

# GENDER

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## A Four-Lesson Unit Plan for High School Psychology Teachers

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This unit is aligned with the following content standard and learning targets of the *National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula* (APA, 2022):

## Standard Area: Multiculturalism and Gender

### **CONTENT STANDARD 2: Psychological constructs of gender and sexual orientation**

Students are able to (learning targets):

- 2.1 Compare and contrast sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation
- 2.2 Describe diversity of gender identity and sexual orientation
- 2.3 Describe psychological effects of privilege, stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation

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# Introduction and Note to Teachers About Using this Resource in Class

*This optional lesson plan includes information that may be useful for teacher background even if it is not used in the classroom. Individual school and community considerations will help determine what content or which activities are appropriate to include with students in class.*

Every individual has a gender identity. Therefore, understanding and discussing gender is relevant to all students and all teachers. Educators have a significant impact on the ways children and adolescents perceive the world through the inclusion or exclusion of identities and cultural narratives. For some, underrepresentation can lead to feelings of disequilibrium and exclusion. This erasure is a frequent experience for transgender and gender diverse people, particularly in K-12 schools (Greytak et al., 2009; Hanson et al., 2019; Movement Advancement Project & GLSEN, 2017). While each individual's gender identity impacts how they move through the world, it is important to recognize the varied experiences, resilience, and marginalization of gender diverse individuals. The assumption that an individual's gender identity aligns with the biological sex they were assigned at birth, which is frequently referred to as cisgender, perpetuates cisnormativity and the marginalization of those that do not identify as cisgender. Grounded in current psychological and educational research, this optional unit plan offers strategies for understanding gender and making space for gender diverse identities to thrive. Further, this unit plan was designed to provide teachers with tools to facilitate critical discussions and learning experiences about gender that foster awareness and inclusivity for all students, when appropriate in specific school settings.

Educators contribute to the ways social constructs such as gender are perceived and perpetuated. Thus, it is essential that teachers engage in this work with confidence and support. We (the authors) understand that discussions about gender diversity look different given the unique context of each school community. Therefore, we strongly recommend that teachers familiarize themselves with the current culture and climate of their schools to understand supports and challenges that may be encountered. Any teacher who intends to use these materials with students is strongly encouraged to get the support of their department chair or school administrators. If there is concern about the receptivity of the school community, we highly recommend engaging in a discussion with your school administration to describe the importance of teaching about gender diversity. As noted above, the information in this resource may be useful for teacher background even if it is not used in the classroom.

If using these materials in class, it is equally important that teachers begin by facilitating a discussion with students to describe class expectations for respectful dialogue and debate to ensure the classroom is a protected space for all students. Reminding students about class norms for engaging in potentially difficult dialogue and strategies for discussing diverse perspectives is necessary. For example, students should be reminded that it is okay to share differing perspectives; however, it is not okay to critique an individual person or their identities (e.g., gender, race, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, socioeconomic status, disability). We recommend educators familiarize themselves with how to foster inclusive spaces

for all students to encourage respectful, affirmative, and supportive discussions that allow students to feel that their diverse identities are welcomed, celebrated, and valued. For example, it may be helpful to prepare a script explaining participatory expectations to students such as,

As the teacher of this class, it is my responsibility to shape and guide the topics we discuss. I am looking forward to sharing my expertise and building knowledge together by inviting you to share your personal experience and reflections. No one is required to share, but if you choose to, your knowledge and experience will be valued.

Pertaining specifically to gender diversity, teachers can utilize strategies from the [GLSEN Safe Space Kit](#) to promote inclusivity and safety. However, it is important to note that not all spaces are safe for all students, and safety cannot be ensured. Therefore, some educators are transitioning to the concept of brave spaces (versus safe spaces) in which students are encouraged to speak, share their lived experiences and perspectives, and engage in discussions with established "ground rules" to promote critical and respectful discourse (Ali, 2017; Arao & Clemens, 2013). Arao and Clemens (2013) outlined the following parameters for facilitating brave spaces:

1. Agree to disagree (i.e., acknowledging that there will likely be disagreements in group discussions)
2. Don't take things personally (i.e., awareness of intentions and impact)
3. Challenge by choice (i.e., allowing individuals to determine their level of engagement)
4. Respect (i.e., discussions about how people can disagree and still feel respected)
5. No attacks (i.e., challenging ideas, beliefs, and statements, not people)

*\*Please see Arao and Clemens (2013) for more detailed information about facilitating brave spaces.*

The following lessons were designed sequentially, however, the content and activities may be utilized individually to meet the unique needs of each classroom community. Additionally, teachers may want to include content or activities in this lesson plan in different units of the course (e.g., developmental, social). In congruence with the American Psychological Association's (APA) [National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula \(APA 2022\)](#), this unit lesson plan is intended to illuminate the construct of gender as a distinct construct from sexual orientation. Thus, please see the TOPSS Unit Lesson Plan on the *Psychology of Sexual Orientation* as needed; a revision of this lesson plan is expected to be published in 2023. We would also like to acknowledge that a great deal of the literature, research, and discourse used to develop this lesson plan about gender are grounded in Western, white dominant beliefs, thus,

creating significant limitations to this work. For example, the idea of gender and sexual orientation as wholly separate concepts is not true for all genders in all cultures. Furthermore, constructs such as gender and sexual orientation are always evolving, and this lesson plan is intended to be an introduction to such constructs positioned within our current contexts and time. New information and research are continuously introduced to the field of psychology, and we encourage you to update your understanding frequently.

## LESSON 1

# Gender is a Biopsychosocial Construct

### GENERAL OVERVIEW

It is essential to differentiate sex, gender, and sexual orientation as unique and complex aspects of identity. As previously mentioned, the TOPSS Unit Lesson Plan on the *Psychology of Sexual Orientation* addresses the attributes of sexual orientation and affectional development (e.g., having romantic feelings without sexual attraction). This lesson plan provides an introductory level understanding of sex and gender, and the ways in which these aspects of identity influence perception, lived experiences, social systems, power, and privilege.

All people are impacted by the constructs of sex and gender; however, the significance these aspects of identity have on a person's life varies substantively. For some people, sex and gender are at the forefront of their minds as they navigate gendered spaces that privilege a gender binary of masculinity and femininity. Others may not consciously think about their sex or gender, which is frequently the case when one's identities align with dominant social systems that perpetuate particular identities as "normal" or "neutral." All facets of identity can impact a person differently throughout one's lifetime and can center specific aspects of identity at some points in time or in some social spaces. Regardless, the authors believe that understanding and exploring sex and gender is important for all people.

The terms sex and gender are often used interchangeably, inaccurately conflating two very different constructs. Gender is a complex, fluid construct that is established and maintained through social and cultural values, beliefs, and behaviors. The construct of gender has been defined in a multitude of ways, which has caused confusion and misinterpretation. Below (and in Appendix A) are working definitions of several constructs commonly associated with sex and gender.

This lesson is grounded in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Model of Human Development and informed by Crenshaw's (1989) concept of intersectionality to increase understanding about the impact of gender on human growth and development. Further, this unit draws from the [American Psychological Association's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Inclusive Language Guidelines \(APA, 2021\)](#), and the work of [Gender Spectrum](#), an organization that strives to identify current best practice in gender diversity education. It is also important to acknowledge that gender studies are always evolving, and this unit is intended to be an introduction to thinking about gender through a critical lens, rather than a static description of these concepts. Foundational resources and working definitions will be further explored in the following lesson.

### DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Please see Appendix A for additional information on several of these definitions that may be useful to teachers.

- **Gender:** Gender Spectrum defines gender through three dimensions; body, identity, and social gender (Gender Spectrum, n.d.).
- **Body:** The body dimension of gender includes both biological and social attributes. In addition to the biological constructs often referred to as "sex," physical attributes are gendered based on cultural interpretations of masculinity and femininity.
- **Sex:** At birth, an individual is typically assigned male, female, or a person with a difference of sex development (DSD, sometimes also known as being intersex) by a medical doctor, who conducts and relies on a short examination of the external genitalia.
- **Identity:** "Gender identity is our internal experience and naming of our gender" (Gender Spectrum, n.d., Identity section).
- **Social Gender:** Social gender includes gender expression and the social systems that shape gender norms.
- **Gender Expression:** The ways in which a person conveys their gender to others which may include clothing, makeup, hairstyles, body hair, voice inflection, mannerisms, etc.

*The following terms are listed alphabetically and are not intended to be representative of all gender identities or experiences. Please see Gender Spectrum's [The Language of Gender](#) and/or the [APA's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Inclusive Language Guidelines](#) for a more expansive list of constructs.*

- **Agender:** An individual who does not identify with any defined gender. Some agender individuals see themselves as genderless, while others see themselves as gender neutral. Agender individuals may fall under the nonbinary and/or transgender umbrella.
- **Cisgender:** One's sex assigned at birth is congruent with their gender identity.
- **Cisnormativity:** The normalization of cisgender identities as the predominant way of being.
- **Difference of Sex Development or Intersex:** General terms used to describe a range of variations of sex characteristics in which an individual is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't clearly align with a binary physical delineation of female or male.

- **Genderfluid:** People who have a gender or genders that change. Genderfluid people move between genders, experiencing their gender as something dynamic and changing, rather than static.
- **Gender Binary:** The assumption that all people fall into two, exclusive categories of girl/boy or man/woman. Limiting gender to these two categories is not representative of all individuals and can enable discrimination and violence against gender diverse individuals.
- **Gender Congruence:** Gender Spectrum defines gender congruence as “the feeling of harmony in our gender” (n.d., Congruence section). Such harmony is achieved when one’s body, identity, and expression align, and individuals feel seen, validated, and supported by their community and society. Gender congruence may be experienced differently throughout an individual’s lifetime and may change overtime.
- **Gender Spectrum:** The idea that there are many gender identities (e.g., female, male, transgender, nonbinary, gender queer, two-spirit). The gender spectrum also includes a range of gender expressions. The gender spectrum is increasingly recognized as more scientifically accurate than that of a gender binary that asserts an individual is one of two genders based solely and immutably on the examination of external genitalia at birth (Montanez, 2017; Scientific American, 2017).
- **Nonbinary:** An individual that does not identify as a man or a woman. Being nonbinary does not determine or limit someone’s gender expression (e.g., a nonbinary person is not required to engage in gender expression that is perceived and received as androgynous).
- **Transgender:** Sometimes this term is used broadly as an umbrella term to describe anyone whose gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth. This term can also be used to convey a gender identity that is “opposite” or “across from” the sex an individual was assigned at birth (APA, 2021).

## CONTENT OUTLINE

### Gender and gender development depends on biological, psychological and social factors.

- **Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model of Human Development** (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) can be used to examine the complexity of gender and its impact on growth and development.
  - » Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model provides a framework for conceptualizing individual identity development and the impact of systemic factors, which are described as the microsystem (i.e., immediate surroundings), mesosystem (i.e., connections between microsystems), exosystem (i.e., indirect social structures), macrosystem (i.e., cultural contexts), and chronosystem (i.e., time) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).
  - » Each of these nested systems has a significant impact on how gender is internalized and perceived throughout one’s life.
  - » Children as young as two-to-three years of age begin to categorize themselves in terms of gender (Halim & Ruble, 2010). By age five, children tend to use constructions of gender to think about and categorize others (Halim & Ruble, 2010).
  - » The beliefs, values, behaviors, and traditions of a child’s family, friends, school community, etc. (i.e., microsystem) impact the way gender is developed, internalized, and conveyed to others. These experiences are further reinforced or undermined based on the way gender is discussed or ignored among a child’s microsystems, such as in discussions between caregivers and teachers (i.e., within the mesosystem).
  - » A child’s exosystem (e.g., caregivers’ workplaces, neighborhoods, media) and exposure to larger cultural and political systems (i.e., macrosystem) also affect gender development through subtle and overt messaging regarding gender (e.g., the gender pay gap, state legislation excluding transgender athletes, criminalizing affirmative healthcare for transgender people).
  - » The constructs of gender and identity development are continuously evolving, and it is not uncommon for different generations to have divergent beliefs, understanding, and language to describe gender (i.e., chronosystem).
- **Intersectionality:** The term intersectionality was coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989).
  - » Intersectionality highlights the ways peoples’ identities are impacted by socially constructed systems that privilege some identities while oppressing others. Socially constructed ideas about what is normal, neutral, or positive create oppressive patterns, policies, and practices that marginalize individuals that do not conform to the dominant way of being. The impact of power, privilege, and oppression on particular identities is elucidated by disproportionate access to social systems such as education, healthcare, housing, and legal representation.
  - » Intersectionality applies to the experiences of gender diverse individuals. Gender diverse individuals are an extremely heterogeneous community, representing a range of religious and spiritual beliefs, racial and ethnic identities, abilities, sexual orientations, ages, etc. Intersectionality acknowledges the dynamic manner in which these complex identities intersect with social systems influencing perceptions, experiences, actions, and relationships.
  - » Intersectionality creates a meaningful lens through which the interactive effects of various forms of power, privilege, discrimination, and disempowerment can be discussed.

- **Minority Stress:** Although this unit plan is intended to illuminate the value of gender diversity, it is important to acknowledge “the excess stress to which individuals from stigmatized social categories are exposed as a result of their social, often a minority, position” (Meyer, 2003, p. 675). Such overlapping vulnerabilities created by social systems pose unique challenges for gender diverse individuals, which is often referred to as minority stress (Meyer, 2003).
  - » Research on the lived experiences and health outcomes of gender diverse individuals, particularly youth, is limited. However, recent research is beginning to explore how transgender and nonbinary youth’s experiences differ from cisgender youth (Greytak et al., 2009; Hanson et al., 2019; Movement Advancement Project & GLSEN, 2017).
  - » Price-Feeney, Green, and Dorison (2020) examined data from “a national quantitative cross-sectional survey of more than 25,000 lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning youth, aged between 13 and 24 years, in the U.S.” (p. 684). These analyses are of particular importance for educators, as they focused on the experiences of youth identifying as transgender and nonbinary, indicating an increased risk for depression and suicidality (Price-Feeney et al., 2020).
  - » Further analysis of the aforementioned dataset explicated a relationship between discriminatory access to school bathrooms that aligned with participants’ gender identity and negative mental health outcomes (Price-Feeney, Green, & Dorison, 2021).
  - » Gender diversity does not inherently lead to poor health outcomes however, social systems that perpetuate cisnormativity can contribute to cumulative stressors that can impact physical and mental health (Meyer, 2003).

[Activity 1.1: Blue and Pink Snowball can be used here](#)

[Activity 1.2: Gender as a Biopsychosocial Construct can be used here](#)

## LESSON 2

# Cultural and Historical Considerations About Gender

### GENERAL OVERVIEW

Western society has traditionally defined gender along a binary, forcing individuals into one of two categories: man or woman (Hyde et al., 2019). Nearly every aspect of Western culture, including religion, popular media, and education, emphasizes gender as a binary concept. A binary concept of gender is often enforced through strictly defined gender roles, the policing of gender expression, and through the perpetuation of gender stereotypes. In other words, gender is both a description of individuals and a prescription for individuals. Individuals assigned male at birth are expected to develop male bodies, identify as men, and behave in accordance with masculine stereotypes (Butler 1990; Morgenroth & Ryan, 2020). For example, it is acceptable for young men to play baseball but less or not acceptable for them to take ballet lessons, despite the fact that both activities may provide positive benefits or opportunities.

Similarly, individuals who are assigned female at birth experience expectations for their bodies, behaviors, mannerisms, and social roles. As a consequence of patriarchy and toxic masculinity, feminine characteristics are also used to justify discrimination and violence. People with traditionally feminine characteristics may be regarded as inferior within the hierarchy of the gender binary due to perceptions regarding gender identity, expression, and/or sexuality (Hoskin, 2020). For example, many have noted that more mothers than fathers altered their work schedules or quit their jobs as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic's impact on childcare and education settings (Donegan, 2021). In addition, dress codes in schools and professional settings are often heavily focused on policing feminine clothing (e.g., skirt length, width of tank top straps) (Aghasaleh, 2018).

Despite these entrenched concepts about gender in Western cultures, a number of cultures do not or did not historically have a binary concept of gender. Third genders or multiple genders are affirmed and celebrated parts of many cultures. This includes a number of countries across the globe that have been colonized by countries like the United Kingdom, the United States, and Spain. Colonization often resulted in countries being forced to adopt Western concepts such as gender, which then impacted individuals who occupied traditional third gender identities and roles (Thomas, 2015). As binary concepts of gender have been increasingly challenged by advocates and researchers in Western countries, this has also created room for more accurate reflections regarding how concepts of gender have evolved and continue to evolve in Western society.

Importantly, an examination of the history of Western culture reveals that even binary concepts of gender are not as stable or rigid as they are often purported to be, particularly over time. For example, some historical expectations traditionally associated with men's clothing and dress (e.g., wearing velvet or brocade fabric, lace, and/or tights) would be considered feminine forms of gender expression today. In addition, a number of historical figures and events, such as the Stonewall riots, have been re-examined to reflect historical accuracy and to reverse the erasure of gender complexity and diversity.

### DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

- **Culture:** The distinctive customs, values, beliefs, knowledge, art, and language of a society or a community. These values and concepts are the foundation of everyday behaviors and practices.
- **Gender Expression:** The ways in which people communicate their gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, hair, voice, and other forms of presentation. Gender expression can vary from culture to culture.
- **Gender Roles:** The pattern of behavior, personality traits, and attitudes that define masculinity, femininity, or additional recognized genders in a particular culture. Gender roles are frequently considered to be the external manifestation of internalized gender identity, although the two are not necessarily consistent with one another.
- **Gender Stereotypes:** A relatively fixed, overly simplified concept of the attitudes and behaviors considered normal and appropriate for male, female, transgender, and nonbinary identities in a particular culture. Western culture tends to employ gender stereotypes for men and women to enforce a gender binary. Gender stereotypes often support the social conditioning of gender roles.
- **Gender Dysphoria:** Gender dysphoria (GD), according to the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition* (DSM-5; American Psychiatric Association, 2013), is defined as a marked incongruence between a person's experienced or expressed gender and the one they were assigned at birth. It was previously termed "gender identity disorder." It is also important to acknowledge that the LGBTQ+ community and its allies continue to debate how and if this term should be used. Some states require that gender diverse individuals receive this diagnosis to access healthcare, however, the use of the term, "gender dysphoria," can be pathologizing. The pathologization of transgender identities and gender expansiveness should be avoided, as simply being transgender and/or gender diverse is not a mental health condition.

- **Intersectionality & Culture:** Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) can be an important lens through which to have conversations about culture and gender. Intersectionality emphasizes the intersections of gender, sex, and other social or cultural identity markers or categorizations such as race, ethnicity, class, nationality, etc., and social systems that award power and privilege to some identities, while marginalizing and oppressing others. Intersectionality acknowledges the power differentials between different identity markers or categorizations and the systemic manner in which power and hierarchies affect the experiences of individuals and groups.

## CONTENT OUTLINE

### There are cultural differences regarding gender identity and gender expression.

- **Western conceptions of gender are often binary, centering cisgender male and female identities.**
  - » Traditional gender roles in the United State are often described in binary terms (femininity and masculinity). Western society has created and enforces expectations for individuals based on their sex assigned at birth. These expectations start at birth, are present throughout development, and continue into adulthood.
  - » Gender roles affect the way behavior is interpreted, the clothes individuals are expected to wear, the roles that individuals have in families, the jobs that are considered appropriate or inappropriate, and the way power is enacted and described. Gender roles and the expectations associated with them are present across settings and are often upheld by institutions like government, religion, education, healthcare, etc.
  - » Medical and scientific research, for instance, frequently describes and categorizes people as either male or female (Servigna, 2022). An analysis of the demographics of researchers and research samples tends to suggest that research has wide-ranging limitations regarding diversity and inclusivity (Knepper et al., 2018; Oh et al., 2015).
  - » Efforts have been made to include more gender diverse people in research studies. However, there are barriers faced by researchers and participants. For example, it can be difficult to gain access to youth participants that belong to the LGBTQ+ community because participation typically requires guardian consent. Requesting guardian consent could expose youth to guardians that may not be supportive, placing youth in potentially harmful or vulnerable situations (Kiperman et al., 2021; Varjas et al., 2008).
  - » The attitudes and expectations that inform gender roles are not typically based on inherent, biological differences between men and women. Social and cultural factors and biology influence each other and are often impossible to separate (Hyde et al., 2019; Morgenroth & Ryan, 2020). Gender roles are often based on oversimplified, social/cultural notions about cisgender men and women, which are referred to as gender stereotypes (for example, women are perceived as more natural caretakers, and men are perceived as less emotional). The impact that gender stereotypes and gender roles have cannot be underestimated.
  - » Social and cultural ideas about gender and gender roles have been used to perpetuate discrimination and violence, disproportionately impacting women and gender diverse individuals. For example, global research indicates that one in three women has experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime at the hand of a partner or non-partner (WHO, 2021).
  - » While gender roles are enforced through rigid expectations, it is also important to note how conceptions of masculinity and femininity have changed over time. Looking at how gender roles have evolved reveals that the gender binary is not as static or inflexible as perpetuation of the gender binary tends to suggest. For instance, during WWII, women began doing hard labor and participated in professional sports. In the 18th and 19th century, noble men were expected to wear makeup, wigs, and fabrics that would be associated with femininity today.
  - » Although many aspects of Western culture are dominated by cisnormativity, progress has been made to challenge such beliefs about sex and gender identity. Notably, the [National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine \(NASEM, 2022\)](#) released a National Institutes of Health (NIH) commissioned report outlining consensus among [190 organizations calling](#) for substantive revisions to best practice for collecting data pertaining to sexual orientation, sex, and gender identity “to help understand the needs and experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and other sexual and gender diverse (LGBTQ+) people” (Servigna, 2022, para. 1).
- **The American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) and Gender**
  - » The DSM provides healthcare professionals in the United States and elsewhere with information to aid in the formal diagnosis of a number of mental health disorders. It does not provide guidelines or information regarding treatment.
  - » The DSM-I and II did not contain diagnoses related to gender diversity. Homosexuality, however, was considered a “sociopathic personality disturbance” by the DSM-I. Alfred Kinsey’s landmark work, published in 1948 and 1953, introduced the notion that human sexuality should be understood and discussed as occurring along a continuum. Psychologists such as Evelyn Hooker built on Kinsey’s work by conducting affirming research with the LGBTQ+ community. Hooker conducted a number of studies on gay men, including a 1957 study

she first presented at the American Psychological Association's annual meeting in 1956. Hooker's (1957) findings indicated that homosexuality did not result in deviated sexual patterns, should not be used to predict personality structure or development, and that homosexuality should not be viewed as a clinical entity. A number of psychologists and activists, such as Jude Marmor, Barbara Gittings, and John Fryer worked with or alongside Hooker to depathologize homosexuality. The DSM classification of homosexuality was updated to "sexual deviation" in 1968 (DSM-II) and was finally removed in 1973 (DSM-III).

- » Gender Identity Disorder first appeared in the DSM-III in 1980. It appeared under the category of Psychosexual Disorders and there were three relevant diagnostic entities: gender identity disorder of childhood (GIDC), transsexualism (for adolescents and adults), and psychosexual disorder not elsewhere classified (Zucker, 2010). In 1987, the DSM-III-R diagnoses were part of a category called Disorders Usually First Evident in Infancy, Childhood, or Adolescence (Zucker, 2010).
  - » In the DSM-IV, which was published in 1994, the three diagnoses were collapsed into a single diagnosis, gender identity disorder (GID), which was placed in a section called Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders. The diagnosis of GID cannot be given to individuals who are intersex.
  - » In 2013, GID was dropped from the DSM-5. Gender dysphoria was introduced as a replacement. In 2017, the World Health Organization's *International Classification of Diseases and Health Related Problems* (ICD-11; World Health Organization, 2019) also dropped GID, transsexualism, sexual maturation disorder, and dual-role transvestism. Three conditions of gender incongruence (gender incongruence of adolescence or adulthood, gender incongruence of childhood, and gender incongruence unspecified) were introduced under Conditions Related to Sexual Health in the ICD-11.
- **Impact of Colonization on Social Acceptance of Third Gender Individuals**
    - » Colonization by Western countries and conversion to Christianity through missionary efforts and force have led to the development of negative attitudes regarding gender diverse people (Jaffary, 2007; Montgomery, 2017).
    - » While individuals who occupy third gender roles remain within a range of cultures, acceptance may now look different than it did prior to European contact and influence. Attitudes can range from acceptance to condemnation depending on the country, culture, and the specific history and context of colonization.
    - » A number of cultures do not have binary notions of gender and/or have third genders present in their culture. Examples of third gender or nonbinary identities in other cultures can be found in Appendix B for teachers to use as desired.

[Activity 2.1: Scavenger Hunt Activity can be used here](#)

[Activity 2.2: Culture and Gender Expression Through Fashion can be used here](#)

## LESSON 3

# The Importance of Pronouns

### GENERAL OVERVIEW

Pronouns are words we use to speak about people in the third person that have been historically ascribed to certain gender identities and expressions. People may also use pronouns to describe themselves to others. For example, someone who identifies as a cisgender or transgender woman may use “she/her” pronouns. There is a tendency to assume an individual’s pronouns based on their gender expression. These assumptions often reflect the gender binary (she/her or he/him) and oversimplified beliefs about gender expression. Further, when addressing groups, individuals frequently divide the group by masculine and feminine labels (e.g., ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls), which suggests that everyone accepts and identifies with a binary concept of gender.

Most individuals use the pronouns that reflect their gender identity. It is important to note that everyone’s pronouns are their pronouns, and gender diverse individuals do not use “preferred” pronouns. Support for gender diversity can be promoted through mindful introductions, name tags that include a space to share pronouns, familiarizing oneself with gender neutral phrases, and other similar behaviors. Using gender neutral language or the pronouns they/them until you are aware of an individual’s pronouns (APA, 2020) can foster more inclusivity of gender diversity. Further, normalizing the sharing of pronouns has been proposed as a means to make spaces more welcoming and affirming for gender diverse individuals (Gender Spectrum, n.d; GLSEN, n.d). It is important to allow students to voluntarily include their pronouns rather than presenting this practice as an involuntary expectation. Not everyone will feel comfortable sharing their pronouns, and it is important to avoid singling out or focusing on people who may have pronouns that are different from what people are expecting based on how they look or sound. In addition to making students uncomfortable, forcing students to share their pronouns may lead a person to feel pressured to say pronouns that are not genuine to them to avoid calling attention to themselves.

Per the APA’s (2020) recommendation, they/them pronouns or a person’s name should be used to avoid misgendering people until the appropriate pronouns are learned. We encourage educators and students to challenge assumptions about gender identities and pronouns based on how people look or sound (e.g., a person walking down the street or a person’s voice on the telephone) to promote inclusivity of gender diversity and avoid misgendering.

Not respecting someone’s pronouns is an aspect of discrimination that gender diverse people commonly experience at school, at home, or across a number of other environments. As previously mentioned, cumulative stressors such as repeatedly being misgendered, may lead to increased risk of poor physical and mental health outcomes (Meyer, 2003). Moreover, providing gender diverse individuals with access to gender affirmation, like using someone’s pronouns or their chosen name, has been shown to reduce suicidal ideation, suicidal behavior, and depressive symptoms (Russell et al., 2018).

### DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

- **Examples of Pronouns:** He/him/his; she/her/hers; they/them/theirs; xe/xem/xyrs; ze or zie/hir (zir)/hirs (zirs). It is important to note that pronouns continue to evolve and may change or be expanded in the future. Please see [Gender Spectrum](#) or [Pronouns Matter](#) for more extensive information regarding pronouns.
- **Misgendering:** Misgendering refers to the experience of being labeled or addressed by others as a gender that does not reflect a person’s gender identity (GLSEN, n.d.). Misgendering can occur via the use of incorrect pronouns, gendered addresses (e.g., sir, miss, ma’am), using a name no longer used by the individual, requiring people to use public spaces such as bathrooms or locker rooms that do not reflect their gender identity, etc.

### CONTENT OUTLINE

#### Pronouns

- In English, the most commonly used pronouns (he/she) specifically refer to a person’s gender and are often employed according to a gender binary of male and female. In some languages nouns can also be gendered; and in other languages (e.g., Spanish and French), if one person in a group is male, the entire group is then assigned/referred to using masculine forms of words. For gender diverse individuals, the pronouns used by others may not reflect their gender identity and can create discomfort, stress, and anxiety (Puckett et al., 2021).

- Though the term “preferred pronouns” has been used in the past, the term can unintentionally imply that someone’s “preferred” pronouns are not their real pronouns or are masking their real pronouns. Someone’s pronouns should be referred to simply as their pronouns, regardless of their sex assigned at birth, gender expression, or how their gender identity has or hasn’t changed over time.
- It is helpful to be mindful of the ways in which language tends to be gendered around particular actions or activities. These instances of language perpetuate gender stereotypes and/or rigid gender roles which assert that binary models of gender can be used to explain what individuals do and what they don’t do (e.g., boys will be boys).
- The use of gender-neutral language (e.g., “they” or “y’all”) supports the reality that activities are not gendered and reduces feelings of exclusion.
- It is imperative to assert that general statements be inclusive when talking about a group of people, but it is equally important to use an individual’s pronouns when referring to a specific person.
- Assuming an individual’s pronouns can be harmful. Someone’s pronouns may or may not reflect how their gender identity is perceived, may or may not match their gender expression, and an individual may use pronouns that exist outside of commonly understood pronouns. Thus, many individuals have sought to normalize the sharing of pronouns by putting their pronouns in their email signatures, social media presence, introductions, or respectfully asking when someone’s pronouns are unknown.

**APA Style guide (APA, 2020), Seventh Edition: Pronouns**

APA provides the following guidance on the use of pronouns in Section 4 of the seventh edition of the APA Style Guide:

- The singular “they” is endorsed and consistent with inclusive usage.
- Always use a person’s self-identified pronoun, including when a person uses the singular “they” as their pronoun.
- Also use “they” as a generic third-person singular pronoun to refer to a person whose gender is unknown or irrelevant to the context of the usage.
- Do not use “he” or “she” alone as generic third-person singular pronouns.
- Use combination forms such as “he or she” and “she or he” only if you know that these pronouns match the people being described.
- Do not use combination forms such as “(s)he” and “s/he.” If you do not know the pronouns of the person being described, reword the sentence to avoid a pronoun or use the pronoun “they.”

## LESSON 4

# Seeking Support at School

### GENERAL OVERVIEW

Establishing a safe, welcoming, and supportive school community is essential for all students and stakeholders. However, it is of particular importance to intentionally foster more inclusive school culture for those that identify with a marginalized status. From a young age students internalize messages about gender, impacting beliefs about identity, personal expression, interpersonal relationships, academic strengths and struggles, and career aspirations.

Although not every school will feel safe and supportive to all students, it is helpful to be aware of individuals who can offer guidance and support. This lesson provides an overview of student service providers typically accessible to students in a school setting. For the purpose of this lesson, we will focus on the roles and responsibilities of school counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers, which will be referred to as school-based mental health professionals (SBMHPs).

Prior to teaching this lesson, we recommend scheduling brief informational interviews with your school-based mental health professionals and other student service providers to learn more about their unique roles and responsibilities in your school. It will be helpful to ask specific questions about your colleague's knowledge and skills working with gender diverse students to accurately convey the services they can confidently and competently provide for students. Once there is a clear understanding of each student service provider's position, we recommend sharing this information with students, families, and other educational stakeholders to increase equitable access to services and resources. If you are in a school that does not provide social, emotional, or behavioral health services for gender diverse students, it is essential to [identify community-based resources](#) that provide culturally responsive services that are safe and affirming.

### DEFINITION OF TERMS

- **School-based mental health professionals (SBMHPs):** These student service providers are typically accessible to students in a school setting, although the exact configurations of stakeholders vary from school to school. This lesson focuses on the roles and responsibilities of school counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers.

### CONTENT OUTLINE

#### Educational Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Youth (LGBTQ+)

- Since 1999, the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network ([GLSEN](#)) has been documenting the educational experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth (LGBTQ+), capturing the challenges they experience and the services that provide support. More recently, necessary attempts have been made to disaggregate research with LGBTQ+ youth to better understand the unique experiences of transgender and gender diverse students (Greytak et al., 2009; Hanson et al., 2019; Movement Advancement Project & GLSEN, 2017). Such research indicates that transgender and gender diverse students have different challenges than their cisgender peers that identify as sexually diverse (Greytak et al., 2009; Hanson et al., 2019; Movement Advancement Project & GLSEN, 2017).
  - » Greytak et al. (2009) indicated that transgender and gender diverse youth experienced higher rates of harassment, assault, and victimization.
  - » Additionally, Hanson et al. (2019) found that “transgender and bisexual high school students were more likely than students of other gender identities and sexual orientations to experience chronic sadness and to contemplate suicide” (p. 2).
  - » Further, schools pose unique barriers for gender diverse youth as they often navigate discriminatory facilities (e.g., bathrooms, locker rooms) and state and federal laws (Movement Advancement Project & GLSEN, 2017).
  - » The psychological and educational needs of gender diverse youth must be addressed, and it is vital to have a clear understanding of the services available to support gender diverse students.

#### School-based Mental Health Professionals (SBMHPs)

- Although there are some commonalities among the student service providers typically accessible to students and families, the exact configurations of stakeholders vary from school to school.

- Awareness of what services are accessible to students within the school and surrounding community is an important step in deconstructing cisnormativity to foster more inclusive schools.
- It is highly recommended that educational stakeholders become familiar with community-based and online services that support gender diverse youth to supplement school-based resources.
- SBMHPs have professional and ethical obligations to support gender diverse students (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2020; National Association of School Psychologists [NASP], 2014; Pacey et al., 2018), and should be actively engaged in fostering more inclusive and welcoming schools.
- SBMHPs have advanced degrees that include training to support the mental health and educational needs of gender diverse students. Specialization specific information for each SBMHP can be found in greater detail through their respective professional organizations (see below).
- In general, SBMHPs are positioned to provide comprehensive student services that address students' academic, interpersonal, career, and post-secondary development, in addition to mental health.
- SBMHPs often organize service delivery through a multi-tiered system of support model (MTSS), including interventions at tier 1 (all students), tier 2 (some students), and tier 3 (few students). Thus, SBMHPs have the knowledge and skills to support gender diverse students through individual, small group, classroom, and school-wide services.
- At an individual level, SBMHPs are well equipped to provide individual counseling services and advocacy for gender diverse students, supporting identity development, interpersonal relationships, academic success, and mental health.
- SBMHPs are positioned to foster gender equity and inclusive school culture and climate by modeling and encouraging inclusive language, classroom lessons, professional development, family collaboration, and community and policy advocacy.
- SBMHPs may be a helpful resource for establishing and supporting student led efforts such as Gender and Sexualities Alliances (commonly referred to as Gay-Straight Alliances or GSAs).

### **Gender and Sexualities Alliances (GSAs)**

- Students can access support through extracurricular clubs, which are commonly referred to as Gender and Sexualities Alliances or Gay-Straight Alliances (GSA).
  - » Names attached to these clubs can vary (e.g., SAGA, True Colors, Equal).
  - » Participants in these clubs can include gender diverse students, sexually diverse students, students who view themselves as allies, or students who simply want to learn more.
- The Equal Access Act (EAA) of 1984 established that any school that permits non-curriculum related student groups must provide equal access to all student groups. Therefore, schools that accept federal funding cannot prohibit students from forming a GSA. Court cases have determined that doing so violates students' first amendment and Title IX rights.
- According to the 2019 GLSEN National School Climate Survey, approximately 60% of respondents attended a school with a GSA or similar LGBTQ+ affirming club (Kosciw et al., 2020).
- Although research indicates that the presence of GSAs and LGBTQ+ affirming clubs can provide emotional support, and opportunities for leadership and advocacy for LGBTQ+ youth, recent attempts to center the experiences of LGBTQ+ students of color indicate that GSAs may not be perceived as inclusive spaces for all students (Ocampo & Soodjinda, 2016).

### **Additional Resources**

- **School Counselors:** The [American School Counselor Association \(ASCA\)](#) provides leadership and professional parameters for current best practice for school counselors. Please see the ASCA (2020) position statement, [The School Counselor and Gender Equity](#), for more information about school counselors' roles and responsibilities specifically pertaining to transgender and gender diverse students.
- **School Psychologists:** Guidance on the professional roles and responsibilities of school psychologists is provided by the [National Association of School Psychologists \(NASP\)](#). Specific roles and responsibilities for supporting transgender and gender diverse students can be found in NASP's position statement, [Safe Schools for Transgender and Gender Diverse Students](#), and [Gender Inclusive Schools: Overview, Gender Basics, and Terminology](#).
- **School Social Workers:** The [School Social Work Association of America \(SSWAA\)](#) provides comprehensive guidance for school social workers to outline current best practices and professional guidelines. Further information to support transgender and gender diverse students can be located in the SSWAA resolution statement, [Promoting the Well-being of LGBTQIA+ Students](#) and [School Social Work Supports the Educational and Civil Rights of Transgender Students](#).

[Activity 4.1: School Resources for Gender Identity Support can be used here](#)

[Activity 4.2: Seeking Support at School can be used here](#)

See the Resource list for additional support

## APPENDIX A

# Additional Background on Key Definitions from Lesson One

**Sex:** At birth, an individual is typically assigned male, female, or a person with a difference of sex development (DSD, sometimes also known as being intersex) by a medical doctor, who conducts and relies on a short examination of the external genitalia.

- **Background for teachers:** Sex is often referred to as ‘sex assigned at birth’ as this classification typically takes place within the first few minutes of life. Biological indicators of sex include external genitalia, but also consist of chromosomal and hormonal variation and the presence of internal reproductive organs. Although sex has historically been perceived as predominantly binary (male or female), ongoing research illustrates there is naturally occurring biological variance, and individuals with DSD variations or intersex variations are far more common than once believed.

**Identity:** “Gender identity is our internal experience and naming of our gender” (Gender Spectrum, n.d., Identity section).

- **Background for teachers:** In other words, gender identity is a person’s psychological sense of being female, male, nonbinary, transgender, gender fluid, agender, etc. Although one’s gender identity is not a choice, the way someone describes their gender throughout their lifetime may change due to societal restrictions about gender, the evolution of the language used to describe gender, or as a result of someone’s gender identity being fluid or non-static (see Gender Spectrum’s [The Language of Gender](#) for more information). It is important to note that someone’s gender identity is not inherently fixed at any point in their life and may change simply because it can. Furthermore, someone’s gender identity does not determine or dictate someone’s sexual orientation.

**Gender Expression** refers to the ways in which a person conveys their gender to others which may include clothing, makeup, hairstyles, body hair, voice inflection, mannerisms, etc.

- **Background for teachers:** In other words, gender expression is the outward presentation of gender. Social gender also includes the ways in which social systems and culture impact one’s gender such as societal assumptions about masculinity and femininity. Social systems create normative beliefs about gender such as gender roles, expectations, and even gendering objects such as colors, toys, and clothing.

**Difference of Sex Development or Intersex:** General terms used to describe a range of variations of sex characteristics in which an individual is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t clearly align with a binary physical delineation of female or male.

- **Background for teachers:** A significant number of children are born with chromosomes, hormones, genitalia and/or other sex characteristics that do not exclusively reflect the categories of male or female as defined by the medical establishment ([interACT, n.d.](#)). Generally, being born with a DSD or intersex variation does not place children at medical risk, but most are still assigned a binary sex (male or female) at birth by their doctors and/or families. Medical exams that are done to classify and determine sex post-birth tend to be external examinations. However, a person who is born with a DSD or intersex variation might appear to be female on the outside but have mostly male-typical anatomy on the inside. They may also be born with genitalia that seem to be in-between the usual male and female types. In addition, an individual who is born with a DSD or intersex variation may have genetic material that is in-between the usual male and female chromosomes (e.g., some of their cells have XX chromosomes and some of them have XY). Often, a person may not become aware that they have these variations until they reach the age of puberty, find themselves to be infertile as an adult, or postmortem examinations. Some people live and die with these anatomical variations without anyone (including themselves) ever knowing.

## APPENDIX B

# Examples of Nonbinary and/or Third Gender Identities in Various Cultures

The following are intended to be brief examples of gender diversity in various cultures. The following cultures do not or have not historically had a binary concept of gender.

### Two-spirit - Indigenous/Native American

- Two-spirit people can be female, male, DSD, or intersex individuals who have both a masculine and a feminine spirit and engage in activities typically associated with men and women or with activities unique to their status as two-spirit people. Two-spirit people are not considered by indigenous communities to be men or women. They are a distinct, alternative gender (Indian Health Services, n.d.).
- A variety of other traits distinguished two-spirit people from men and women, including temperament, dress, lifestyle, and social roles.
- Two-spirit individuals might prefer or demonstrate aptitude for activities associated with the “opposite” sex. For example, two-spirit females engaged in hunting or war. They may also engage in activities done by both men and women, such as weaving or other kinds of traditional arts, or occupy unique roles as shamans or healers (Indian Health Services, n.d.).
- Indigenous communities likely have specific terms in their own languages for the gender diverse individuals in their communities and the social and spiritual roles these individuals fulfill. Attitudes about sex and gender can be very diverse and, although terms like two-spirit have come to be accepted or adopted by many Native American communities, specific tribes may prefer their own terms.
- Two-spirit is often included in the umbrella of LGBTQ+ (e.g., LGBTIQ2-S). However, “two-spirit” does not inherently mean someone who is Indigenous/Native American is gay or queer.

### Hijra/Kinnar - South Asian

- A third gender role or institution in India. A Hijra is often an individual who is neither male nor female, who is identified as intersex at birth, is impotent, is infertile, or has undergone surgery to have their genitalia removed (Sepie, 2015; Nanda, 1986). Hijra can be transgender but not all transgender people in India are hijra (Gettleman, 2018).
- Hijra identity is spiritual, as well as physical, and has a rich, traditional role in Indian society, particularly in the northern parts of the country. Hijra are self-proclaimed and socially recognized “instruments of the Goddess,” and are associated with religious or mythological figures of androgyny, fertility, dancing, and singing. They are sometimes imbued with the power to predict the future, bring blessings to newly married couples or pregnant women, to detect impotence, and to curse others (Nanda, 1986; Sepie, 2015).
- Hijra are not men or women; however, hijra often identify as incomplete men and the word is a masculine noun which emphasizes sexual impotence. Female behaviors are often associated with the role. These behaviors include dressing in women’s clothing, long hair, taking names associated with women, plucking facial hair, and/or adopting mannerisms that are associated with femininity (Nanda, 1986).
- Hijra often live in one of seven “family” houses (i.e., similar to fraternity and sorority houses on college campuses or houses as they are traditionally recognized within New York City’s ball culture), all of which are led by a guru. These houses have particular rules or community guidelines (Nanda, 1986). These relationships can be nurturing and/or exploitative. For example, many hijras are sex workers and must turn over earnings to their gurus in exchange for protection from police or abusive clients (Gettleman, 2018).

### Fa’afafine & Fa’afatamas - Samoan

- An alternative or nonbinary gender category in Polynesian culture that Samoans recognize as distinct from men and women.
  - » Fa’afafine “translates as in the manner of a woman” (Barrett, 2019).
    - Fa’afafine are assigned male at birth and almost exclusively have romantic and/or sexual relationships with men. However, identifying as Fa’afafine does not describe an individual’s gender identity or sexual orientation, particularly as it pertains to Western terms and constructs. Fa’afafine actively resist being described using Western terms and/or societal constructs of gender identity and sexual orientation and describe their identity as a cultural one (Barrett, 2019).
    - Fa’afafine typically have a feminine appearance and demonstrate feminine mannerisms. However, appearance and mannerism can also be heterogeneous and/or exist on a spectrum (Bartlett & Vasey, 2007).
    - Sex between men is outlawed in Samoa. Fa’afafine are not criminalized under this law.
    - Fa’afafine may do work typically done by women, but are not limited to only doing work typically done by women. They are also recognized for their charitable work (e.g., caring for elderly, advocating for sexual health and education).

- » Fa'afatamas are individuals assigned female at birth who demonstrate masculine characteristics.
- Fa'afafines or fa'afatamas are the featured performers, like the Hijra, in a traditional dance. This dance is called taupou. The dance emphasizes feminine movement and also embodies sexual comedy/caricature.

### **Metis - Nepal**

- Metis or Meti are typically transgender women who have sexual relationships with men (Knight et al., 2015). However, the term tends to be porous more than it is rigid. Those who identify with meti may do so based on their sexual orientation and gender expression may vary across different settings.
- A third gender was established in Nepal in 2007 through a court case, which established a third gender and outlawed discrimination based on sexual or gender identity (Knight et al., 2015).

### **Muxes - Mexico**

- Third gender category present in indigenous culture of Juchitan in El Istmo de Tehuantepec, Oaxaca, México. Muxes self-identify and are accepted as a third gender, rather than as men or women, and adopt characteristics of both genders (Mirande, 2016).
- Some parents of muxe children see them as a blessing from God. Others have mixed feelings or respond in ways that hurt and traumatize their children. While Juchitan is largely seen as a haven of acceptance to the muxe population, muxes may still encounter varied or negative responses in the community (Mirande, 2016).
- Muxes are biological males who dress in traditional female Zapotec attire and take on traditionally feminine roles. There is a lot of variance in terms of what this looks like.
- Identifying as a muxe does not determine sexual orientation. Some muxes are married to women or are bisexual. However, their sexual partners are typically assumed to be and referred to as hombres (straight men) (Mirande, 2016).
- The term "muxe" is said to be a Zapotec take on the Spanish word for "woman" (mujer). This illustrates the impact of colonization on traditional gender roles in various countries and cultures.
- For additional information, please see Torres (2021).

### **Bugis - Indonesia**

- The Buginese people are an ethnic group in Indonesia. There are about six million Bugis. The Bugis people recognize five different genders. This concept of gender has been part of Bugis culture for at least six centuries.
- Oroané are comparable to cisgender men, makkunrai to cisgender women, calalai to transgender men, and calabai to transgender women. Finally, bissu are androgynous or intersex individuals. Bissu are often revered shamans or priests. These definitions are not exact, but are viewed as being sufficient (Davies, 2016).

### **Sistergirl and Brotherboy - Australian Aboriginal**

- A brotherboy is an individual who is assigned female at birth but feels masculine spiritually and may take on male roles in the community and/or society. A sistergirl is an individual who is assigned male at birth but feels feminine spiritually and may take on female roles in the community and/or society. These identities are a cultural and gender identity.
- Sistergirl and brotherboy are heterogeneous identities. For example, someone who has been assigned male at birth, who feels spiritually male, and typically performs male roles, may not be a "man," and may still identify as a brotherboy.
- There is "a need to understand the cultural significance (ceremonies and ancestral dream time stories from womanhood to manhood) and of moving from one gender to another" (Gilbert et al., 2014, p. 64).

### **Māhū - Hawai'i, Tahiti, Marquesas**

- Māhū are typically individuals who are assigned male at birth who live as women. They wear feminine clothing and perform work traditionally associated with women.
- The term Māhū means an individual who feels in between a man and a woman.
- Modern use of the term "māhū" can apply to a variety of genders and sexual orientations.

## **ACTIVITY 1.1**

# **Blue and Pink Snowballs**

### **CONCEPT**

This activity is designed to get students to acknowledge the stereotypes they hold regarding gender. This activity purposefully uses binary stereotypes to get students to examine their own preconceptions about gender.

### **MATERIALS**

Cut up 10-15 slips of pink and blue paper for each student (or pair).

### **TIME**

This activity takes no more than 25 minutes, depending on the length of discussion allowed.

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

On the blue slip of paper, students will write terms and/or phrases that describe male characteristics. On the pink paper, students will write terms/phrases that describe female characteristics. These terms or characteristics should reflect traits they think of when they think about males or females in general (e.g., athletic, doesn't talk about feelings, talkative, likes to hang out with friends, artistic), and may include positive or negative characteristics about either gender.

Then, students will crumple up the papers and pretend they are tossing "snowballs." Students will gently toss their snowballs (papers) around the room and then gather other students' snowballs. With a partner or small group, students should analyze the slips of paper, answer the following questions, and comment on any insights that emerge:

- Are there any terms that overlap?
- What terms surprised you for either gender?
- How does this demonstrate how we view and speak about gender?

Students should be encouraged to consider what they know from psychology as they consider these questions.

## ACTIVITY 1.2

# Gender as a Biopsychosocial Construct

### CONCEPT

Students will differentiate the biological, psychological and social aspects of gender, while recognizing the interaction between each aspect. This activity will highlight the complexity of gender as a construct.

### MATERIALS

Printed copies of the *Gender as a Biopsychosocial Construct Handout* (i.e., the outlined body and Venn diagram)

Large sheets of paper (to post Venn diagrams on classroom walls)

### TIME

If the first handout is assigned as homework, the Venn diagram and in-class discussion may take 20-25 minutes.

If done entirely in class, this may take a full class period.

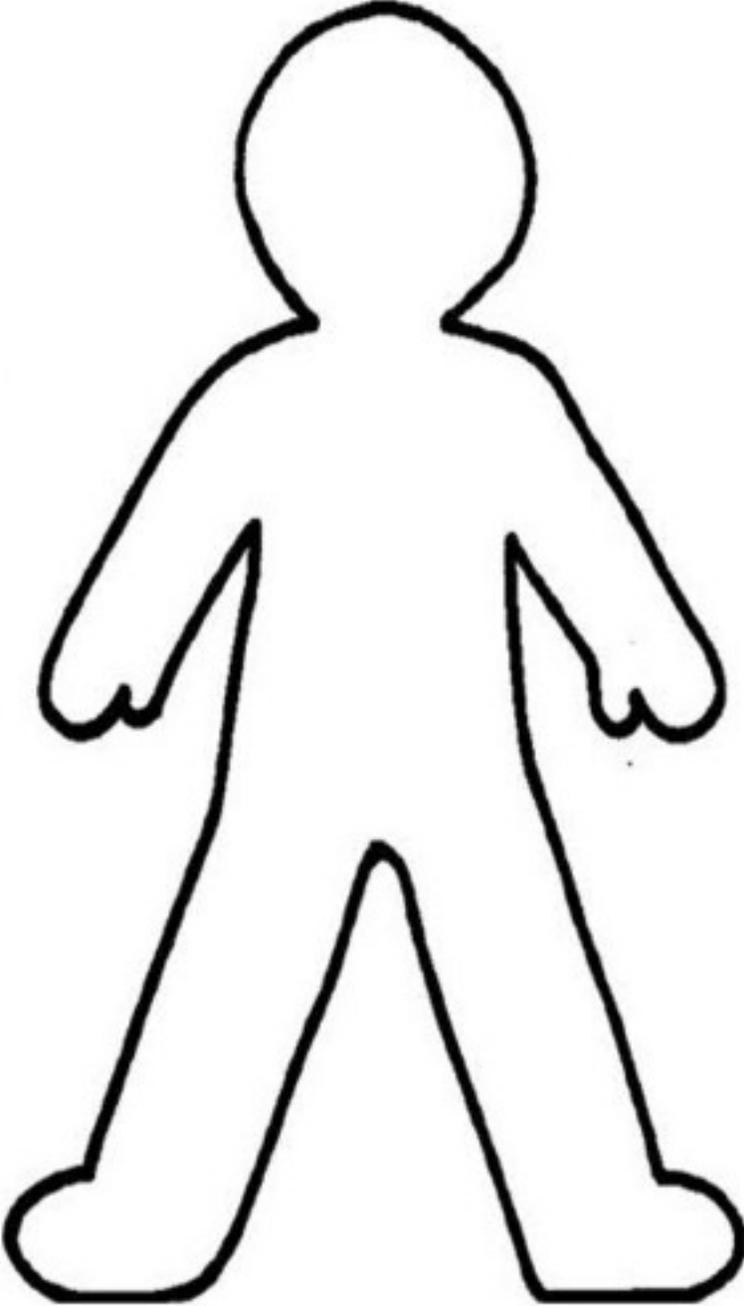
### INSTRUCTIONS

On the outline of a person handout below, students should write terms and ideas that are associated with gender. This could include body parts or characteristics, examples of clothing worn, and so on. This activity could be done individually or as a small group. Alternatively, students could be asked to complete the body diagram individually and then discuss and create the Venn diagram in small groups.

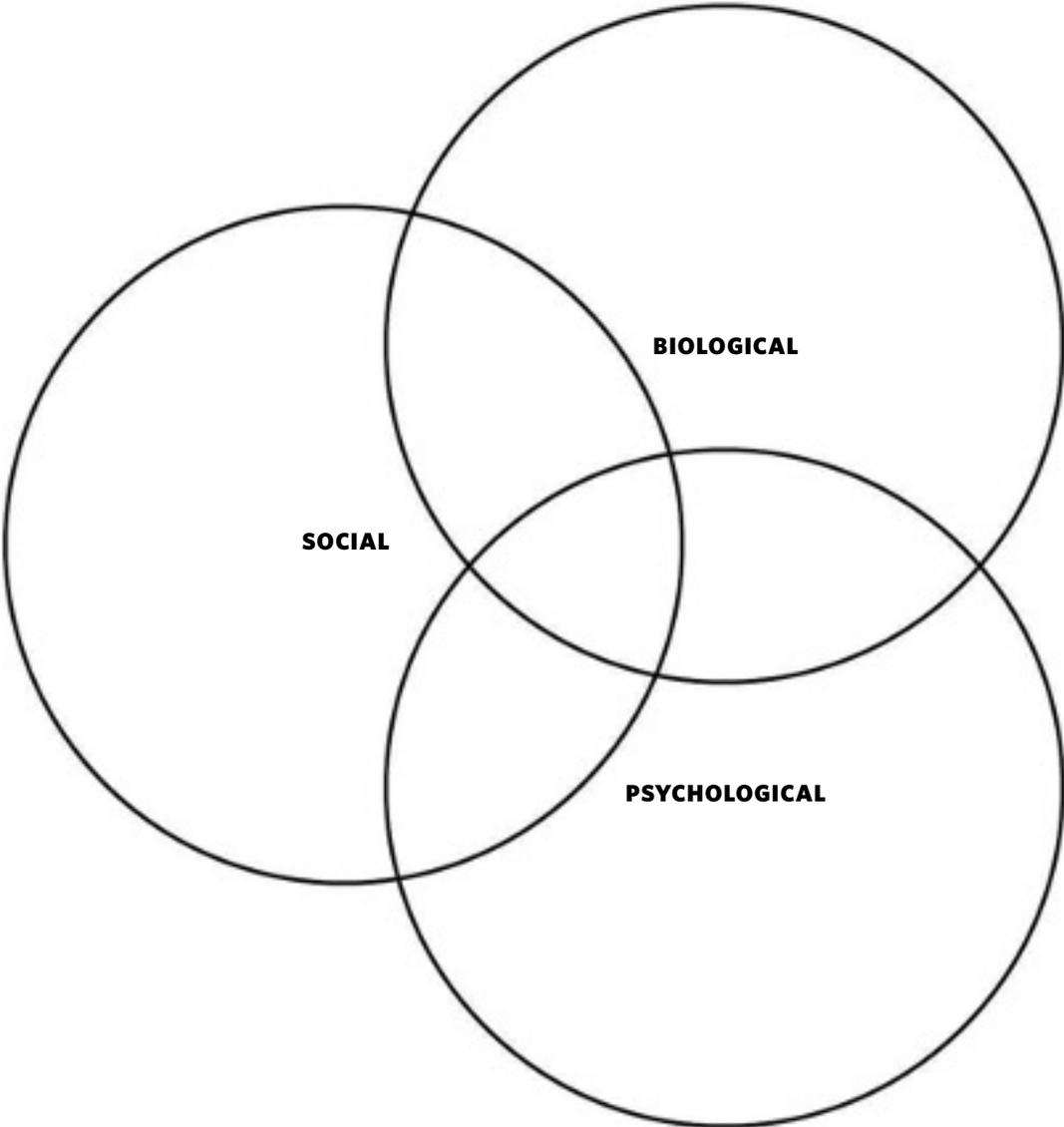
Next, using the terms that you used in your person, categorize the terms into the biopsychosocial approach to Psychology using the Venn diagram handout.

In closing, students can discuss either in small groups or as a class the three categories in the Venn diagram. The purpose of this activity is for students to recognize the complex interaction between the biological, psychological, and social aspects of gender.

Gender as a Biopsychosocial Construct Handout



# Gender as a Biopsychosocial Construct Handout



## **ACTIVITY 2.1**

# Scavenger Hunt Activity

### **CONCEPT**

This activity invites students to consider examples of and messages about male, female, and nonbinary individuals through print and electronic media.

### **MATERIALS**

Internet access might be helpful

*Scavenger Hunt* Handout

### **TIME**

A full class period could be devoted to this activity, or if assigned as homework, students could share observations over 15-20 minutes in class.

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

Provide the handout below to students. In small groups, individually, or as a class, ask students to supply examples of the following topics. Students should list a brief description or find an image of the example in the chart below. After the chart has been completed, invite students to discuss if they noticed any patterns and if they had any reactions to the activity. Students could also be invited to write a reflection instead of or after engaging in class discussion.

# Scavenger Hunt Handout

<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PERSON OR EXAMPLE</b>
Advertising focused on women	
Advertising focused on men	
Gender neutral advertising	
Toys focused on boys	
Toys focused on girls	
Gender neutral toys	
Examples around school focused on girls	
Examples around school focused on boys	
Gender neutral examples around school	

## ACTIVITY 2.2

# Culture and Gender Expression Through Fashion

### CONCEPT

Students will explore historical examples of gender expression fluidity and understand that gender expression is not rigid. This activity is intended to prompt discussion among students and have them reflect on how gender expression has changed over time.

### MATERIALS

*Culture and Gender Handout*

### TIME

15-25 minutes

### INSTRUCTIONS

Ask students to go through the following images or descriptions and answer the associated questions.

### NOTES/SOURCES FOR TEACHERS

#### Image 1

The portrait is Mr. John Freake, a wealthy merchant and attorney in Massachusetts.

<https://worcester.emuseum.com/objects/2313/john-freake>

James Freake © Worcester Art Museum, Sarah C. Garver Fund. Reprinted with permission.

#### Image 2

This is Franklin Roosevelt.

Image downloaded from <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Franklin-Roosevelt-1884.jpg>

#### Image 3

This is author Ernest Hemingway as a young boy, along with his twin sister.

Photo credit: Ernest Hemingway Photograph Collection/John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston. Copyright law allows for unrestricted use of this image for editorial, creative, and educational purposes.

*Teachers can find images online of the other three examples via a search browser. For example, teachers can search for “Billy Porter red carpet” for the first example (e.g., <https://www.elle.com/uk/fashion/celebrity-style/g30673216/billy-porter-met-gala-oscar-fashion>).*

## Handout: Culture and Gender



This is someone dressed in Puritan fashion in 1674.

Based on this picture, how would you describe this person's gender?  
What was the basis for your guess/description?



This is a Victorian era photo of a famous American who made history in the 20th century.

Who do you think it might be? What is the basis for your guess?



Based on this picture, how would you describe this person's gender?  
What was the basis for your guess/description?

What do you notice about Billy Porter's red carpet styles?

Egyptian men and women used makeup (kohl). Wealthy Egyptians wore jewelry and heavily perfumed wigs (scented cones), regardless of gender. How does this contrast with traditional gender role expectations held by many in our current society?

Hanfu is the traditional clothing worn by the Han Chinese that emerged during Shang dynasty; the clothing was unisex. Both females and males could both be seen wearing a similar version of the hanfu called shenyi, a long robe with connecting top and bottom parts. How does this compare or contrast with typical clothing worn today in China or the United States?

**Reflection:** What do these current and historical pictures or descriptions demonstrate about the fluidity of gender expression?

## **ACTIVITY 4.1**

# School Resources for Gender Identity Support

### **CONCEPT**

This activity will help students to identify national, state, local, and school resources for gender identity support.

### **MATERIALS**

*Seeking Support* Handout

Internet

School handbook

### **TIME**

15-20 minutes

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

For each question, find the best national, state, local, and school resource for help. Include as much information as possible for the resource, such as website, phone number, and/or location. Please note these resources will vary from school to school.

# Seeking Support Handout

If you, or a friend, needs help discussing gender with a parent/guardian/adult, where is a safe place to start?

<b>NATIONAL</b>	<b>STATE</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>SCHOOL</b>

If you, or a friend, is looking for a supportive, gender diverse community to join, what are your options?

<b>NATIONAL</b>	<b>STATE</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>SCHOOL</b>

If you, or a friend, is looking for mental health support, where can you find help?

<b>NATIONAL</b>	<b>STATE</b>	<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>SCHOOL</b>

## **ACTIVITY 4.2**

# Seeking Support at School

### **CONCEPT**

This activity will help students to identify school resources for support.

### **MATERIALS**

*Seeking Support at School* Handout

### **TIME**

5-10 minutes

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

Have students complete the handout. In small groups or as a class, have students share which of the school personnel they identified at their school and whether or not they know how to schedule appointments with school personnel.

# Seeking Support at School Handout

Different schools may refer to some of these positions in varying ways or have different personnel within the school. For example, a school counselor may serve different roles in different schools.

**Are there at least two adults that you trust at school?**

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

**If yes, please list the adults you trust:**

**Do you have a school counselor at your school?**

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

**If yes, do you know how to schedule an appointment with your school counselor?**

- Yes
- No

**Do you have a school psychologist at your school?**

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

**If yes, do you know how to schedule an appointment with your school psychologist?**

- Yes
- No

**Do you have a school social worker at your school?**

Yes

No

I don't know

**If yes, do you know how to schedule appointment with your school social worker?**

Yes

No

# References

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# Resources

10 Considerations for Finding a Gender Competent Therapist for Your Child  
<https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/gender-diverse-children.pdf>

Bill Nye On Sexuality and Gender Spectrum  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQDBNJ3mPa0>

decolonizing trans/gender 101 (book)  
<https://publishbiyuti.org/blog/2014/06/decolonizing-transgender-101/>

Emily Quinn Homepage  
<https://www.emilord.com/>

Girl Toys Versus Boy Toys - The Experiment (BBC Stories) (video)  
*Note: This video shows how gender expression affects social interactions at an early age and may be used to introduce a discussion on the topic.*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWu44AqFOil>

GLSEN Homepage  
<https://www.glsen.org/>

GLSEN - How School-Based Mental Health Providers Can Support LGBTQ Youth  
<https://www.glsen.org/blog/how-school-based-mental-health-providers-can-support-lgbtq-youth>

GLSEN Trans Action Kit  
<https://www.glsen.org/activity/trans-action-kit>

Gender Spectrum Homepage  
<https://genderspectrum.org/>

The Gingerbread Person Homepage  
<https://www.gingerbread.org/>

The Gingerbread Person  
[https://egale.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ENG-Gingerbread-Person\\_NEW.pdf](https://egale.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ENG-Gingerbread-Person_NEW.pdf)

"Hir" Poems about Transgender Youth  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRLSgPQG0c4>

How School-Based Mental Health Providers Can Support LGBTQ Youth  
<https://www.glsen.org/blog/how-school-based-mental-health-providers-can-support-lgbtq-youth>

Improving School Climate for Transgender and Nonbinary Youth:  
Research Brief  
<https://www.glsen.org/research/improving-school-climate-transgender-and-nonbinary-youth>

interACT  
<https://interactadvocates.org/>

Intersectionality Self-Study Guide  
<https://students.wustl.edu/intersectionality-self-study-guide/>

J. Jennifer Espinoza - "The Moon is Trans"  
<https://wordsfortheyear.com/2016/06/12/the-moon-is-trans-by-joshua-jennifer-espinoza/>

Learning for Justice Homepage  
<https://www.learningforjustice.org>

Pronouns Matter  
<https://pronouns.org/>

Nonbinary Fact Sheet  
<https://www.apadivisions.org/division-44/resources/nonbinary-fact-sheet.pdf>

Office of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity  
<https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt>

Pronoun Fact Sheet  
<https://www.apadivisions.org/division-44/resources/pronouns-fact-sheet.pdf>

Students Exploring Gender Identity  
<https://www.apa.org/ed/schools/primer/gender-identity>

Tough Guise  
<https://www.kanopy.com/en/product/216726>

Trans Action Kit  
<https://www.glsen.org/activity/trans-action-kit>

Transgender Identity Issues in Psychology  
<https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/programs/transgender>

Welcoming Schools  
<https://welcomingschools.org/>



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