

Teacher's Guide

The social and political struggle for LGBTQ+ rights has historically overlapped with the history of psychology. Psychology has shaped and been shaped by changing ideas about sexuality and gender since the nineteenth century. **The Archives of the History of American Psychology** at the **Cummings Center for the History of Psychology** houses numerous archival materials relating to this history. Many of these materials are publicly available in the online exhibit [*A Clockwork Lavender: Sexology, Psychology, and the LGBTQ+ Community*](#).

The following projects are intended for high school and undergraduate college classrooms to help your students explore the history of psychology and the LGBTQ+ community and sociocultural contexts of scientific inquiry. They are to be used in combination with the contents of the *Clockwork Lavender* online exhibit.

A Clockwork Lavender: Sexology, Psychology, and the LGBTQ+ Community

Level: high school, undergraduate college students

Time: 20 minutes (in class); 60-75 minutes (independent work)

Objectives: By the end of this activity, students will:

1. have a general understanding of how psychology's view of sexual orientation and gender identity has changed historically
2. have a general understanding of how sociocultural characteristics and historical context influence scientific inquiry
3. have a general understanding of how psychology has been used to facilitate or restrict social change related to discrimination and minority groups

These objectives contribute to outcomes 1.2C, 1.3A, 2.5a, 3.3A, 3.3B, and 3.3c of the [APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major, Version 2.0](#) and Sociocultural Diversity Standards 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.6 of the [APA National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula](#).

BEFORE the exhibit [5 minutes]

Ask your students what they know about the history of the LGBTQ+ community. How do they think this history relates to psychology?

DURING the exhibit [60-75 minutes]

Students will independently open and read through the full *Clockwork Lavender* exhibit at uakron.edu/chp/education/a-clockwork-lavender. While navigating through the exhibit, students

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will complete the scavenger hunt activity (*Activities*, pages 1-2) and the critical thinking prompts (*Activities*, pages 3-7). An answer sheet for both is included on the following pages.

AFTER the exhibit [15 minutes]

Initiate an open discussion with your students with the following questions:

KNOW: What did you learn from the exhibit? Is there anything that stood out to you as surprising?

FEEL/UNDERSTAND: What do you think it was like to be a member of the LGBTQ+ community when these identities were considered diagnosable illnesses? How did psychology impact these individuals' lives?

APPLY: What led to change in psychology's treatment of LGBTQ+ people? How do society and culture impact science? How does science impact society and culture?

Answer Sheet

SCAVENGER HUNT

1: Who wrote the first English textbook devoted specifically to homosexuality?

Havelock Ellis.

2: Who founded the *Institut für Sexualwissenschaft* (Institute for Sexual Research)?

Magnus Hirschfeld

3: For what purpose was *Psychopathia Sexualis* originally written?

Psychopathia Sexualis was originally written as a legal resource for criminal cases involving sexual behavior.

4: Which psychologist tried to disprove the idea of homosexuality as a symptom or indicator of other psychological disorders?

Evelyn Hooker

5: Who was Christine Jorgensen?

Christine Jorgensen was a transgender woman who rose to celebrity status in the United States and helped to bring mainstream attention to transgender identities.

6: Why was the 1968 publication of the *DSM-II* controversial?

The publication of the DSM-II was controversial because the diagnosis of homosexuality remained intact, despite decades of research disputing it.



7: Who was John E. Fryer?

John E. Fryer was a psychiatrist who concealed his identity to speak openly as a gay man at a 1972 American Psychiatric Association panel on homosexuality.

CRITICAL THINKING PROMPTS

How did sexologists like Richard von Krafft-Ebing and Havelock Ellis change the way homosexuality was understood? Do you think that their work had a positive impact on the rights of LGBTQ+ people?

Student answers should include the fact that Krafft-Ebing reframed homosexuality as a diagnosable, pathological form of behavior rather than a criminal act. Students may note that Ellis studied homosexuality as “sexual inversion” and that this model resembled modern ideas about transgender identity. They may also note that Ellis described homosexuality as common in the natural world and studied non-criminal cases.

Students may respond that these sexologists had a positive impact because they opposed the criminalization of homosexuality, generated awareness and representation of LGBTQ+ experiences, and distanced those identities from legal and criminal definitions. Alternatively, students may respond that these sexologists had a negative impact because they described homosexuality as abnormal, pathologized LGBTQ+ people, and in some cases linked homosexuality to social degeneration and national decline.



Why do you think Mr. Lin and others like him sought treatment for their sexual orientation or gender identity? How did society and the fields of psychiatry and psychology contribute to their decision to seek treatment?

Students may reference a variety of factors that could lead LGBTQ+ people to seek treatment. These may include social stigma and the loss of personal identity related to “coming out,” a lack of role models or positive representation of LGBTQ+ people in society and culture, and a desire to be “normal.”

Students should note the view, popular in psychology, that homosexuality was a disease. They may discuss the variety of conversion therapy methods that were used to “treat” homosexuality, including talk therapy, electro-convulsive shock therapy, hormone therapy, sterilization, and lobotomy. They may note that these therapies seemed to promise a path to normalcy for many LGBTQ+ individuals.

What qualifications did Alfred Kinsey look for when hiring field interviewers? Reflect on what these qualifications might tell us about sexuality and sex research in the 1940s.

Students should write about the requirement that researchers be able “to look at any and every type of sexual behavior objectively” without passing moral or social judgement. They may also reference the need for researchers to be trustworthy, able to meet with people “of all social levels,” and unafraid of sex. They may notice that happily married researchers in their 30s and 40s were preferred, particularly those with clinical or institutional experience

Students may come to a variety of conclusions based on these facts. They should come away recognizing the taboo nature of non-normative sexualities in the 1940s and the



difficulty that was expected in getting research subjects to discuss their sexual experiences honestly. They may note that, because sexual minorities sometimes faced institutionalization for their desires, researchers with institutional experience may have had more experience working with these minorities. They may also draw the conclusion that married heterosexual researchers were seen as effective neutral observers of sexual difference.

In your own words, describe Evelyn Hooker's study on homosexuality. What was the result of this study? What was Hooker's own view of homosexuality, and how did she prevent her beliefs from impacting the results?

Students should explain in their own words that Evelyn Hooker recruited gay and straight men of equal intelligence and gave them a series of psychological tests. Results from these tests were then given to experts who could not tell the difference between the gay and straight men based on their test scores. She further found no correlation between homosexuality and psychological maladjustment. They may note that this was one of the first tests of its kind to include non-clinical gay test subjects.

Students should further recognize Hooker's positive view of gay men, citing them as functioning "extraordinarily well" and being "some of our most creative people." They should note that Hooker recruited men from gay rights organizations, rather than testing her own friends, in order to avoid contaminating the results. They may also note that other experts were brought on to conduct a blind analysis of the data.

Reflect on the social and medical needs of gay and transgender people over the course of the late 20th and early 21st century. What are the similarities and differences between how these two groups have been treated by mental health professionals?



Regarding similarities between the treatment of gay and transgender people, students may note that both groups have been historically stigmatized by psychiatric literature with, for example, stereotypes about their childhoods and upbringing. They may note that both groups have participated in liberation movements that called for the reform of established clinical and psychiatric practices.

Students should also recognize differences between the two groups, such as that many transgender people have had to rely on psychiatric and medical treatment to access gender affirming care. They may discuss how gay activists rejected the increasing visibility of gender affirming (or “sex change”) surgery in the 20th century. They should include reference to 21st century controversy around the “gender identity disorder” diagnosis, as the complete removal of this diagnosis threatened to cut off access to gender affirming healthcare for some transgender people. They may contrast this with diagnoses related to homosexuality, which most gay activists sought to have abolished entirely.

