

Session 13: Greater Gender Equality



13.0: Introductions

Participants	Women and Men Together
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To understand how gendered expectations affect the lives of women and men, and girls and boys2. To identify discriminatory or unequal gender norms3. To suggest innovative ideas and methods for modifying discriminatory gender norms
Duration	2 hours
Preparation	Read and/prepare fact sheet and discussion questions, flipcharts, masking tape, etc.

Activity 13.1: Review of Home Practice

Time | 10 minutes

STEPS

1

Welcome everyone to session 13

2

Review home practice by asking individuals to share their experiences (**Encourage them to discuss what happened when they met the school needs of their children**).

3

Encourage participants to continue doing the home practice.

Activity 13.2: Act like a Man/Act like a Woman

Time | 1 hour

What the facilitator needs to know

- ⊙ This activity is a good way to understand perceptions of gender norms. Remember that these perceptions may also be affected by class, race, ethnicity and other differences.
- ⊙ It is also important to remember that gender norms are changing in many countries. It is getting easier, in some places, for men and women to step outside of their “boxes.” During the discussion, ensure to highlight reasons as to why it is easier in some places for women and men to step outside their box.
They could include;
 - Intermarriages and other social interaction
 - Efforts of modernization
 - Family values
 - Education among others
- ⊙ Give an example illustrating how children can be taken advantage of because of the norms that both men and women, boys and girls believe to be true.

Objectives

1. To identify the differences between the behaviour expected of men and women.
2. To understand how the gendered rules affect the lives of women and men, and girls and boys.

Materials

Flipchart, markers, masking tape and resource sheet on gender roles/behaviour expectations.

STEPS

1

Provide an overview of the session objective.

2

In a larger group, **ask the male participants** to share their experiences of being told to “**Act like a Man**”. Write down the responses on a flipchart

- a) **Ask:** “Why do you think they said this?” “How did it make you feel?”
- b) Now ask the **female participants** to share their experiences of being told to “**Act like a woman**”. Write down the responses on the flipchart.
Ask: “Why do you think they said this?” “How did it make you feel?”

3

Explain that **we** will continue to see how society creates very different rules for how men and women are supposed to behave. These rules are called “gender norms” because they define what is supposed to be ‘normal’ for how men and women “ought to” think, feel, and act. However, these rules sometimes restrict the lives of both women and men

4

Use these questions for both the men and women. First, relate the questions to the men and later to the women.

- a) Which of these messages can be potentially harmful? Why? (*Place a star next to each message and discuss one by one.*)
- b) How do the messages impact on a man’s/ woman’s health and the health of other family members?
- c) What happens to men/women who try not to follow/ conform to the messages? How are they treated?
- d) What things could be changed to make men’s/ women’s lives and the family members' lives better?

Next, draw another table that has both a column for men and women. Label it “**Transformed Men/ Women.**” **Ask** the participants to list characteristics of men and women who do not completely agree to the messages of “act like a woman”, “act like a man”

5

Finally ask the participants the following questions:

- a) How can we help our children to modify the unfair norms and practices boys and girls are subjected to?
- b) How can you help modify, at community level, some of the unfair norms and practices men and women are subjected to?

Close the activity by highlighting the following:

1. Throughout their lives, men and women are taught by family, media, and society about how they should conduct themselves as men and women, and how they should relate to members of the opposite and same sex.
2. As we have seen, many of these differences are constructed by society and are not part of our nature or biological make-up.
3. What is considered appropriate behaviour for women or men varies from country to country and from culture to culture. It changes over time. This means that such behaviour is not natural/ inborn. Many of these expectations are completely fine and help us enjoy our identities as either men or women.
4. We, however, all have the ability to discern unhealthy teachings and prevent them from limiting our full potential as human beings or that of our family members. As we become more aware of how some gender stereotypes can negatively impact our lives and communities, we can think constructively about how to challenge them and promote more positive gender roles and relations in our lives and communities.
5. We can all challenge/modify the unfair norms and practices that hinder the lives of men, women, boys and girls, in the characteristics mentioned the gender boxes. The more people do this, the easier it gets.

Activity 13.3: Parenting as Partners

Time | 50 minutes

Materials | Flipchart and markers

Objectives

1. To discuss the issues in which fathers and mothers tend to have different perspectives regarding child upbringing.
2. To agree on how to resolve differences on parenting roles for proper growth of children.

STEPS

1 | **Provide** an overview of the session objective.

2 | In plenary, let participants identify the five most common issues mothers and fathers argue about in regard to parenting. (*Provide some examples like choice of schools, dress code, religion, etc*)

3 | In single sex groups, let participants identify *five techniques a couple can use to resolve disagreement in a respectful and constructive way.*

4 | In plenary, get groups to report back the different perspectives of each sex

5 | Write these techniques on a flipchart. Discuss how realistic each technique is and how it might be made more practical.

a) Ask to hear your partner's views and listen to them carefully without interruption (*You can provide examples for each issue discussed by the group*).

b) Identify any aspects of your partner's views that you agree with.

c) Ask your partner to hear your own views without interruption

d) State your own views firmly, and if possible clarify about how you feel reading the issue.

☉ Try not to blame your partner or list their mistakes.

☉ Try to have a neutral tone. Do not to be angry.

☉ Try to use 'I' other than 'you' in your statements to help avoid blaming your partner.

e) Have a 'problem-solving approach'. Do not try to win the argument with your partner, but try to find a solution you can both agree on.

f) Don't make threats or provocations

g) If you feel too emotional/overwhelmed, seek another engagement to distract oneself. Resume discussion on feelings when calmer.

h) Try to do at least three positive things to improve/reinforce your relationship every time an issue of disagreement arises.

Close the activity by highlighting some of the following:

1. A positive spousal relationship is very important because taking care of children requires support from each other, and is a mixture of hard work and love.
2. Parents' styles of parenting are often shaped by the way they were brought up by their parents. The influence of one's own upbringing can be positive or negative.
3. However, parents have to stay attuned to each other and have open communication to discuss how they can share the parenting roles.
4. Always try to present a united front to the children and resolve differences away from them.
5. Agree on a parenting plan that you both believe is in the best interest of your children, marriage and family.

Activity 13.4: Home Practice

Time | 5 minutes

Materials | Flipchart and markers

STEPS

- 1 | **Ask** parents to share the knowledge they got from the session with their spouse, children and/ or neighbours.
- 2 | **Ask** parents to reflect, every day, on the gender norms they would like to modify in their lives that would benefit themselves and family, and let them start the process of modifying it.
- 3 | Bid participants farewell