GET READY TO CREATE CHANGE.
The Women’s Fund of Central Ohio brings people together to explore and challenge important issues.
We believe that listening to each other and understanding shared experiences is vital to creating solutions to underlying societal problems that negatively impact women and girls.

Gender norms are the root of many issues facing women and men in our society. They are implicit or explicit rules, expectations and standards placed on both sexes regarding how they should behave and be treated by society. At The Women’s Fund, we believe the limiting and damaging expectations, society has for the behavior of women and girls extends to impact women’s economic self-sufficiency. Knowing this, we wanted to explore this issue and its impact in central Ohio to begin the conversation to create positive change.

By convening the community to hold conversations, The Women’s Fund is calling upon groups and individuals to take steps toward change.

This is where you come in!

As part of the Gender By Us conversation you are contributing to a greater dialogue for change. By sharing your voice, perspective, and experiences you are raising awareness around the impact of gender norms—which is the first step to creating change!

The Women’s Fund acknowledges the complexity of the subject matter in this toolkit. The Intersectionality of race, class, sexual and gender identity, social norms identification of LGBTQ, varying geographies, etc. all add additional layers to discussions around gender norms. There are no right or wrong responses. Every individual’s experiences is theirs. Guests participating in Gender By Us conversations should feel welcome, safe and free of judgement.
What’s in the Toolkit:

CONVERSATION GUIDE

MAN / WOMAN BOX ICEBREAKER

DEFINITION CARDS

CONVERSATION CARDS

DATA POINT CARDS

CONVERSATION DO’S AND DONT’S

Find the full Pervasive Power of Gender Norms research report on The Women’s Fund website.

→ womensfundcentralohio.org
IT’S SIMPLE. HAVE A CONVERSATION.
HOW TO GET STARTED.
Find 60-90 minutes with a group to host a conversation and use this toolkit.

Once you select your date, let The Women’s Fund know.

Email us at genderbyus@womensfundcentralohio.org

Invite the group.

• We recommend 8-10 people per group.
• If you choose to host a larger group, consider breaking into smaller groups and allowing time for each to discuss and report out to the larger group.
• The guest list is up to you.
• Think about the people you spend time with—friends, family, colleagues and neighbors.
• Think about people with multiple perspectives.
• Consider inviting both women and men.

Send Implicit Association Test link to all participants.

• You may want to encourage participants to take the gender section of the Harvard Implicit Association Test prior to coming to conversation.

→ www.bit.ly/IATgender

Prepare for the conversation.

• For the Man / Woman Box Exercise, have a sheet of paper, pen, and/or markers ready.
• We suggest you also provide snacks and drinks for your guests to create a comfortable space.

Implicit bias and gender norms are not things we consciously chose to have. They are the product of the images we see and messages we take in through media, society etc. By identifying and understanding them, it is not intended to shame or blame anyone but to serve as a launching point for making conscious choices in how we want to be, and the change we want to create. The first step in creating social change is changing the definition of the issue at hand.
Start the conversation

1. **Introductions**
   Allow the participants to introduce themselves.

2. **Review Do’s and Don’ts of Discussion**
   **DO**
   - Listen.
   - Encourage participation by all.
   - Use “I” statements.
   - Invite guests to follow-up and expand on ideas.
   - Honor that everyone is entitled to their experience and opinion.
   - Keep this a safe space.
   - Let the conversation flow freely.

   **DON’T**
   - Be judgmental or dismiss any participants.
   - Interrupt one another.
   - Engage in a debate.
   - Share confidential information beyond the group.

3. **Icebreaker: Man / Woman Box Exercise** — See Man / Woman Box Card.

4. **Set the Stage**
   Define Implicit Bias and Gender Norms — See Definition Cards.

5. **Choose a card to read aloud to the group**
   - There are cards with questions and data reference points in the areas of Women’s Economic Self-Sufficiency, Leadership for Women, and Lifeskills for Girls.
   - Grab card decks and dive in.
   - There is no required order—see where the conversation takes you.
   - Your group does not need to answer all questions. You may only get through two, and that’s totally fine.

6. **Call to Action**
   Challenge the group to provide answer final question: *What will you do?*

7. **Follow Up with Participants**
   We will send you an email with a post-survey link to send to your group.
   → www.bit.ly/wfcoconvo

8. **Follow Up with The Women’s Fund**
   Tell us how it went and provide any feedback.
HOW TO HOST THE CONVERSATION.
What will you do?
Commit to two things you will do to disrupt pervasive gender norms and implicit bias after being a part of the conversation. Share with your networks!

Keep the conversation going by using #GenderByUs
- Use the # when you see examples of gender norms.
- Use the # to celebrate moments where you see gender norms being disrupted.
- Tag a friend into the conversation on social media.

Share your experience with your network and with The Women’s Fund at @WomensFundCO

SHARE YOUR VOICE.
REFERENCES


5. The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University, 2015-2016. The Pervasive Power of Gender Norms.


THE PERVERSIVE POWER OF
GENDER NORMS

womensfundcentralohio.org #GENDERBYUS

Gender By Us Toolkit Sponsors

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CardinalHealth
DEFINITIONS

What are Gender Norms?

Gender norms are the popular and conventional ideas most people have about what it means to “act like” a man or a woman. We tend to learn them from our experiences in family, peer groups, places of worship, schools, movies, magazines, and the internet, for example. With persistent use, they come to be taken for granted or thought of as “natural” and “just the way things are.”

Gender norms tend to be narrow and significantly limit the range of possibilities for gender expression.

What is Implicit Bias?

Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. Implicit biases may be activated based on any number of identities we perceive in others, such as gender, age, or race, and they tend to favor our own group, creating “us” and “them” divisions. Implicit biases encompass both attitudes and stereotypes we may unconsciously hold regarding groups in our society.
MAN / WOMAN BOX

Instructions

The goal of this exercise is to observe dominant mainstream ideas of gender. We acknowledge that gender roles may vary depending on ethnicity, culture, class, ability and family, among other things. This exercise seeks to look at and reflect on stereotypes.

STEP 1: Man Box
• When the statement “act like a man” is said, what are the expectations implied by this?
• How are men supposed to behave?
• What happens if they don’t?

STEP 2: Woman Box
• Repeat but this time with the first question:
  • What are the expectations of “acting like a lady – or a woman”?

STEP 3: Review and Reflect
CONVERSATION CARDS

#GENDERBYUS
What are your thoughts about the definition of implicit bias and gender norms?
Describe a time when you, intentionally or unintentionally, reinforced a gender norm.
What implicit or explicit biases do you have?

#GENDERBYUS
Describe an experience when you have been affected by gender bias. How have you been treated differently because of gender?
What impact does gender bias have on our society?
How are gender norms reflected in society, including pop culture, advertising, movies and TV?

#GENDERBYUS
How do you see gender norms impacting women’s leadership?

#GENDERBYUS
How do you see gender norms impacting women’s economic self-sufficiency?
How do you see gender norms impacting lifeskills for girls?
What can be done to change norms or expectations about how men and women should act?
What effect do you think biases and norms have on an individual?
When was the first time you remember society telling you what “acceptable behavior” was for your gender?

#GENDERBYUS
What gender-related messages did you hear growing up?

#GENDERBYUS
How were you told to act based on your gender?
What rules do you feel you are expected to follow because of your gender? Do you always?

#GENDERBYUS
DATA POINTS

#GENDERBYUS
In Ohio, women, on average, earned just 78 cents for every dollar men earned. ¹
Hispanic women earn 89 cents on the dollar when compared to Hispanic men and just 54 cents on the dollar when compared to white men. 5
African American women earn 90 cents on the dollar when compared to African American men and 63 cents on the dollar compared to white men.\textsuperscript{5}
Women living below the poverty line have slightly higher educational attainment than men, yet they still have higher overall poverty rates. ²
27% of female heads of household in central Ohio are not economically secure. Looking at unmarried female heads of household in central Ohio, that number jumps to 45%.
“Even when we hold education, experience, employment gaps due to children, occupation, industry and job title constant, there is a pay gap. This “unexplained” pay gap leaves little beyond discrimination to explain it. Some research has found this unexplained portion is a sizeable share of the gap—41%.” 6
Ohio has never elected a woman to serve in the United States Senate.
Ohio has never elected a female governor. ³
One of six elected officials statewide is a woman. \(^3\)
Currently in Ohio, only 10 of the 53 cities with a population over 30,000 have female mayors. ³
Leadership qualities linked to “male” characteristics mean women are perceived as unable to lead if they are too feminine but are too masculine if they exhibit these leadership qualities. ⁵
Central Ohio residents viewed traits such as emotional, polite, easy going, nurturing, gentle and bossy as feminine. Conversely, traits such as assertive, ambitious, brave, confident, analytical and strong were viewed as more masculine. 5
More than half of Columbus metropolitan statistical area residents who took the Harvard Implicit Association Test had a moderate to strong bias toward associations of women with family and men with careers. 5

#GENDERBYUS
Gendered expectations resulting in disparate educational opportunities, in turn drive diverging career paths for many women versus men. Today women earn more college degrees than men, and yet they are not equally represented across all fields, especially STEM fields.
Even when women do choose and succeed in STEM careers, as in medicine, they are more likely to end up in those tied to caregiving and so-called “soft science” (pediatric, veterinary) than those considered “hard science” such as cardio-thoracic or neurosurgery—careers that are accorded greater esteem and higher pay.
A national study of 600 girls aged 12–18, showed that 52% had experienced academic sexism, 76% had experienced athletic sexism and 90% had experienced some form of sexual harassment. ⁴
Learning traditional femininity often means internalizing values such as being deferential, desirable and dependent that directly conflict with academic achievement and economic security.\textsuperscript{5}
Gender norms push girls away from the emerging fields of science, technology, engineering, math and medicine—which are expected to generate a disproportionate share of the high-paying, high-advancement jobs for the 21st century. ¹⁰
For boys, learning masculinity often means learning to assert dominance, strength, individualism and aggression. This translates to rule-breaking and defiance of authority. It also leads to viewing academics as weak, feminine, or gay—attitudes tied to lower performance and greater engagement with school disciplinary and juvenile justice regimes.  

#GENDERBYUS  

#GENDER/NORMS
DISCUSSION
DO’S

#GENDERBYUS
Discussion Do’s

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• Encourage participation by all.
• Use “I” statements.
• Invite guests to follow-up and expand on ideas.
• Honor that everyone is entitled to their experience and opinion.
• Keep this a safe space.
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DISCUSSION
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• Be judgmental or dismiss any participants.
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