Popular Modern Secular Narrative / Aspirations for Healthy Relationships

Life’s journey

Childhood Young adulthood – some exploration and “trying-out” settling down cohabiting maybe marriage hopefully happy ever after but divorce/ remarriage ok

Possibly procreation+ monogamy

This is expected to be the same trajectory for any sexual orientation or gender identity – Equal Marriage

One Religious Narrative / Aspirations for Healthy Relationships (possibly shared by some Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Sikhs and Christian people )

Life’s Journey

Childhood young adulthood – some exploration and “trying-out” settling down/cohabiting maybe marriage hopefully happy ever after but divorce/ remarriage ok

Monogamy Possibly procreation – possibly celibate

Same narrative as the Secular view and **with** the inclusivity of differing sexual orientations and gender identities. Include God’s unconditional love for all and of prayer and guidance. Liberal Christians may emphasise mercy and forgiveness and will have a historically contextual interpretation of sacred text.

**Globally these views are minority** religious views but are more evident in westernised countries such as Northern Europe, parts of USA, Canada, NZ etc. where they sit more easily alongside equality laws.

Postmodern postnarrative narrative

Childhood Fluid gender identity possible non-binary no fixed idea in lifetime of how to or whether to couple/ procreate Monogamy not the prerequisite of good relationships

Marriage /coupling not necessarily the ideal for happiness- polyamory accepted

Monogamy not the prerequisite of good relationships

Romantic Myth Narrative - perpetuated by Disney/ Hollywood / all Rom Coms

Life’s journey

Childhood singlehood yearning false starts the “one” arrives a “soul mate “ rescues all is fixed happily ever after

Tends to be a female fantasy narrative but pervades expectations of all in western society?

Another Religious Narrative for aspirational Healthy Human Relationships – held by some Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs etc



Life’s journey

Childhood Young Adulthood observing and discerning Marriage Hopefully happy ever after some allowing Divorce and re-marriage

Maybe dating No sex maybe arranged marriage celibacy as a positive option(RC) some not easily (RC)

This interpretation does **not** perceive same-sex relationships as “ordered” and part of God’s highest plan for humanity. They will be prayerful and depend on holy text for guidance and that of the religious leaders. They are less likely to be welcoming of transgender people on the whole. They will often have a literal interpretation of sacred text. This is **globally the majority** religious belief – sometimes not all members will adhere to all teachings but will remain in the tradition.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Coupling narratives you have seen and been aware of? Have they matched any of the narratives above?
2. Do you think people’s narratives change over time? What kinds of things make people change their narratives?
3. Of the children/ young people in your school - what narratives most influence them?
4. Of the parents of the children/ young people in your school - what narratives predominate?
5. How might this affect the way you teach relationships in your school?
6. Do you think there are any shared guidelines that you need as staff regarding teacher bias, when teaching relationships education ?