

FAST FACTS



10-20
People



30
Minutes



\$0



Low Risk
Level

Gender Rules for Intimacy

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

Purpose of Activity: The purpose of this activity is to gain awareness of individual perceptions of gender roles and rules of intimacy. Participants will explore advantages and disadvantages of gendered rules about relationship and intimacy.

Objectives/Learning Outcomes: After participating in this activity, participants will be able to identify the costs and benefits of gender role conformity. They will be able to recognize appropriate interactions and to practice respectful discussion between women and men about gender relationships.

Materials Needed:

- Open space (may need to move furniture as reflected in set up and clean up times)
- Stop watch
- Chalkboard, blackboard, or large paper
- Writing utensils
- 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.
- **Introduction**
 - *This activity was designed to begin to talk about the way that we interact with one another based upon gender. We will explore the ways in which we’ve been taught to act, as well as what we see in our everyday lives.*
- **Instructions**
 - *Please form two lines in the center of the room and face each other. Identify the person who is directly across from you in the other line. I am going to ask*



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a question and you will have 2 minutes each to share your response. It is important that you listen to your partner while they are sharing, and do not interrupt them. I will tell you when the second person may begin answering, and also when you will switch partners. Please identify which of you will start, and I will ask the first question.

- o *Everyone please come together as a group and think about what you shared and what you heard. We are going to bring all of our experiences together to visualize rules of gender intimacy.*

• Questions

- o Question 1: When you were a child, what is one message you were taught about relationships between girls and boys? How were you taught this lesson? [Allow the first partner to speak for 2 minutes. Repeat the question and ask the second partner to begin. After 2 minutes, tell them that the time is up and instruct them to change partners.]
- o Question 2: When you were a child, what is one lesson you were taught about how males were supposed to relate to each other? How were you taught this lesson? [After each partner has had 2 minutes to respond, instruct them to switch partners and move on to the final question]
- o Question 3: When you were a child, what is one lesson you were taught about how females were supposed to relate to each other? How were you taught this lesson?

Processing:

After all participants are gathered in one group, the facilitator should ask for volunteers to record their peers' responses. Make a table on the board that reflects the following headings:

Rules for Females	
With Females	With Males

Rules for Males	
With Females	With Males

Ask the following questions and place responses in the appropriate places on the board:



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- *Think about what you were taught about how girls and women are supposed to behave in relationships. What are some examples that you shared?*
- *What were you taught about boys and men and the way they are supposed to behave in relationships?*

Facilitate a discussion about the difference between the defined roles. You may want to ask questions such as:

- What do you observe about the rules that everyone shared?
- Do you follow these?
- What do you think are the advantages of following the rules? What are the disadvantages?
- What happens to those of us who do not fit in the box of gender rules for relationships?
- What happens to the part of you that doesn't fit in the box?
- Why would someone step out of the box of gender rules?
- What would be helpful to encourage more people in getting free of the gender rules?

Final points to summarize: *Keep in mind that throughout our lives we are continually being taught how we should interact with one another, and how we should expect other people to act. Think about the gender rules that we talked about today when you are going back into your hall or classes. Try to challenge yourself to get out of your expectations of gender rules and to encourage others to do the same.*

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.