

## Breaking a Gender Norm

- 1) I wore nail polish for the day
- 2) I broke the norm around campus and with my friends.
- 3) People around campus whom I didn't know and my group of friends (around 10, 15 friends) noticed that I was wearing bright-blue nail polish.
- 4) I felt a little bit nervous when my friend was putting on the nail polish. It was against my way of dressing and my learned gender role, so it felt wrong and uncomfortable as the nail polish was being applied.
- 5) After the nail polish was applied, I went back to my room for an hour – I had some work to finish off – and when I left, I had forgotten that I had nail polish on and I didn't notice it until my friend asked me why I was wearing nail polish. By then, I felt comfortable and carried on with my day as usual.
- 6) The strangers I noticed gave me an odd look and that was that. Since it was a folkway norm, there was no other reaction than the odd look. My friends reacted in a similar way: one noticed, gave a short laugh and asked why. My response was "I like to express myself from time to time" and then carried on as normal and our conversation carried on as nothing happened. Another friend was wondering why she felt there was something different about me till she noticed the nail polish and another friend didn't even notice till it was pointed out to him.
- 7) Since there was no negative reaction, I did not feel any hostility. It felt my friends were open-minded and accepting of the fact that whatever a person does to make themselves happy, kudos to them.
- 8) I felt that people were pretty accepting of gender fluidity in recent years since there is a lot more information about it – magazines, internet – they could read other's people's thoughts and feelings about struggling with their gender, and that in turn, made it more accepting to breaking gender folkways. I have not seen anyone break any gender mores, but I think if people do, it will be in a discreet niche environment surrounded with similar-thinking people.
- 9) I felt that the following gender norms males had to break were too noticeable while for girls, it was easier, therefore I propose for males, they could wear nail-polish, or make-up that is light enough to be noticed but not overdone.  
For females, dressing in a more masculine way like shirt, loose-fit jeans, hiding long hair to make it seem like you have a guy's haircut and or adding facial hair.