender page on imi, and then to today's activity, Reflect on your own gender journey. 	Entire group









Time	Activity	Description	Group Configuration
	Exploration (Continued)	<p>4. <u>Ask</u> volunteers to read the descriptions of a few of the gender journeys drawn below the embedded drawing app. Note how students vary in their use of visual tools (shapes, lines, words, etc.) to represent their journeys.</p>	
10 min	Creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give students time to use the drawing app on this imi page to draw their own gender journey and then to write a short description of it. Encourage students to utilize the available tools (i.e. shapes, text, colors) however they see fit. 	Individual
10 min	Share & Debrief	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Ask</u> for volunteers to share their images and accompanying descriptions. 2. <u>Debrief</u>: Lead students in a reflective discussion of today’s activity. Questions to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some common threads between people’s gender journeys, both those in the app and folks we heard from here? Why do you think that may be? • What are some unique qualities of people’s gender journeys? • Was it easy or difficult to draw your own gender journey? Why? 3. <u>OPTIONAL</u>: <u>Give</u> youth the option to download the image they created and email it with the description to hello@imi.guide for possible inclusion on imi. 	Entire Group
<p>Further Resources</p>		<p>If facilitators or students would like to learn more about gender identity and expression, check out the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonbinary people describe their gender journeys! From our “Writing Our Own Dictionary” video series. • What being trans means! from the same video series. • Dive into the official Writing Our Own Dictionary EduGuide. 	

LESSON #2: Stress & Strategies

Objectives	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on what stress feels like in their bodies. • Develop self compassion and affirmation tools to use after stressful situations. • Practice using their breath to help their bodies deal with stress.
Relevant Concepts/ Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress - a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation (from WHO). • Metacognition - awareness and understanding of one's own thought processes, essentially thinking about your thinking • Identity Affirmation - the affective process of developing positive feelings and a strong sense of belonging to one's social group.
Teacher Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch the videos and preview the activities in advance to see if there are any areas or concepts you may need to clarify for your students. • Gather materials (below).
Materials/ Supplies Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • imi guide - Reflect on what stress feels like in your body • imi guide - Apply self compassion and affirmation tools after stressful situations • imi guide - Practice using your breath to help your body deal with stress • Students should each have a device (can be a phone, tablet, or personal computer) with access to the internet.
Total Time	45 minutes

1 → Sometimes when I'm stressed, I'll feel tension in my:

Choose as many as you like

 A forehead	 B jaw	 C neck	 D chest
 E arms	 F hands	 G legs	 H back

OK ✓

10 → What can you say to yourself next time you're feeling stress or tension in your ___?

Choose as many as you like

<input type="checkbox"/> A I am who I am right now because of my experience, but I am not defined by one single experience.
<input type="checkbox"/> B I can be kind to myself as I work through this.
<input type="checkbox"/> C My body deserves time to rest and recharge.
<input type="checkbox"/> D I won't pressure myself, I'll simply listen to my own body.
<input type="checkbox"/> E I have the power to settle my mind.
<input type="checkbox"/> F My body fills with light and I feel still, calm and ready for what's to come.

OK ✓

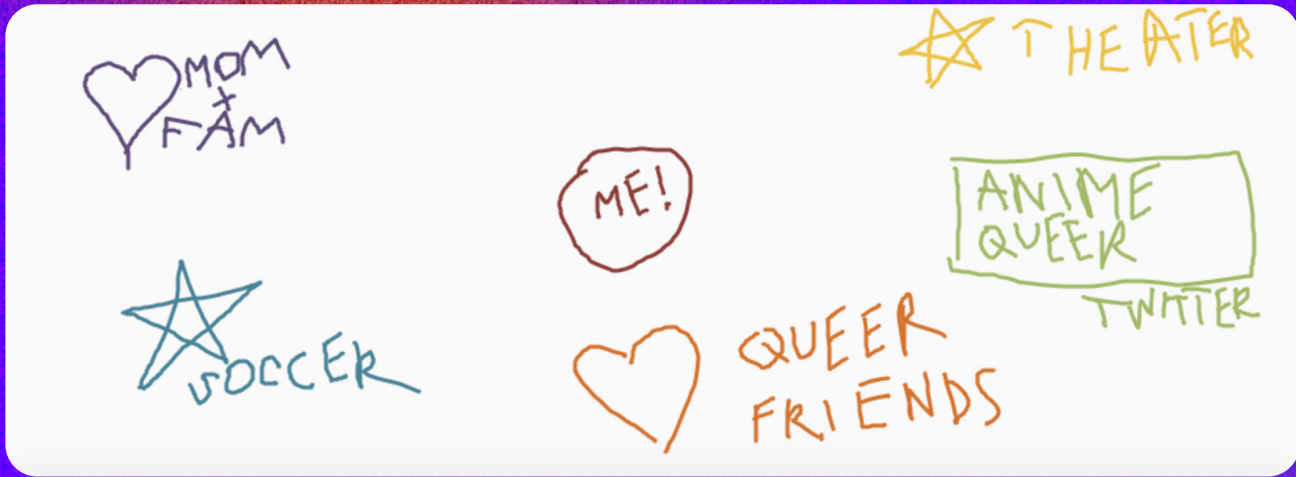
Time	Activity	Description	Group Configuration
5 min	Welcome and Agreements	<p><u>Welcome</u> students to the space and <u>ask</u> a student to review group agreements that have been established. The facilitator then <u>shares</u> the lesson plan’s objectives and key concepts/vocabulary from above.</p>	Entire group
5 min	Activation - Journal Prompt	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Share</u> the following prompt with students: “Reflect on 2 stressful situations you have recently experienced. One should be a time when you felt like you managed the stress well. The other should be a time when you felt like your stress got the better of you. What was different about those situations and how you approached them? What was similar?” 2. <u>Say</u>: “You can answer this however you see fit. Responses may take the form of a written reflection on a piece of paper or virtual document. Or maybe they will take the form of drawings and visual representations. The idea is for you to reflect, and there’s no right or wrong way to do that.” 3. <u>Give</u> students time to respond to the prompt. 4. OPTIONAL: If time and the culture of your learning environment allows, feel free to let this journal prompt <u>lead</u> into a whole-group discussion. 	Individual
1 min	Reflect on Stress	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Navigate</u> to imi guide - Reflect on what stress feels like in your body on your device. Screen share or project your desktop image and share the video at the top of the page. <u>Watch</u> the video (0:28) as a group. 2. <u>Say</u>: “Stress isn’t something that just lives in our minds—it can live in our bodies, too. Developing awareness about where stress lives in our bodies can actually give us the tools to begin to address that stress.” 3. <u>Have</u> students navigate to the page on their individual devices. 4. <u>Ask</u> youth to answer the questions on the web page about how they experience stress in their bodies on their own devices. Instruct them to stop when they get the button that says, “Hear Lela’s story”. NOTE: If there aren’t many youth with devices, use the prompts to lead the activity and have youth write down their answers or project or screenshare the prompts. 	Entire Group with Individual Reflection

Time	Activity	Description	Group Configuration
	Reflect on Stress (Continued)	<p>5. <u>Debrief</u>: Lead group in a reflective discussion. Questions to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scroll back up and look at what you wrote. How does stress feel in your body? • Which statements did you choose when asked what you can say to yourself the next time you are feeling stress in your body? • What does it feel like to reflect on stress? This is something we call metacognition, or thinking about thinking. 	
5 min	Apply self-compassion and identity affirmation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Navigate</u> to imi guide - Apply self compassion and affirmation tools after stressful situations on your device. Screen share or project your desktop image and share the video at the top of the page. <u>Watch</u> the video (0:39) as a group. 2. <u>Have</u> students navigate to the page on their individual devices. 3. <u>Have</u> students read through all 10 of the affirmations on the imi guide, choose one that resonates most with them, and take a screenshot of it (or write it down if they don't have a device). 4. <u>OPTIONAL: Instruct</u> students to use the affirmation they selected (or one of their own creation) to design their own wallpaper for their device using apps like Walli, Wallpapers by Google, Resplash, Muzei Live Wallpaper, or Tapet. 	Entire Group with Individual Reflection
10 min	Breathing to manage stress	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Navigate</u> to imi guide - Practice using your breath to help your body deal with stress on your device. Screen share or project your desktop image and share the video at the top of the page. Watch the video (0:22) as a group. 2. <u>Have</u> students navigate to the page on their individual devices. 3. <u>Time</u> students for 1 minute while they practice the breathing exercise. 4. <u>Say</u>: "While you practice the breathing exercise, you may choose to slowly repeat the affirmation you chose earlier in your head." 	Entire Group

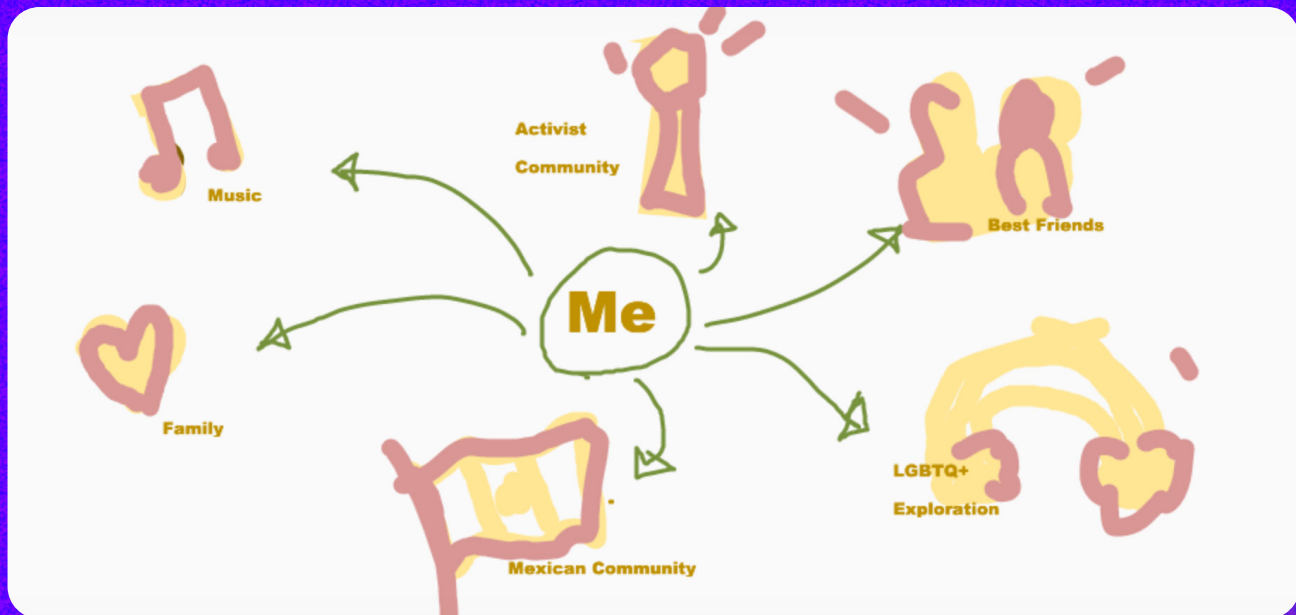
Time	Activity	Description	Group Configuration
10Min	Debrief	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Before a final discussion for the day, <u>ask</u> students to reflect on what they wrote and reflected on at the beginning of today's lesson. 2. <u>Debrief</u>: Lead the group in a final reflective discussion. Questions to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was the experience of doing the breathing exercise? • In what situations can you see yourself using the affirmation and/or the breathing exercise? • In what stressful situations might it be difficult to do these exercises? • How can you overcome those difficulties? (Examples: stepping out so you have a minute to yourself, just doing the affirmation in your head) 3. OPTIONAL: <u>Lead</u> students in a body scanning and breathing exercise using these instructions from the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley or another reputable source. Invite students to notice how the stress in their body changes as they bring awareness to it. 	Entire Group

LESSON #3: Mapping & Finding Community

Objectives	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Map the communities they are a part of.• Find new communities for support.
Relevant Concepts/ Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community - a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals.
Teacher Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Watch the video and preview the activity in advance to see if there are any areas or concepts you may need to clarify for your students.• Gather materials (below).
Materials/ Supplies Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• imi guide - Mapping the communities you're a part of• Students should each have a device (can be a phone, tablet, or personal computer) with access to the internet.• Blank sheets of paper (one per participant).
Total Time	45 minutes



Maya, she/her, 17, MI – “I find community in a lot of the art spaces I’m a part of at school and online. My mom, grandma, and friends also play a big part in making me feel seen when I’m struggling with my queer identity.”



Ivy, she/her/hers, 17, AZ – “Music has been such a huge part of my life, mainly piano and singing ever since I was around four years old. Next, I want to talk about the activist community. And I think definitely this part of me definitely became a bigger part since COVID 19 because I was able to explore more of my beliefs and who I am. The next two parts are my best friend and my family. These two things are so important to me because these are the people who I go to and who I trust the most. Next is the Mexican community. My whole family is Mexican, I am Mexican, and the community makes me feel bigger than who I am. And I am just so grateful to have that. Next, I want to talk about LGBTQ plus exploration. I don’t completely know who I am or who I love. And I feel that the community is so open and so welcoming that I am able to explore that part of me.”

Time	Activity	Description	Group Configuration
5 min	Welcome and Agreements	<u>Welcome</u> students to the space and <u>ask</u> a student to review group agreements that have been established. The facilitator then <u>shares</u> the lesson plan's objectives from above.	Entire group
5 min	Activation-Visual Representation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Before sharing the relevant concept for today's lesson, <u>give</u> each participant a blank piece of paper and <u>ask</u> them to create their own visual definitions of what community means to them. 2. <u>Give</u> students time to reflect and create individually. 3. <u>Lead</u> the group in a conversation about what community means to them. <u>Record</u> key words from each students' definition on the board in order to create a shared definition. 	Individual reflection & group discussion
5 min	Let's Learn	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Navigate</u> to imi guide - Mapping the communities you're a part of on your device. Screen share or project your desktop image and share the video at the top of the page. <u>Watch</u> the video (0:40) as a group. 2. <u>Have</u> students navigate to the page on their individual devices. 3. <u>Ask</u> for volunteers to read the descriptions of a few of the communities maps drawn below the embedded drawing app. 	Entire Group
15 min	Mapping Communities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Have</u> students take time to use the drawing app to draw their own community map and then to write a short description of it. 2. OPTIONAL: If the culture of your classroom allows, <u>ask</u> volunteers to share their images and their descriptions. 3. <u>Debrief</u>: Lead students in a debrief. Questions to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some of the similarities between people's community maps, those in the app and folks we heard from here? • What are some unique qualities of people's community maps? • Was it easy or difficult to draw your own community map? Why? 	Individual

Time	Activity	Description	Group Configuration
10 min	Discovering New Communities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Say</u>: “For those who are a part of the LGBTQ+ community, it is not uncommon to intentionally seek out new communities to be a part of that are affirming. Sometimes that can be hard as a teen. Today, you are going to explore three safer online communities that are run by non-profit organizations.” 2. <u>Divide</u> youth into smaller groups and have each group explore these three online communities. Ask them to learn enough about how it works to share with their peers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q Chat Space • Give Us the Floor • Trevor Space 3. <u>Have</u> groups share with the larger group what they learned about each online community. 	Small groups
5 min	Debrief	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Direct</u> students to look back at their initial definitions of community as well as their maps from the first activity. 2. <u>Debrief</u>: Lead students in a final debrief discussion. Questions to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which communities are you part of that provide you with the most strength? • What can you do to maintain close connections to those communities? 3. <u>OPTIONAL</u>: <u>Give</u> youth the option to download the image they created and email it with the description to hello@imi.guide for possible inclusion on imi. 	Entire group

LESSON #4: Understanding Internalized Stigma

<p>Objectives</p>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define internalized stigma and reflect on their own experiences with it. • Read about other LGBTQ+ teens' experiences with stigma. • Create memes that express joy, pride, and confidence in being part of the LGBTQ+ community.
<p>Relevant Concepts/ Vocabulary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stigma - a set of negative and unfair beliefs that a society or group of people have about something. • Internalized stigma - the shame and expectation of discrimination that prevents people from talking about their experiences and stops them seeking help (from National Institutes of Health).
<p>Teacher Preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch the videos and preview the activities in advance to see if there are any areas or concepts you may need to clarify for your students. • Gather materials (below).
<p>Materials/ Supplies Needed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • imi guide - Internalized stigma looks, sounds, and feels different for everyone • imi guide - Hear stories from other LGBTQ+ teens • imi guide - What internalized stigma looks like • Students should each have a device (can be a phone, tablet, or personal computer) with access to the internet. • Post-it notes.
<p>Total Time</p>	<p>45 minutes</p>



dykeauthority Follow

Me, a lesbian filled with internalized homophobia who has been conditioned into thinking that outward interest in other women is predatory:



Internalized transphobia:

What if I'm not really trans and I'm subconsciously faking my identity. What if all this dysphoria is just result of mental illness and internalized misogyny.

Me @ myself:



transbisexuals Follow

the two internalized homophobia moods are: "i must be faking it im not really gay" or "i am gay but im awful and predatory for it"



slothes-and-gays Follow

when you accidentally touch your straight friend's hand and immediately apologize and she looks at you like "what are you apologizing for?" and you can't explain that internalized homophobia makes you worry that straight girls are always uncomfortable around you so you just awkwardly laugh



dead-butch

internalized homophobia in the media: gay bully beats up gay kid because hes mad that hes gay

internalized homophobia irl: gay kid refuses to make eye contact with members of the same gender for fear of being Predatory



ghostsweaters

Internalized homophobia in the media: hating gay people

Interanitized homophobia irl: hating one single gay person, yourself

Time	Activity	Description	Group Configuration
5 min	Welcome and Agreements	<p><u>W</u>elcome students to the space and <u>a</u>sk a student to review group agreements that have been established. The facilitator then <u>s</u>hares the lesson plan’s objectives and key concepts/vocabulary from above.</p>	Entire group
5 min	Activation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>S</u>ay: “In our last lesson, we focused on mapping and finding community.” 2. <u>G</u>ive students post-it notes and <u>a</u>sk them to write down a song that they listen to when they want to make themselves feel better. Students may <u>s</u>hare with elbow partners or in small groups. 3. <u>C</u>ollect the post-it notes to create a whole-class playlist for Lesson #5. 	Entire group
10 min	Internalized Stigma & Questionnaire	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>N</u>avigate to imi guide - Internalized stigma looks, sounds, and feels different for everyone on your device. Screen share or project your desktop image and share the video at the top of the page. <u>W</u>atch the video (0:29) as a group. 2. <u>H</u>ave students navigate to the page on their individual devices. 3. <u>I</u>nstruct students to read through and answer the questions in the chat at the bottom of the page identifying which internalized stigma statements they relate to. NOTE: At the end of the questions, imi directs users to a coping skills page. This activity does not incorporate that. 4. <u>S</u>ay: “Remember that the statements in this activity are what you have received from society and the media. Internalizing these stigmas is completely understandable given how prevalent they are.” 	Entire Group with Individual Reflection
5 min	Stories from LGBTQ+ Youth	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>D</u>irect students to navigate to imi guide - Hear stories from other LGBTQ+ teens on their individual devices. 2. <u>R</u>emind students that it is common to experience internalized stigma. 3. <u>A</u>sk for 4 volunteers to read what other LGBTQ+ teens have shared. 	Entire group

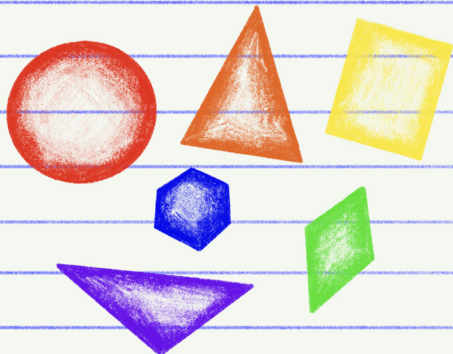
Time	Activity	Description	Group Configuration
10 min	Learning through Memes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Direct</u> students to navigate to imi guide - What internalized stigma looks like on their individual devices. 2. <u>Read</u> from the top of the page: <i>Remember, if you've internalized negative messages from society about being LGBTQ+, it's not your fault and you're not alone. It's impossible to not be influenced by the culture and people that surround us.</i> 3. <u>Have</u> students work in pairs to look through the memes that demonstrate what internalized stigma looks like. 4. <u>Debrief</u>: Lead group in a reflective discussion. Questions to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does it feel to know that others experience internalized stigma as well? • What are some ideas you have for combating internalized stigma? 	Pairs & group discussion
10 min	Create your own!	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Have</u> students find or create memes that express joy, pride, and confidence in being part of the LGBTQ+ community and then <u>share</u> with each other. 2. <u>Gather</u> the memes and compile them into a class library for Lesson #5. 	Individuals, pairs, or small groups

LESSON #5: Coping Skills & Self-Care

<p>Objectives</p>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define and differentiate between coping skills and self-care practices. • Create a toolkit of coping skills and self-care practices that work for them.
<p>Relevant Concepts/ Vocabulary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coping skills - conscious strategies used to reduce unpleasant emotions. • Self care - the process of establishing behaviors to ensure holistic well-being of oneself, to promote health, and actively manage illness when it occurs.
<p>Teacher Preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch the videos and preview the activities in advance to see if there are any areas or concepts you may need to clarify for your students. • Gather materials (below). • Prepare a class library (this can easily be done on a virtual document or slides presentation) of the memes the group created during the last session. • Prepare a playlist (consider YouTube, Spotify, or Apple Music) of the students' empowerment songs from the last lesson. • Optional: Create an acrostic-style graphic organizer to help students track strategies they may use (see "Coping through Distraction" activity below).
<p>Materials/ Supplies Needed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • imi guide - Coping with stress through distraction • imi guide - Find a self care practice that works for you • imi guide - Coping with stress through expression and creativity • Students should each have a device (can be a phone, tablet, or personal computer) with access to the internet.
<p>Total Time</p>	<p>45 minutes</p>

Drawing

DRAWING IS A NATURAL WAY TO EXPRESS CREATIVELY. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE "GOOD" AT IT! DRAWING CAN RELIEVE STRESS AND HELP YOU WORK THROUGH COMPLICATED FEELINGS DO YOU HAVE NO WORDS FOR.



Some Affirmations

Even when I'm having a stressful moment or day, I know I am _____
(beautiful
loved
appreciated)

Even when I don't feel my best, my friends remind me that I am _____
(a great friend
so funny!
always loved)

KEEPING A MOOD JOURNAL

TRACKING YOUR FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS CAN HELP YOU IDENTIFY STRESS TRIGGERS. YOUR JOURNAL IS WHERE YOU CAN EXPRESS YOUR SADNESS AND ANGER WITHOUT WORRYING WHAT ANYONE THINKS.



Music

Singing, playing an instrument, or listening to music can be a wonderful way to soothe yourself.

Whether you dance by yourself to your favorite music, play an instrument, or go to a dance party, using music to get out your feelings can be a powerful way to unwind.

Time	Activity	Description	Group Configuration
5 min	Welcome and Agreements	<p><u>W</u>elcome students to the space and <u>a</u>sk a student to review group agreements that have been established. The facilitator then <u>s</u>h<u>a</u>res the lesson plan's objectives.</p>	Entire group
10 min	Meme Share-Out	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>S</u>hare the class library of the memes the group created during the last lesson. 2. OPTIONAL: If the culture of your learning environment allows, <u>t</u>urn this into a game and <u>h</u>ave students guess who created which meme. This can be facilitated individually or in teams. 3. <u>D</u>ebrief: Elicit participant responses on the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Would you consider reviewing memes like this a form of coping or of self care?</i> • <i>What is the difference between coping and self care?</i> <p>NOTE: The goal here is for students to articulate that coping skills are used in reaction to stressful situations and experiences, while self-care is more preventative.</p>	Entire group
10 min	Coping through Distraction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>N</u>avigate to imi guide - Coping with stress through distraction on your device. Screen share or project your desktop image and share the video at the top of the page. <u>W</u>atch the video (0:52) as a group. 2. <u>H</u>ave students navigate to the page on their individual devices. 3. <u>A</u>sk students to work individually or in pairs to click on all of the categories (labeled with the acronym ACCEPTS) of ways to cope with stress using distraction. 4. As students work through the coping strategies, <u>a</u>sk them to identify three strategies that resonate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One they've used in the past • One that they've not used, but could see working for them • One that they don't think would work for them 	Entire group with individual or partner work

Time	Activity	Description	Group Configuration
	Coping through Distraction (Continued)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. OPTIONAL: <u>Consider</u> having students identify one strategy that they may use from each of the ACCEPTS categories. If your students would benefit from it, <u>create</u> an acrostic-style graphic organizer for them to use. 6. <u>Debrief</u>: Lead the group in a reflective discussion of this process. Questions to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you think these coping strategies work well? • Why might they not work as well as self-care practices? 7. <u>Say</u>: “Remember that self care is preventative!” 	
15 min	Personalized Self Care	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Navigate</u> to imi guide - Find a self care practice that works for you on your device. Screen share or project your desktop image and share the video at the top of the page. <u>Watch</u> the video (0:55) as a group. 2. <u>Have</u> students navigate to the page on their individual devices. 3. OPTIONAL: <u>Play</u> the playlist of participant-chosen empowerment anthems while students work through the following steps. 4. <u>Ask</u> students to work independently to read through the list of self care practices, choose one, and answer the question that is posed for it. Once clicked, each self care practice has a short description and asks the reader to name specific ways they can use that self care practice. NOTE: The last self-care practice, “Chat with your community on Q Chat Space,” does not have a question and is not available 24/7, so students should not choose that one at this time. Still, they can read it and become aware that it exists. 5. Once students have identified one self-care practice, <u>pair</u> them up to <u>share</u> which one they picked and why, as well as their answers to the questions about how they might specifically move forward. If time permits, students can work to create a plan or even begin their self-care work. 	Entire group, individual reflection, and partner work

Time	Activity	Description	Group Configuration
5 min	Creating New Habits	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Say: "In this unit, we have begun to explore the many resources that imi guide provides for feeling empowered, building communities, managing our stress, and practicing self care. To formalize this work, we will try and choose a creative self care practice and implement it into our daily routines."</i> 2. <i>Navigate to imi guide - Coping with stress through expression and creativity on your device and have students do the same.</i> 3. <i>Instruct</i> students to choose one of the four expressive options listed on the page: keep a mood journal, keep an affirmation journal, draw, or express yourself through music. 4. <i>Say: "Research shows that it takes two weeks to build a new habit. With that in mind, I encourage you to commit to this practice every day for the next [amount of time - depending on your schedule]. When we come back together as a group, we will share our experiences and have a final discussion about imi."</i> 5. <i>Encourage</i> students to seek your support if needed as they work on building new habits. <i>Say: "As we've learned, our community is stronger together!"</i> 	Entire group

Culminating Activity

<p>Total Time</p>	<p>30-45 min</p>
<p>Materials Needed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students should come prepared with evidence of their work in one of the four expressive options from imi guide - Coping with stress through expression and creativity that were introduced in the final lesson. NOTE: Students should be made aware that they will not need to share their work with their peers if they are not comfortable doing so. This last activity is about reflecting on the process more than sharing their products.
<p>Community Agreements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Welcome</u> students to the space and <u>ask</u> a student to review group agreements that have been established.
<p>Overview & Activity</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Revisit</u> Maslow's Hierarchy of needs. <u>Say</u>: "In this unit, we have been introduced to the many resources that imi guide provides, exploring activities related to stress, queerness, stigma, and gender. Where in Maslow's Hierarchy do you feel these activities fit best?" <u>Organize</u> students into small groups. <u>Ask</u> groups to mark where on the hierarchy each of the activities we did falls. Groups may choose to label with numbers that correspond to our five lessons below. <u>Ask</u> groups to come to a consensus as much as possible. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drawing Your Gender Journey Stress & Strategies Mapping & Finding Community Understanding Internalized Stigma Coping Skills & Self-Care <p>NOTE: Certain activities may fall in more than one level. This is where the collaborative discussion portion of this comes in.</p> <u>Debrief</u>: Lead the groups in a share-out and reflective decision. See how much the groups agree with each other. Questions to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Was it easy to come to a consensus as a group?</i> <i>Which categories fit into more than one level on the hierarchy? Why?</i> <i>Try and reflect back on where you placed yourself on the hierarchy at the beginning of this unit. Has that shifted at all since we began this work?</i> <i>How will committing to this work help you move up the hierarchy?</i> <u>Debrief: Close out</u> with a larger discussion about the unit as a whole. This may include volunteers sharing elements of their expressive work from the last lesson. Questions to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>What was your experience reflecting on your gender, identity, and support systems during this unit?</i> <i>Were certain activities more challenging than others? Why?</i> <i>How much success have you had in using your creative expression tools and building this positive habit?</i> <i>What support do you need as you continue to build confidence in your own skin and develop strategies for managing stress?</i> <i>How likely are you to recommend imi and its resources to other young people? Why?</i> <i>Do you have any questions?</i> <u>Say</u>: "There are many other resources on imi that you can continue to utilize on your own. We encourage you to do so, and to share this web app with others who may benefit from it. Thank you for your participation in this learning and your engagement in this process of personal growth. You should be proud of yourselves."



About the Creators

imi was created through a collaboration of LGBTQ+ organizations - including [Centerlink](#), [Hopelab](#), and [It Gets Better](#) - and hundreds of LGBTQ+ young people from across the country. It's a tool for LGBTQ+ teens, by LGBTQ+ teens and their allies. Follow imi on [Instagram](#) and on [TikTok](#).

[CenterLink](#) assists over 300 newly forming community centers and existing LGBTQ centers through networking opportunities for center leaders, peer-based technical assistance and training, and a variety of capacity building services. Find an LGBTQ community center near you using the [CenterLink directory](#).

[Hopelab](#) is a social innovation lab and impact investor, advancing solutions that support, affirm, and empower young people.

[It Gets Better](#) is a nonprofit organization on a mission to uplift, empower, and connect LGBTQ+ youth around the globe.

Additional Resources

We hope you enjoyed this EduGuide and the activities and resources it presented. This is part of a growing portfolio of materials that help ensure that the uplifting stories crafted and collected by It Gets Better reach LGBTQ+ youth wherever learning takes place. You can help make our EduGuides even better by offering your feedback at itgetsbetter.org/EduFeedback.

Learn more at itgetsbetter.org/education, and for inquiries, email us at education@itgetsbetter.org.

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