

What do you mean when you say gender?

Learning objectives

- Know the difference between sex and gender
- Understand how gender is socially constructed and socialized, begin to see implicit or internalized bias
- Begin to see the impact on access to resources and power of socially constructed gender roles and the division of labor

Time

This is designed as a 45-minute pre-recorded session appropriate for self-paced learning.

Facilitated learning in real-time

The session script and PowerPoint slide deck, or the pre-recorded session, can also be used as standardized content for use real-time (synchronous) facilitation.

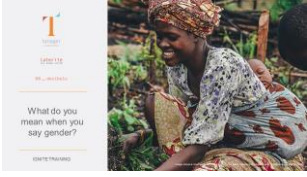


When delivering this content in a facilitated, real-time mode—either remotely or in-person—plan to double the time (90 minutes) and design the learning session with experiential learning activities to make the session more interactive. You can find ideas for activities in the compendium guidance.

Using the session talking points

REMINDER: The session notes / talking points are meant as a guide and should not be read verbatim. You can—and should—customize the talking points to suit your facilitation style. You will see notation throughout these notes, including directions to you, the facilitator, that are not meant to be shared with the learners. These are in square brackets [like this]. Key

concepts are in **bold text**. Learning activities are in sections with grey background, and are in blue text.

Notes / talking points

Slide	Notes / talking points
	<p>Welcome!</p> <p>[Do introductions]</p>
	<p>This session will introduce topics of sex, gender, gender socialization, gender bias and gender roles.</p> <p>We will work on differentiating between the concepts of gender and sex, and build understanding for what it means for something to be socially constructed. We will also talk about how most people expect men and women to adhere to our ideas about gender, and how we react when people do not stick to those notions. Finally, we will look at how gender plays out in our culture through gender roles and how we divide work, which also has implications for who has access to resources and power.</p>
	<p>Look at the image. Which of the frogs do you think are male or female?</p> <p>Many people will say they think the frog on the right is a “male” frog because it is showing traits that they associate with men and masculinity– bravery, protectiveness, aggression. Many people say that the frog on the left is a female frog because it portrays traits that they associate with women and femininity – being timid, modest, needing protection.</p> <p>However, if we look just at the frogs’ bodies in this picture, not at what they are doing, there are actually no visible differences between their physical bodies. There is no way to tell, from their physical biology, as to whether they are male or female.</p>

Sex
is different from
gender.

Many people will interpret the picture in this way because of our own cultural ideas about how a “male” or “female” might act, not whether the frogs have biological characteristics that make them male or female. We assume the frogs’ biological differences because we impose our own ideas about how this relates to what they are doing. Sharing a bed, using a bat, acting afraid, lead many people to assume one frog is male and one is female, though we don’t actually have information to indicate this.

These differences- in how we perceive and label people because of how they look and act, and how we label them based on their physiology and biology, highlights the difference between gender and sex. **Many people use the terms sex and gender interchangeably, but they are not the same thing.**



Sex
is the
classification of
people being
male or female
based on their
biological
traits.

Sex is the assignment and classification of people as male, female, intersex or another sex assigned at birth, often based on a combination of bodily characteristics and biological traits, most often genitalia, but also including chromosomes, hormones, and internal reproductive organs.



Gender refers to
cultural
attributions
(roles, behaviors,
etc.) based on
sex.

Gender refers to the roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for girls, boys, women, and men.

Traits, characteristics, actions and roles can be what we call “gendered.” This is when we associate these things as masculine or feminine or as being performed by a man or woman. This does not mean they are inherently masculine or feminine, just that they are associated that way, in that culture, at that time.

We might typically think of cooking as a feminine behavior or a woman’s role, for example. There is nothing different about a woman’s body that makes her more suited to cooking, indeed worldwide many men take on this role at home and professionally.

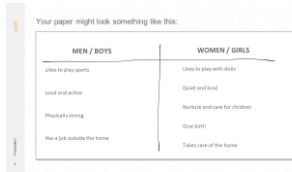
THINK
Think about
what traits you
ascribe to men
and women.



Think through common things you might think of as masculine or feminine.

Take a paper and divide it into two columns boys/men and girls/women. In each column write down a few ideas...

- For boys and girls, think about their activities. What sports do they do, what are their toys, what are their play scenarios, what chores do they do, what is their relationship to school/specific subjects?
- For men and women, think about what roles they have in the house, on the farm, at work, in the community.
- What are common things people say about boys? What are their traits? What are things that boys do? What about adult men?
- What are common things people say about girls? What are their traits? What are things that girls do? And adult women?

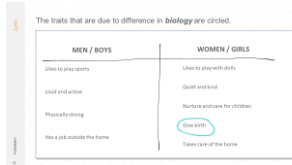


Your paper might look something like this.

Are these things due to a difference in biology?



Now that you have a few items in each column, take a look at your lists. Circle all of the traits that are due to a difference in biology.



Here is an example of what a list like this might look like:

As you can see, and as you perhaps see on your own list, there are many things that we think of as gendered, but not much is associated with our physical biology. Women can get pregnant and have children due to their reproductive organs- this is the only thing on this particular list that is a difference in sex.

For the other items, we can think of examples that show that these are not inherent differences between boys and girls, men and women. They are simply ideas that we have because of our ideas about gender. For example, many girls like to play sports too, and of course there are talented female athletes around the world. Girls are often given dolls to play with, perhaps more boys would play with dolls if given the chance!

Similarly, men can be very tender fathers who nurture and love their children, even without giving birth. Women also often work outside the home and can have incredible physical strength.

When we start to differentiate sex from gender, we can begin to see that most of the differences we attribute to boys and girls, men and women, are because of our notions of gender, not because of biology.



Gender is *socially constructed* which is to say: Gender is an idea that is created and accepted by the people in a society.

What is considered masculine or feminine is not inherent in our biology, but *created out of our social ideas about what we consider to be normal (norms)*.

Our ideas about gender change over time and from culture to culture.

These ideas shape much of our society and our daily lives, from what we wear, to our roles around the home, to our work outside the home. We'll talk more about that in the next module.

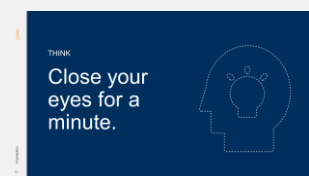
These things can be deeply ingrained in our culture, so they might be hard to recognize, but *nothing about them is determined by our biology*.



These ideas are then taught/learned and reinforced throughout our society—in our homes, in school, through our faith, in sports, in media, in the workplace.

This process is called gender socialization, it is how we are taught to behave in accordance to and expect the gender norms of our culture.

We are socialized from birth through our relationships and our social context.



Picture for a moment the head of a big company. Imagine this person getting home from a long day at work and sitting down to have a warm meal with their family.

Picture now a farmer going to a bank. The farmer has everything ready to get a loan to purchase a large new piece of farming equipment.

Now, open your eyes. In your pictures, were either of these people women?

Unconscious gender bias is our automatic associations based on gender.

Maybe they were! But many people would be picturing men.

This is because of our notions about gender, and our *unconscious* gender bias.

We have *automatic* associations about gender that feed into decision-making, enabling a quick assessment of an individual according to gender and gender stereotypes.

Unconscious gender bias is what makes us automatically associate certain things with men and masculinity, and others with women and femininity.

Unconscious gender bias can make it hard to go against **social norms**, or how we typically see and experience gender roles and traits.

Unconscious gender bias is the *unintentional and automatic* mental associations based on gender, coming from traditions, norms, values, culture, and experience.



Take a look at these images. What do you notice? What are women and men doing in this image?

Most people notice that the men in these pictures are doing tasks that are typically carried out by women. The men are doing something unexpected based on the cultural ideas of what is considered masculine.

How does this image make you feel? What does it make you think about?

This is not related to people's biology, the men in this image have not changed at all physically, but our cultural notions of gender.



It can feel strange at first to see a man doing something we think of as a woman typically doing, or a woman doing something a man typically does. This is not because it is bad or wrong, but because our ideas about gender are so deeply embedded in all aspects of our lives and created not just by our own (individual) ideas, but by the stories and images we hear and see in our culture.

Our hardwiring (our human neurology) gives us a strong preference for the expected. When things do not fit our expectations or norms, it causes us stress, even if only a little bit, and even if we do not consciously act differently.

This feeling can make it hard to go against our learned ideas about gender. It can keep us from imagining women getting loans or being the heads of companies. It can keep us from picturing men cooking dinner for their family.



One of the ways that gender and gender bias shows up in our culture and affects our daily lives is in the creation of gender roles.

Gender roles are based on the ideas of what men and women should do and are capable of doing. They include our ideas about the appropriate duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges for men and women.

Sometimes, people are more uncomfortable when men step into feminine roles or adopt feminine traits than when women adopt masculine roles or traits. This is often because women's roles are not as highly valued in society, and feminine traits are often seen as inferior to masculine traits.



Gender roles are NOT based on what men and women *can* do because of their biology (and associated physiology). Reminder: gender roles are socially constructed.

Examples of common misconceptions about gender roles:



Myth: Women should care for children because they are more nurturing.
Reality: Both men and women can be nurturing and are needed in children's lives



Myth: Men should be the top earners for their household and are responsible for taking care of their families
Reality: all adults in a household have important roles to play in providing for and taking care of other members



Myth: Men should always be strong and resilient and should not show too much emotion or sadness when things get hard.
Reality: men and women both have feelings, and it's healthy to express them no matter what your gender expression.



MYTH
Women should cook the food because they are better at food preparation.

REALITY
Men also make great cooks!

Myth: Women should cook the food because they are better at food preparation
Reality: men also make great cooks!

MYTH
Young girls should fetch water.

REALITY
Both boys and girls can help around the house in age-appropriate ways.



Myth: Young girls should fetch water.
Reality: both girls and boys can help around the house in age appropriate ways



Which of these gender myths have you experienced in your own life? Did you adhere to the myth? Did you go against the norm? How did it feel?



When we talk about gender, we often think of the many ways that gender limits women's role within society.

But *narrow gender roles are also limiting to men.*

Ideas about masculinity create strict and potentially very harmful norms about how men are supposed to act and express emotion, what they can do, and how they should relate to others.

Think, if men are always expected to be strong, they may feel greater shame, hide illness or pain, or not seek or receive help when they need it.

If men are expected to not show emotion, they may feel greater loneliness, be at risk of isolation, or express emotion as anger or violence.

When we discuss gender roles, we are talking about ideas about women (femininity) *and* men (masculinity), and how they relate to one another.



A prominent example, in a household, and in a society, there are many tasks to be done.

Assigning different tasks to different people for efficiency is called division of labor. Gender roles have become the dominant way that many cultures organize the division of labor, especially household labor.

Age is also a factor – younger people in the household have certain responsibilities too.

Think about your own typical day. What household tasks do you do? Cooking? Cleaning? Go to a job outside the home? Care for children? Which of these would you still do if you were the opposite gender?

THINK
What other ways
can you think of to
organize the
division of labor in
a household?



Labor in a household does not have to be organized around gender.

What other ways can you think of to organize the division of labor in a household?

Some other ways might be around age, interest or skill, access to resources.

Unconscious bias contributes to a
gendered division of labor.

One issue with dividing work around gender is that as a society, we then tend to place less value on tasks typically performed by women.

Again, this does not always happen on purpose, it is part of our socialization and unconscious bias. Work that happens outside the home, usually performed by men, is paid and more highly valued because it brings in income and is socially recognized as work. It has a value automatically attached to it, and the amount of time it takes to complete is more visible since a person leaves the home to do it and returns when the work is done for the day.

Meanwhile, women still conduct the majority of household labor, even if they also work outside the home. Because household labor – caretaking of family members and other work such as cleaning, cooking, and other types of work like fetching water – is not tracked or paid, it often leads to women having more tasks. Sometimes, because the work is done in the home or on household property where people don't see or notice the work, families and communities and society at large do not always realize how much time and energy these tasks take. Or, these tasks are not considered real, valuable work compared to the work done by men because they do not directly bring money into the home.

Women have an
unequal
work burden.
The amount of time
that men and women
spend working.



Look at the time the woman and man spend *working*.*

To “work” is defined as to “be engaged in physical or mental activity in order to achieve a purpose or result.”

When does their work day start? When does it end?

They are different types of tasks, which ones do you think of as more difficult? Which ones take more time? Which ones allow for more power and decision making within the household?



We also have a bias where women's work is not valued as highly as men's work, so it is often unpaid or paid less.

Women's roles and work are often overlooked and undervalued- leaving them with less income and decision-making power.

For example, women are most often the ones to cook, clean, and do a majority of the child rearing. This labor is usually unpaid.

Other examples might include:

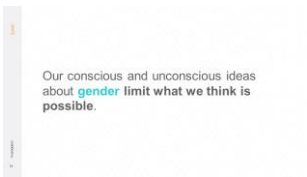
- In agriculture, women often do tasks that are farther from sale and market. While women do planting, harvest, or post harvest activities, they often do not take certain crops to market, meaning that they do not collect income directly.
- With livestock, women often do the day to day feeding and watering of animals, but men take the animals to market and collect the pay. Women may also care for livestock that have a lower market value, such as poultry, while men care for higher valued livestock such as cattle.



Which tasks are paid? Do they lead to resources, information, or power? Which tasks are done by men? Which by women?

- Who tends animals?
- Who grows export crops?
- Who controls household finances?
- Who is a member of a producer's organization or cooperative?
- Who attends trainings or talks to extension officers?
- Who owns land or livestock?
- Who purchases seeds?
- Who rents large equipment?
- Who decides when to hire labor?
- Who harvests food for consumption?
- Who provides extension training generally?

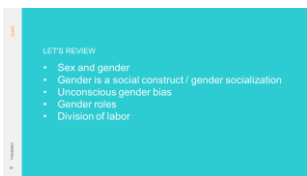
Both men and women **can** do all of these things.



Our conscious and unconscious ideas about **gender** limit what we think is possible.

When we recognize that our ideas about what men and women should do are based on our socialized ideas about gender, rather than their biological sex, we can begin to look for the many ways gender affects our lives, especially in the roles and work that we typically assign to women and men.

Even though our ideas about gender roles are often unconscious, they keep us from imagining new ways of doing things, and limit what we think is possible, for both women and men.



LET'S REVIEW

- Sex and gender
- Gender is a social construct / gender socialization
- Unconscious gender bias
- Gender roles
- Division of labor

We have covered a lot of information. Let's review some of the key ideas we have discussed.

Sex and gender

- Sex, refers to physical, biological characteristics of men and women
- Gender refers to the economic, social and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female in a particular place and point in time.

Gender is a social construct / gender socialization

- A social construct is an idea that is created and accepted by the people in a society. Gender is a social construct, because it is an idea created amongst the people in a society.
- Socialization is *how* we are taught to behave in accordance to and expect the gender norms of our culture.

Unconscious gender bias

- Unconscious gender bias is unintentional and automatic mental associations based on gender, coming from traditions, norms, values, culture and experience.

Gender roles

- Gender roles are the socially expected duties, responsibilities, rights, and privileges of women and men. They are created, changed, and perpetuated through our culture.

Division of labor

-
- Division of labor is the assigning of different tasks to different types of people for efficiency. This can be done consciously or unconsciously.
-



As we close out this session, continue to think about how gender shows up in your life. Ask:

- What ideas about gender roles do I hold?
- What is considered “normal” for men and women to do in my own society, workplace, household?
- How are these roles valued differently or the same, and how do we attribute value to these roles?
- What types of decisions are men and women encouraged or allowed to make?
- When have I had an experience in my own life where what I was doing was not considered “normal” for me to do, from a gender perspective? How did this make me feel?



Thank you.

[Add contact info here if desired. Wrap up and set up for what's next]



FACILITATOR:

Included below are optional or alternate slides available to you as you customize the learning experience.

Module Resources and Further Reading

Learn more about the terminology used for gender-related work with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Gender Equality Toolbox
<https://www.gatesgenderequalitytoolbox.org/definitions-concepts/gender-equality-lexicon/>

The *Lancet* Series on Gender Equality, Norms, and Health contains insights into the impact of gender inequalities and restrictive gender norms on health.

<https://deliverforgood.org/delivering-gender-equality-and-health-the-lancet-series-on-gender-equality-norms-and-health/>