

LESSON 1: IDENTITIES, FEELING THE SAME AND FEELING DIFFERENT



Learning Objectives

- To understand the most common concepts and terms related to SOGIE.
- To accept differences and unique characteristics about people.
- To increase self-acceptance and confidence.

WARM-UP

- Participants do a go-around of first names, pronouns, and something that they are looking forward to until the end of this year. If the workshop takes place online, the facilitator should instruct the participants to “pass it on” to the next participant by naming after they have had their turn.
- Introduction, setting the space: each session should include an introductory segment that addresses group ground-rules.

Activity 1A: Identities and spectrums of identity

1 Present the series of half-photos and ask the participants to point to the photos of men and the photos of women. Do not give them much time to think and highlight that, in the western world, many people would tend to assign them as such: trousers/jeans - man, dress - woman. **2** Show the full photos. Ask the following questions and explain the concept of “gender expressions” and “gender norms”: the way society chooses to interpret various individual expressions as more typical of men or women.

Why do many people tend to associate trousers with men and dresses with women? Have these norms always been like this? What about in other parts of the world? What are other “signs” that lead us to interpret the sex or gender of people? (for example, walking into a supermarket and briefly interacting with a person at the counter, we immediately tend to assign a gender/sex to them). Facial hair, body shape are more commonly typical of one sex or another but there are other variations of sex, as we will see later on. Are there just exclusively men and women outfits? Introduce the idea of spectrum of gender expression. For example: androgynous fashion (harder to interpret in terms of gender).

3 Introduce spectrum of sex: using the previous example of the spectre of gender of expression, explain what makes up sex (sexual reproductive organs, secondary sex characteristics and chromosomal makeup) and the spectrum of sex (male, female, intersex). **4** Introduce spectrum of sexual orientation: using the previous examples, introduce the concept of sexual orientation (multilayered attraction to people of various genders) and the spectrum of sexual orientation: gay, bisexual, straight, pansexual, asexual, aromantic. **5** Introduce spectrum of gender identity: using the previous examples, introduce the concept of gender identity (how our brain creates an internal sense of identity in relation to gender) and the spectrum: cis, trans, non-binary, genderqueer, agender. **6** This presentation should be as interactive as possible, as the facilitator progresses through the concepts, try to elicit the terms and the explanations from the participants themselves, who should be guided by questions.

RESOURCES FOR FACILITATORS:
[HTTPS://WWW.USD.EDU/DIVERSITY-AND-INCLUSIVENESS/OFFICE-FOR-DIVERSITY/SAFE-ZONE-TRAINING/SPECTRUM-MODEL/](https://www.usd.edu/diversity-and-inclusiveness/office-for-diversity/safe-zone-training/spectrum-model/)
[HTTPS://WWW.GENDERBREAD.ORG/RESOURCE/GENDERBREAD-PERSON-V4-0/](https://www.genderbread.org/resource/genderbread-person-v4-0/)

WARM-UP
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ACTIVITY 1A: IDENTITIES AND SPECTRUMS OF IDENTITY
|
ACTIVITY 1B: STATEMENTS – COMPETITION
|
ACTIVITY 2A: FEELING DIFFERENT
|
ACTIVITY 2B: MESSAGE TO MYSELF
|
ASSIGNMENT: INDEPENDENT RESEARCH

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Annexes



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Activity 1B: Statements – competition

1 Divide participants into two equal groups. Instruct the groups to decide on a name for their team. Ask each group (privately, so that the other group does not hear the instructions) that they should think of a list of “wrong” statements that they hear from people, or media, in relation to gender/sex/sexual orientation/gender identity. At the same time, they should be prepared to respond to a wrong statement that they will hear from the other team. The teams will receive one point for each commonly known “wrong statement” they produce and for each correct and convincing response to the other team’s statements. Allow the groups 5 minutes to prepare and run the competition for 20 minutes. Count the points and give the winning team a symbolic prize. **2** If done online, the preparation time should be done in separate breakout rooms within the platform. For the actual activity, if done in Zoom, the cam frames of participants can be arranged that way that they are grouped together. If this is not possible, ask participants to change their names to the name of their team.

Activity 2A: Feeling different

1 Invite participants to come to an open space and form a circle. Tell them that you will read out various names or categories of people or situations and if that is true for them, they will take a step inside the circle and then step back. If done online, start by having all participants turn off their cams and just turn it on for a second and off again if the call is true for them, as if they were stepping inside the circle. Some categories to be called: speaks 2 or more foreign languages, likes dogs more than cats, travelled outside of Europe, has never been in love, plays a lot of computer games, is into fashion, can describe themselves as a geek, likes sports, has been to the dentist at least once this year, doesn’t have siblings, etc. **2** Ask participants questions:

*Did everyone step into the circle? Did everyone turn their cam at least once?
What does this mean?*

3 Ask participants to individually write on a piece of paper two things that they think make them the same as the other people in the room; and two things that they think make them different, especially if they are things that are not visible to the other people. They will not be asked to share what they wrote.

How do we feel when we are the same as most other people? What about when we are different? Does it make it a difference that we are different and exposed or different and not visible? Why do young people who might be gay, bisexual, trans, or intersex feel that they are different from everyone else and isolated? What are the advantages and disadvantages of being different?

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Key message: all people feel different from the others, at various times. We are all part of the majority and the minority groups in different ways. This happens to everyone but people who are part of stigmatized minority groups often feel isolated, which affects their mental health and overall wellbeing. It's important to be aware that there is nothing wrong to be or feel different from the majority and it is something that happens to many of us.

Activity 2B: Message to myself

1 Individually each participant reflects and writes down a key learning for themselves or something they want to remind themselves of in the future. Alternatively, it can be a message for their younger or older selves. Invite a few volunteers to share their ideas.

ASSIGNMENT: INDEPENDENT RESEARCH

Ask participants to form teams and conduct observational research on the topic of gender in their schools or immediate communities. They should observe and report on:

- Behaviors*
- Curricula*
- Space settings*
- Policies, rules, systems of support*

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