

#Tool 10



Key elements for promoting critical thinking

Objective

The purpose of this tool is to identify the key elements of critical thinking and to facilitate their incorporation into the design of anti-rumours initiatives relating to diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions and sex characteristics. It includes an evaluation matrix.

How to use the tool

- As a guide to identifying and selecting the dimensions of critical thinking to promote through anti-rumours initiatives.
- As a reference for reviewing or strengthening existing initiatives with a view to reinforcing the promotion of critical thinking.
- The evaluation matrix can be used both during the design phase and upon completion of an anti-rumours initiative to assess the extent to which it incorporates elements that foster the development of critical thinking.

Recommendations

- ✦ Use participatory methods such as debates, group discussions and role-play.
- ✦ Create environments where people feel safe to express their opinions.
- ✦ Combine qualitative and quantitative methods to measure changes in critical thinking skills in everyday situations.

1. Key elements for promoting critical thinking

Objective	What does it involve?
Self-awareness and reflection	▪ Encouraging people to recognise their own biases, privileges, lived experiences and positions towards SOGIESC issues, even within the LGBTIQ community itself. ▪ To encourage reflection on how experiences, education and environment influence perceptions on SOGIESC issues. ▪ To reflect on how social stereotypes, gender norms and cis-hetero-endosex normativity can influence beliefs, expectations and behaviours.
Open-mindedness	▪ Encouraging a willingness to consider different perspectives, including those that challenge one's own beliefs about SOGIESC, and question preconceived ideas. ▪ To foster empathy and an understanding that experiences relating to diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions and sex characteristics are varied and shaped by multiple personal, social and cultural factors. ▪ Recognising that many perceptions of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions and sex characteristics are shaped by a lack of knowledge, historical invisibility or the absence of diverse role models.
Questioning and inquiry	▪ Learning to formulate profound and reflective questions that enable an analysis of the rationale behind anti-LGBTIQ statements, beliefs, rumours or hate speech. ▪ Encourage curiosity, fostering the pursuit of rigorous information rather than accepting unsubstantiated claims. ▪ Explore the origins of certain LGBTIQ-phobic beliefs, discourses or narratives, analysing how they are constructed, who disseminates them and what effects they have on LGBTIQ people.
Informed understanding of SOGIESC diversity	▪ To reinforce basic knowledge of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions and sex characteristics as a foundation for critically analysing prejudices, rumours, misinformation, and disinformation. ▪ To facilitate a contextualised understanding of LGBTIQ history, the processes of discrimination and resistance, advances in rights, and the current realities that affect the communities. ▪ To highlight role models and the social, cultural and scientific contributions of LGBTIQ people, helping to challenge stereotypes and broaden frameworks for understanding human diversity. ▪ To advance knowledge of the legal and human rights-related

Objective	What does it involve?
	framework concerning equality, non-discrimination and the protection of LGBTIQ people.
Evidence-based reasoning	▪ To critically evaluate sources of information, distinguishing between credible, well-founded data and biased information. ▪ Support fact-checking as standard practice when confronted with rumours, stereotypes, mis- or dis-information or anti-rights narratives relating to LGBTIQ people. ▪ Cross-check claims against specialist sources, rigorous research and authoritative bodies on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics, and human rights.
Logical analysis	▪ Encourage the assessment of the validity of arguments by identifying logical fallacies such as: “children need a mother and a father” or “sex is binary”. ▪ Teach the structure of sound arguments and how to construct them to counter prejudiced or misinformed beliefs.
Taking a broader perspective	▪ Encourage activities that help participants view a SOGIESC issue from the perspective of other people or groups affected by stereotypes: e.g. different family forms. ▪ Use role-play, personal stories or case studies to help understand other people’s experiences and reflect critically.
Scepticism towards generalisations	▪ Develop the habit of questioning broad statements, especially those that stereotype or homogenise. ▪ Promote a nuanced understanding of identity, emphasising diversity within groups, as well as power dynamics, and the various types of discrimination and realities.
Collaborative dialogue	▪ Encourage respectful and productive discussions that allow for the exchange of differing viewpoints on diversity. ▪ Teach the importance of listening and engaging in dialogue without hostility, whilst maintaining a critical stance towards misinformation and exclusionary narratives.

2. Evaluation matrix

This evaluation asks you to **rate different aspects of the design of an action** according to their level of fulfilment and intensity. For each aspect, select a score from **1 to 5**, where **1 indicates a low level of fulfilment or intensity and 5 indicates the highest level**. The scores should reflect the extent to which each aspect is incorporated into the design of the action.

Dimension of the initiative	1	2	3	4	5	Evidence or examples present in the initiative
Promotes self-awareness and reflection on prejudices, biases and stereotypes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Encourages openness to different perspectives	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Encourages critical thinking and asking questions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Improves understanding of SOGIESC diversity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Teaches different actors to cross-check information and use evidence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Encourages critical analysis of arguments and narratives	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Enables to understand other experiences and perspectives	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Challenges stereotypes and prejudices	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Creates opportunities for respectful dialogue and active listening	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union and the Council of Europe. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the author(s). Views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union or the Council of Europe.

This document was drafted in the framework of the EU/CoE joint project “Combating anti-LGBTIQ violence and hate speech and strengthening awareness raising and fact-based narratives about LGBTIQ persons”.

The reproduction of extracts (up to 500 words) is authorised, except for commercial purposes, as long as the integrity of the text is preserved, the excerpt is not used out of context, does not provide incomplete information or does not otherwise mislead the reader as to the nature, scope or content of the text.

The source text must always be acknowledged as follows “© Council of Europe, 2026. All rights reserved. Licensed to the European Union under conditions”. All other requests concerning the reproduction/translation of all or part of the document should be addressed to the Publications and Visual Identity Division, Council of Europe (F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex or publishing@coe.int).

All other correspondence concerning this document should be addressed to the Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics Unit of the Council of Europe’s Equal rights and Hate Prevention Division, Council of Europe, F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex, E-mail: sogi@coe.int

This publication has not been copyedited by the PVID Editorial Unit to correct typographical and grammatical errors.

Cover and layout: Diversit

© Council of Europe, October 2026. All rights reserved. Licensed to the European Union under conditions.