



EXPLAINED: Abortion Research & Policy Abortion on Screen

Learning Objectives: By the end of the session, learners will be able to:

- Describe how misrepresentations of abortion on screen impact stigma and attitudes towards abortion.

Video Lecture:



Suggested Readings:

- Sisson G, Kimport K. "Depicting abortion access on American television, 2005-2015." *Feminism and Psychology*. [in press]
- Sisson G, Kimport K. "[Doctors and Witches, Conscience and Violence: Abortion Provision on American Television.](#)" *Perspect Sex Reprod Health*. 2016;48(4):161-8.
- Sisson G, Kimport K. "[Telling stories about abortion: abortion-related plots in American film and television, 1916-2013.](#)" *Contraception*. 2014;89(5):413-8.
- Sisson G, Kimport K. "[Facts and fictions: Characters seeking abortion on American television, 2005-2014.](#)" *Contraception*. 2016;93(5):446-51.



Lesson Plan in a Flipped Classroom Setting

EXPLAINED: Abortion on Screen

Using a flipped classroom model, this lesson plan will use the video lecture and additional resources to provide learners with an engaging learning environment. Here's [how to use this course in a "flipped- classroom"](#) at your own institution.

Teaching Points

- Abortion has been depicted regularly in film and television over the last 100 years.
- The portrayal of the safety of abortion on television vastly misrepresents the true nature of the procedure (0.001% mortality rate compared to 10% on screen).
- Characters on TV who get abortions are not representative of the women who get abortions in real life; on-screen they are wealthier, whiter and younger.
- Film and TV characters accessing abortion face fewer barriers to get abortion care than women in reality (parental consent, financial barriers, waiting periods, high costs, etc.)

Time Required

Total Time of Video Lectures: 10 minutes

Estimated Independent Prep Time Required by Learner: 30 minutes

Total Estimated Time Required for In-Classroom Activity: 30 minutes

Materials Required and Instructor Preparation

- Learners will need internet access with enough bandwidth to view streaming videos.
- The instructor should print copies of the small group activity quiz (page 4-5) included in this packet.

Activity

Independent Preparation (conducted by learner before in-classroom activity)

- Learners should independently view the video lecture.
- Learners may be assigned any of the relevant readings (determined by instructor's desired learner work-load)



as outlined in the “Suggested Readings” section on page 1.

In-Classroom Activity (Small Group Activity)

- Divide the classroom into small groups and distribute the small group activity quiz (page 4-5).
- Instruct learners spend 10 minutes and work together to answer the questions provided.
- At the end of this activity, convene the class. Present the questions on the quiz and have learners share their answers.
- Write the correct answers on the board for the class to see. Collect each handout from learners.
 - The instructor can reference the answer sheet on page 6-7.



Names

EXPLAINED: Abortion on Screen

In your group, answer the following questions referencing the video lecture assigned before class. Be prepared to turn in this handout at the end of class.

Questions

1. ____ % of characters on screen die as a result of getting an abortion, however in real-life the abortion mortality rate is only ____%.
 - 15; 0.15
 - 10; 0.01
 - 10; 0.001

2. Characters who get abortions on TV are less likely to be portrayed as parents, ____% compared to ____ % in reality.
 - 30; 45
 - 15; 61
 - 25; 55

3. List three major barriers to accessing abortion that are **NOT** portrayed accurately on TV:
 - I.
 - II.
 - III.



Open-Ended Question:

Onscreen representations of women getting abortion erase the reality of the diverse group of people accessing this service. Explain how this has an impact on real life attitudes and perceptions of abortion.



Questions and Answers

EXPLAINED: Faith-Based Quiz Answer Sheet

Questions

1. ____ % of characters on screen die as a result of getting an abortion, however in real-life the abortion mortality rate is only ____%.
 - 15; 0.15
 - 10; 0.01
 - 10; 0.001

2. Characters who get abortions on TV are less likely to be portrayed as parents, ____% compared to ____ % in reality.
 - a. 30; 45
 - b. 15; 61
 - c. 25; 55

3. List three major barriers to accessing abortion that are **NOT** portrayed accurately on TV:
 - I. Steep costs
 - II. Long travel distances
 - III. Multi-day waiting periods
 - IV. Parental consent requirements
 - V. Lack of social support

Open-ended question:



VIDEO COMPANION GUIDE

Onscreen representations of women getting abortion erase the reality of the diverse group of people accessing this service. Explain how this has an impact on real life attitudes and perceptions of abortion.

Women who get abortions on TV are more likely to be whiter, wealthier, younger, and not already parents. This further stigmatizes women in communities that are not represented, because the general public doesn't "see" them getting abortions. This also creates hostile and less open space for women in these groups to talk about their experiences. Combined with the representation of abortion as "dangerous", and this portrayal creates an environment that may amplify support for policies that restrict abortion. Abortion restrictions affect low-income women of color more dramatically than any other group, making it harder for them to access the service, and if/when they do, limiting social support and understanding.