**Femininity and Masculinity**

**Lesson Plan adapted from:** [**http://www.pasaysnomore.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/PCADV\_HealthMasculinityActivities.pdf**](http://www.pasaysnomore.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/PCADV_HealthMasculinityActivities.pdf)

***Considerations***: What is the gender identity predominately in your group? What is the gender identity of mentors? Student/Mentor gender identity and sexual orientation may offer different lenses for discussion.

*Additional Gender Identity Background*: <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/sexual-orientation-gender/gender-gender-identity>

Goals

* Students will identify gender roles in society and limitations of these definitions
* Students will become aware of power and privilege of gender and inequality between men and women
* Students will investigate role of gender in written language

Pre-group preparation

* Copy “Gender Boxes” (one per participant)
* Copy “Male Privilege” and “Female Privilege” double-sided (one per participant)
* Copy “Gender-Free Nouns” ½ sheet for each student

Materials

* Group agreements and talking piece
* Pens or pencils, student folders
* Marker Board or Butcher Paper/Large Sticky Pad

*Icebreaker:* Pose pertinent questions to group.

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| Have you ever been told to “act like a man”?   * If yes, think about how it made you feel.   Have you heard men or boys being told to “act like a man”?   * Why do you think people say this to men or boys? | Have you ever been told to “act like a woman”?   * If yes, think about how it made you feel.   Have you ever heard other women or girls being told to “act like a woman”?   * Why do you think people say this to women and girls? |

**Activity 1 – The Value of Education (Handouts: See end of lesson)**

**Act like a Lady/Act like a Man**

*Adapted from Source: https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/files/Exercise-2-Act-like-a-Man-Act-like-a-Lady.pdf*

1. Separate mentor group by gender to think about gender expectations. You will then bring them back together to have a group conversation.
2. Distribute ‘Gender Boxes’ (see below). Ask each group to think what messages they receive that tell them what it means to *Act Like a Lady* or *Act Like a Man* in the following areas: Clothing, Physical Appearance, Hobbies/Toys, Colors, Hanging Out, Dating/relationships, Education, Careers/Professions
3. Lead a Discussion with some/all the questions on the bottom of the Handout ‘Gender Boxes’
4. Point out that although some people seem to fit into gender boxes (norms/stereotypes) more than others, almost everyone has times or parts of themselves that are outside the box. Ask student partners to share one time they felt like they were “inside the box” and one time they felt like they were “outside the box” for their gender. Ask for volunteers to share with the group. <https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/what-are-gender-stereotypes>
5. Discuss Being Outside the Box…(Adapted from source: https://www.pcc.edu/resources/illumination/documents/gender-role-boxes-glbtq-and-sexism-exercise.pdf)

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| **What are names applied to persons outside the box?** Ex: Wimp, fag, queer, pussy, gay  \*Note: These words are important to say and to write down, but ask participants to answer this question calmly and respectfully as possible.  **What things happen physically to people outside the box?**  Ex: Fights, beat up, harassed, teased, abused, ignored | **What are names applied to persons outside the box?** Ex: Dyke, tomboy, slut, ho, whore, lesbian  \*Note: These words are important to say and to write down, but ask participants to answer this question calmly and respectfully as possible.  What things happen physically to people outside the **box?**  Ex: Harassed, abused, ignored, raped, bad reputation |

1. Stereotypes of the other Gender. Ask both groups to share about the opposite gender.

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| **Ask Boys…**  How are women supposed to be different from men? - nicer, weaker, more gossip  What feelings is a "real woman" supposed to have?- fear, sadness, low self-esteem  How do "real women" express their feelings?- crying, screaming, hysteria  How are "real women" supposed to act sexually?- follow the man, don't sleep around | **Ask Girls…**  How are men supposed to be different from women? - stronger, tougher, in control  What feelings is a "real man" supposed to have?- anger, superiority, confidence  How do "real men" express their feelings?- yelling, fighting, silence  How are "real men" supposed to act sexually?- aggressive, dominant, with women |

***Other Gender Stereotypes: (For Additional Discussion***

**Male-Masculinity**

* Strong
* Tough
* In control
* Does not back down
* Brave/courageous
* Does not cry
* Provider
* Aggressive
* Violent
* Decision maker
* Has had multiple sex partners (female only)
* Is always ready for sex
* Drinks and/or smokes
* Needs to prove he is heterosexual
* Is self-reliant/independent
* Takes risks

**Female-Femininity**

* Weaker/ need to be protected
* Passive/submissive
* Must be attractive/sexy but not too sexy
* Must dress “respectably”
* Must care/nurture her marriage/relationship
* Must please her partner sexually
* Caregiver (for children, partner and sick relatives)
* Homemaker (responsible for the house work/cooking)
* Must obey husband
* Must produce children (in some cases, male children)

*Source: Act Like a Woman https://www.engenderhealth.org/pubs/gender/gender-toolkit/act-like-a-man-act-like-a-woman.html*

**Activity 2: Male and Female Privilege Checklists**

-Distribute checklists (below) to students by gender identity.

-Have students take 5 minutes in silence to mark the checklist items which apply to them. *Optional: You can distribute both lists to all students so students can review – discuss male list has more privileges. Do they agree?*

-Discuss as whole group what this means? Does race play a role? Sexual orientation?

**Activity 3: “Creating Gender-Free Nouns”** Source: <https://msw.usc.edu/mswusc-blog/diversity-workshop-guide-to-discussing-identity-power-and-privilege/#icebreaker>

The objective of this activity is to reconsider male-gendered nouns that we consider “generic.” Generating gender-free nouns and pronouns will help participants incorporate more inclusive language in their daily speech and writing.

* 1. Discuss as whole group the terms “gender” and “sexuality” agree on a common definition.
  2. Break participants into small groups and distribute handout ‘Gender-Free Nouns’
  3. Convert Suffixes of the nouns into gender-free, inclusive terms by changing the noun root word or substituting a non-gender specific root word from another language. Tell students since male endings are so pervasive, it is OK to invent new words by replacing the endings of existing words with something non-gendered.

Discussion Questions: How do the changes in the words’ structures change the connotation? How does familiarity affect our perception of a word’s correctness? For example, do we think the words “teachman” or “runman” are more correct than “teacher” or “runner”?

Gender Boxes

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Act like a Lady** | **Act like a Man** |
| Clothing: | Clothing: |
| Physical Appearance: | Physical Appearance: |
| Hobbies/Toys: | Hobbies/Toys: |
| Hanging Out with Friends: | Hanging Out with Friends: |
| Dating Relationships/Sex: | Dating Relationships/Sex: |
| Education: | Education: |
| Careers/Profession: | Careers/Profession: |

***Discussion Questions:***

Who taught you everything that’s in the box?

What were you glad or upset about to see in the box?

How do the items in these boxes affect relationships across genders?

What were some of the assumptions we made about sexual orientation? What do heterosexism and/or homophobia have to do with the boxes?

What do you want to tell people of your gender?

What do you want to tell people who are not your gender?

The Male Privilege Checklist *(Source: http://ae.gov.sk.ca/evergreen/socialsciences/appendixc/portion02.shtml)*

1. My odds of being hired for a job, when competing against female applicants, are probably skewed in my favor. The more prestigious the job, the larger the odds are skewed.

2. I can be confident that my co-workers won't think I got my job because of my sex - even though that might be true.

3. If I am never promoted, it's not because of my sex.

4. If I fail in my job or career, I can feel sure this won't be seen as a black mark against my entire sex's capabilities.

5. The odds of my encountering sexual harassment on the job are so low as to be negligible.

6. If I do the same task as a woman, and if the measurement is at all subjective, chances are people will think I did a better job.

7. If I'm a teen or adult, and if I can stay out of prison, my odds of being raped are so low as to be negligible.

8. I am not taught to fear walking alone after dark in average public spaces.

9. If I choose not to have children, my masculinity will not be called into question.

10. If I have children but do not provide primary care for them, my masculinity will not be called into question.

11. If I have children and provide primary care for them, I'll be praised for extraordinary parenting if I'm even marginally competent.

12. If I have children and pursue a career, no one will think I'm selfish for not staying at home.

13. If I seek political office, my relationship with my children, or who I hire to take care of them, will probably not be scrutinized by the press.

14. Chances are my elected representatives are mostly people of my own sex. The more prestigious and powerful the elected position, the more likely this is to be true.

15. I can be somewhat sure that if I ask to see "the person in charge," I will face a person of my own sex. The higher-up in the organization the person is, the surer I can be.

16. As a child, chances are I was encouraged to be more active and outgoing than my sisters.

17. As a child, I could choose from an almost infinite variety of children's media featuring positive, active, non-stereotyped heroes of my own sex. I never had to look for it; male heroes were the default.

18. As a child, chances are I got more teacher attention than girls who raised their hands just as often.

19. If my day, week or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether or not it has sexist overtones.

20. I can turn on the television or glance at the front page of the newspaper and see people of my own sex widely represented, every day, without exception.

21. If I'm careless with my financial affairs it won't be attributed to my sex.

22. If I'm careless with my driving it won't be attributed to my sex.

23. I can speak in public to a large group without putting my sex on trial.

24. If I have sex with a lot of people, it won't make me an object of contempt or derision.

25. There are value-neutral clothing choices available to me; it is possible for me to choose clothing that doesn't send any particular message to the world.

26. My wardrobe and grooming are relatively cheap and consume little time.

27. If I buy a new car, chances are I'll be offered a better price than a woman buying the same car.

28. If I'm not conventionally attractive, the disadvantages are relatively small and easy to ignore.

29. I can be loud with no fear of being called a shrew. I can be aggressive with no fear of being called a bitch.

30. I can ask for legal protection from violence that happens mostly to men without being seen as a selfish special interest, since that kind of violence is called "crime" and is a general social concern. (Violence that happens mostly to women is usually called "domestic violence" or "acquaintance rape," and is seen as a special interest issue.)

31. I can be confident that the ordinary language of day-to-day existence will always include my sex. "All men are created equal…," mailman, chairman, freshman, he.

32. My ability to make important decisions and my capability in general will never be questioned depending on what time of the month it is.

33. I will never be expected to change my name upon marriage or questioned if I don't change my name.

34. The decision to hire me will never be based on assumptions about whether or not I might choose to have a family sometime soon.

35. Every major religion in the world is led primarily by people of my own sex. Even God, in most major religions, is usually pictured as being male.

36. Most major religions argue that I should be the head of my household, while my wife and children should be subservient to me.

37. If I have a wife or girlfriend, chances are we'll divide up household chores so that she does most of the labor, and in particular the most repetitive and unrewarding tasks.

38. If I have children with a wife or girlfriend, chances are she'll do most of the childrearing, and in particular the most dirty, repetitive and unrewarding parts of childrearing.

39. If I have children with a wife or girlfriend, and it turns out that one of us needs to make career sacrifices to raise the kids, chances are we'll both assume the career sacrificed should be hers.

40. Magazines, billboards, television, movies, pornography, and virtually all of media is filled with images of scantily-clad women intended to appeal to me sexually. Such images of men exist, but are much rarer.

41. I am not expected to spend my entire life 20-40 pounds underweight.

42. If I am heterosexual, it's incredibly unlikely that I'll ever be beaten up by a spouse or lover.

43. I have the privilege of being unaware of my male privilege.

# Female Privilege Checklist *Adapted Source: www.feministcritics.org/blog/2008/06/08/female-privilege/*

**As a woman …**

1. I have a much lower chance of being murdered than a man.  
2. I have a much lower chance of being driven to successfully commit suicide than a man.  
3. I have a lower chance of being a victim of a violent assault than a man.  
4. I have probably been taught that it is acceptable to cry.  
5. I will probably live longer than the average man.  
6. Most people in society probably will not see my overall worthiness as a person being exclusively tied to how high up in the hierarchy I rise.  
7. I have a much better chance of being considered to be a worthy mate for someone, even if I’m unemployed with little money, than a man.  
8. I am given much greater latitude to form close, intimate friendships than a man is.  
9. My chance of suffering a work-related injury or illness is significantly lower than a man’s.  
10. My chance of being killed on the job is a tiny fraction of a man’s.  
11. If I shy away from fights, it is unlikely that this will damage my standing in my peer group or call into question my worthiness as a sex partner.  
12. I am not generally expected to be capable of violence. If I lack this capacity, this will generally not be seen as a damning personal deficiency.  
13. If I was born in North America since WWII, I can be almost certain that my genitals were not mutilated soon after birth, without anesthesia.  
14. If I attempt to hug a friend in joy, it’s much less likely that my friend will wonder about my sexuality or pull away in unease.  
15. If I seek a hug in solace from a close friend, I’ll have much less concern about how my friend will interpret the gesture or whether my worthiness as a member of my gender will be called into question.  
16. I generally am not compelled by the rules of my sex to wear emotional armor in interactions with most people.  
17. I am frequently the emotional center of my family.  
18. I am allowed to wear clothes that signify ‘vulnerability’, ‘playful openness’, and ’softness’.  
19. I am allowed to BE vulnerable, playful, and soft without calling my worthiness as a human being into question.  
20. If I interact with other people’s children — particularly people I don’t know very well — I do not have to worry much about the interaction being misinterpreted.  
21. If I have trouble accommodating to some aspects of gender demands, I have a much greater chance than a man does of having a sympathetic audience to discuss the unreasonableness of the demand, and a much lower chance that this failure to accommodate will be seen as signifying my fundamental inadequacy as a member of my gender.  
22. I am less likely to be shamed for being sexually inactive than a man.  
23. From my late teens through menopause, for most levels of sexual attractiveness, it is easier for me to find a sex partner at my attractiveness level than it is for a man.  
24. My role in my child’s life is generally seen as more important than the child’s father’s role.

Gender-Free Nouns

Source: <https://msw.usc.edu/mswusc-blog/diversity-workshop-guide-to-discussing-identity-power-and-privilege/#icebreaker>

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **NOUN + MALE SUFFIX** | **VERB + "-ER" SUFFIX** | **NOUN + MALE SUFFIX** | **VERB + "-ER" SUFFIX** |
| Ex: Airmen | Fliers, pilots | Ex: Statesman | Orator, speaker |
| Sportsman |  | Craftsman |  |
| Stableboy |  | Mailman |  |
| Policemen |  | Layman |  |
| Lineman |  | Foreman |  |
| Workmen |  | Salesman |  |
| Repairman |  | Crewmen |  |
| Lumbermen |  | Chairman |  |
| Spokesman |  | Busboy |  |

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| Policemen |  | Layman |  |
| Lineman |  | Foreman |  |
| Workmen |  | Salesman |  |
| Repairman |  | Crewmen |  |
| Lumbermen |  | Chairman |  |
| Spokesman |  | Busboy |  |