

FAST FACTS



10-20
People



30
Minutes



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Residence Life
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Attending Activity – Gender

Adapted with permission from *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*

Purpose of Activity: The purpose of this activity is to get participants active, to practice listening, and to begin to think about gender and identity.

Objectives/Learning Outcomes:

By actively participating in this activity, participants will:

- be more comfortable sharing with each other about their ideas of gender
- begin thinking about gender from perspectives outside of normal conceptualization of gender.

Materials Needed:

- Open space (may need to move furniture as reflected in set up and clean up times)
- Stopwatch
- Facilitation Guide (see below)

Ground Rules:

- Be fully present and participate at your own comfort level – challenge by choice.
 - Follow up - What does it mean to be “fully present”?
 - Follow up - What does “challenge by choice” mean?
- Push yourself outside of your comfort zone – the most learning happens when we are a little bit uncomfortable.
- Listen respectfully, share air time, and encourage others to participate.
- It’s ok for us all to be at different places with the things we discuss today.
- Show respect for one another’s beliefs, values, and experiences.
- Respect and maintain privacy.

Facilitation Guide:

- Clear an open space large enough to accommodate two parallel lines of group members.
- Facilitator Script:

Introduction: *This activity was designed to get to know each other a little better and to talk about who we are.*

Explanation: *Please count off by 2. If you are a “one” please form a circle in the middle of the room facing outward. If you are a “two” form a circle around the “ones” and face inward so that you are directly facing another person. I will read several questions and you will have 2 minutes to discuss the answers of the question with the person that is directly across from you. After 2 minutes, I will tell you to switch and the “twos” will rotate one person to the left.*

Consider asking the following questions, but feel free to add your own:

- If your life were made into a movie, which celebrity(s), actor(s), musician(s) would you want to play you?

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- If your gender was a car, what would it be? Make, model, color ...?
- If your gender had a motto, what would it be?
- If you could be another biological sex for one day, what would you most like to do?
- If your gender was a song or piece of music, what would it be? A country song? A rap? Be specific!
- What do you appreciate the most about your gender?
- What do you find challenging or constricting about your gender?

Invite everyone to take a seat in order to participate in a discussion.

Processing Questions: Prepare questions to ask in order to facilitate discussion and summarize the purpose of the activity. Possible questions might be:

- Which questions were hard to answer? Why do you think that is?
- Have you ever thought about your gender as an object like a car or a song before? Are there other objects that you think might more closely capture your gender?
- How do you define gender?
- Do you think that your idea of gender is the same as other people in this room?

Final points to summarize: *This activity shows us that gender is not something that is easily put into a box. In fact, each of us may have our own way of thinking about or expressing the gender that we identify with. Think about this in your daily interactions, and challenge yourself to see all of the unique ways that people define themselves and their gender.*

Possible facilitation issues:

- As with all sharing activities, individuals may grow uncomfortable with opening up to the group. Confirm that the group should be a safe place and that all individuals should be supportive of one another throughout the activity.
- Important definitions to be aware of and explain throughout discussion:
 - **Biological Sex** - The biological sex one is assigned at birth based on visible physiological and anatomical sex characteristics
 - **Gender Identity** - A person's sense of being a woman, a man, or other gender identification