



**It's On Us Workshop:  
LGBTQ+ Mythbusters, Part I:  
Understanding Sex, Gender, and Sexual  
Orientation**

# Agenda

- **Introductions**
- **Self care check-in**
- **Biology, culture, and gender?  
Oh my!**
- **Sexual orientation: chosen or  
born this way?**
- **Tools for sexual identity**
- **Toolkit**
- **Self care reminder**
- **Post-training survey**

# Learning Outcomes

Differentiate understandings of sex and gender through a queer, feminist lens.

Critique traditional understandings of sex and gender differences via social justice-oriented perspectives of gender.

Critique traditional understandings of sexual orientation via emerging theories.

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# INTRODUCTIONS

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# SELF CARE CHECK

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# Biology, Culture, and Gender? Oh my!

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**What is sex? What is gender? Are they the same or different?**

## HOW IS SEX DEFINED?

**Sex**: A label assigned at birth based on genitals.

# HOW IS SEX DEFINED?

COMMON SEXUAL DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFERENTIATION		
Chromosomes	XX	XY
Visible Genitalia	Vulva (clitoris, labia majora, and labia minora)	Penis and scrotum
Gonads	Ovaries (internal)	Testes (external)
Hormones primarily related to sexual anatomy and reproduction	Estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone	Testosterone, FSH, and LH
Internal reproductive structures	Fallopian tubes, uterus, and vagina	Vas deferens, seminal vesicles, and ejaculatory ducts
Differentiations in the brain*	Hypothalamus is estrogen sensitive (for cyclical release of hormones)	Hypothalamus is insensitive to estrogen, leading to a steady production of hormones

\* While some research has demonstrated other differences, contradictory research has uncovered confounded variables disproving these differences

## HOW IS GENDER DEFINED?

**Gender**: A social and legal status; a set of expectations from society about behaviors, characteristics, and thoughts.

# HOW DOES SOCIETY ENCULTURATE US INTO BINARY GENDER?

**Gender Roles:** Unwritten rules that define how a person should present, dress, and express themselves based on their assigned sex.

**Gender Norms:** Expectations about how a person should behave based on their assigned sex.

**Socialization:** A lifelong process occurring through observation, imitation, and modeling of others' behaviors wherein individuals learn and internalize social expectations of gender (i.e., gender roles and norms).



**What are some common gender roles and norms based on assigned sex (men and women)?**



**What are some things people  
assume men and women are  
naturally better at — and where do  
those assumptions come from?**

**Do you think traditional  
conceptions of 'natural' male and  
female traits are shaped more by  
biology or by culture? Why?**

## Sex differences in cognitive abilities: A cross-cultural perspective

Virginia A. Mann <sup>a</sup>, Sumiko Sasanuma <sup>†</sup>, Naoko Sakuma <sup>†</sup>, Shinobu Masaki <sup>†</sup>

### Abstract

Studies in Western cultures have indicated significant sex differences in certain cognitive abilities. To determine whether similar differences occur in a non-Western culture, this study administered a cross-linguistic battery of tests to high school students in Japan and America. In both cultures, girls averaged significantly higher scores on a Story Recall test, the Digit-Symbol test and a Word Fluency test whereas boys achieved significantly higher scores on a Mental Rotation test. The analysis of standardized test scores further indicated that the size of the sex difference was culture-independent in three out of these four cases. These results are discussed in the context of the GESCHWIND and GALABURDA [Cerebral Lateralization. Biological Mechanisms, Associations and Pathology, Bradford Books, Cambridge, Massachusetts] account of the contribution of testosterone to left-right asymmetries in early cerebral development.

## Stereotype threat, identity salience, and spatial reasoning

Matthew S. McGlone <sup>a</sup>  , Joshua Aronson <sup>b</sup>

### Abstract

Stereotype threat research provides insight into how the low standardized test scores of students from stigmatized social groups may derive in part from the negative performance expectations about these groups. Because these students belong to many social groups, one means of mitigating the threat is to remind them of their membership in groups for which there are positive performance expectations. We tested this hypothesis by priming different social identities among undergraduates prior to administering a standardized test of spatial reasoning, the Vandenberg Mental Rotation Test. We found that females who were primed to contemplate their identity as students at a selective private college performed better than those who were primed to contemplate their sex or a test-irrelevant identity. For males, priming their sex increased performance relative to the test-irrelevant or private college student primes. These results demonstrate the potential of reminding students of their achieved identities (e.g., private college student) in an effort to subdue evaluation apprehension created by negative stereotypes about their ascribed identities, such as being female in the case of spatial abilities.

**Let's test it!**

**Group 1 goes first.**

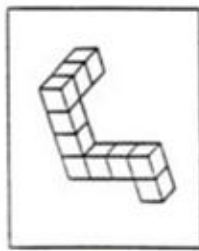
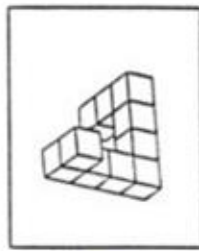
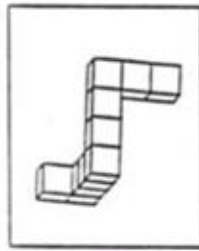
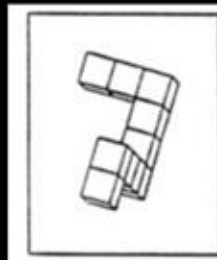
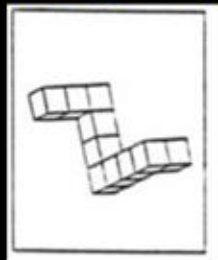
**Group 2 close your eyes!**

**You are going to complete an  
Interior Design Spatial Challenge.**

**You will read a question.  
You have 15 seconds to write down the  
answer to the question.**

Which two images below are rotations of Image #1?

Image #1



A

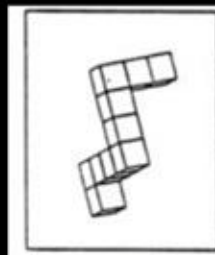
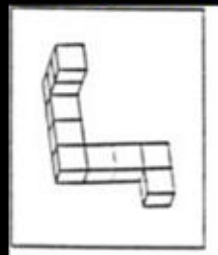
B

C

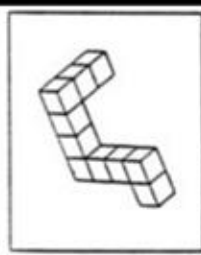
D

Which two images below are rotations of Image #2?

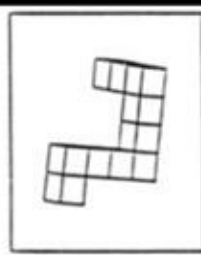
Image #2



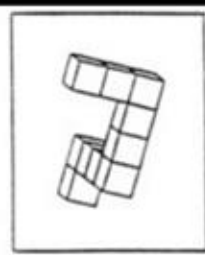
A



B



C



D

**Let's test it!**

**Group 1 close your eyes.**

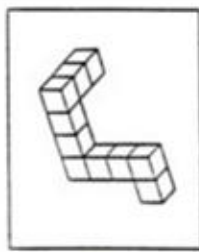
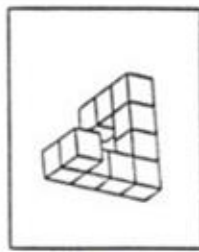
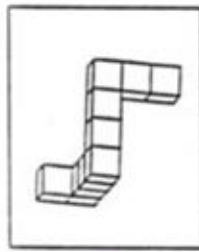
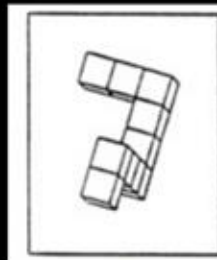
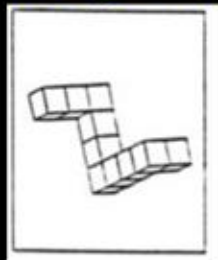
**Group 2 get ready!**

**You are going to complete an  
Engineering Aptitude Test.**

**You will read a question.  
You have 20 seconds to write down the  
answer to the question.**

Which two images below are rotations of Image #1?

Image #1



A

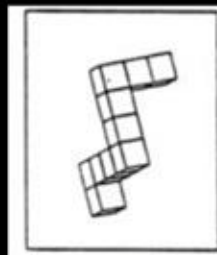
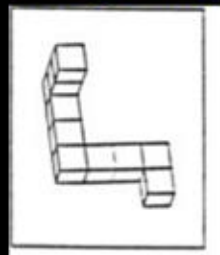
B

C

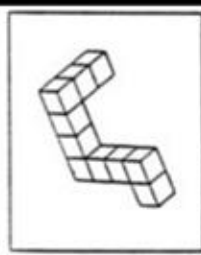
D

Which two images below are rotations of Image #2?

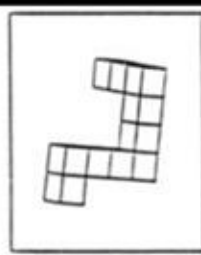
Image #2



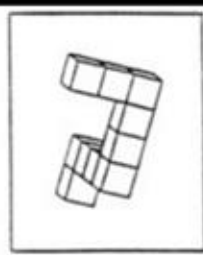
A



B



C



D

**Put in the chat:**

**1) How confident you felt completing the task:**

1 = Not at all confident, 10 = Completely confident

**2) Your answers**

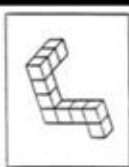
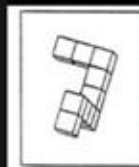
## TWO DIRECTIONS: GENDER-SPECIFIC

GROUP 1: "Interior Design  
Spatial Challenge" (Feminine)

GROUP 2: "Engineering  
Aptitude Test" (Masculine)

## ONE ROTATION TASK

Image #1



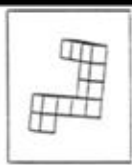
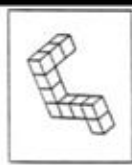
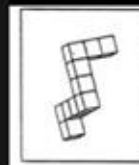
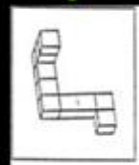
A

B

C

D

Image #2



A

B

C

D

**Interior Design  
Spatial Challenge**  
(Feminine)

**Engineering  
Aptitude Test**  
(Masculine)

**Women**

**High confidence  
Fast response time  
More accuracy**

**Low confidence  
Slow response time  
Less accuracy**

**Men**

**Low confidence  
Slow response time  
Less accuracy**

**High confidence  
Fast response time  
More accuracy**

**Do you think common conceptions  
of 'natural' male and female traits  
are shaped more by biology or by  
culture? Why?**

**“The existence of sex differences...says nothing about the source or inevitability of such differences or their potential basis in immutable biology.”**

— Cordelia Fine, Psychologist at University of Melbourne, author of  
*Delusions of Gender*

**“A gendered world will produce a gendered brain.”**

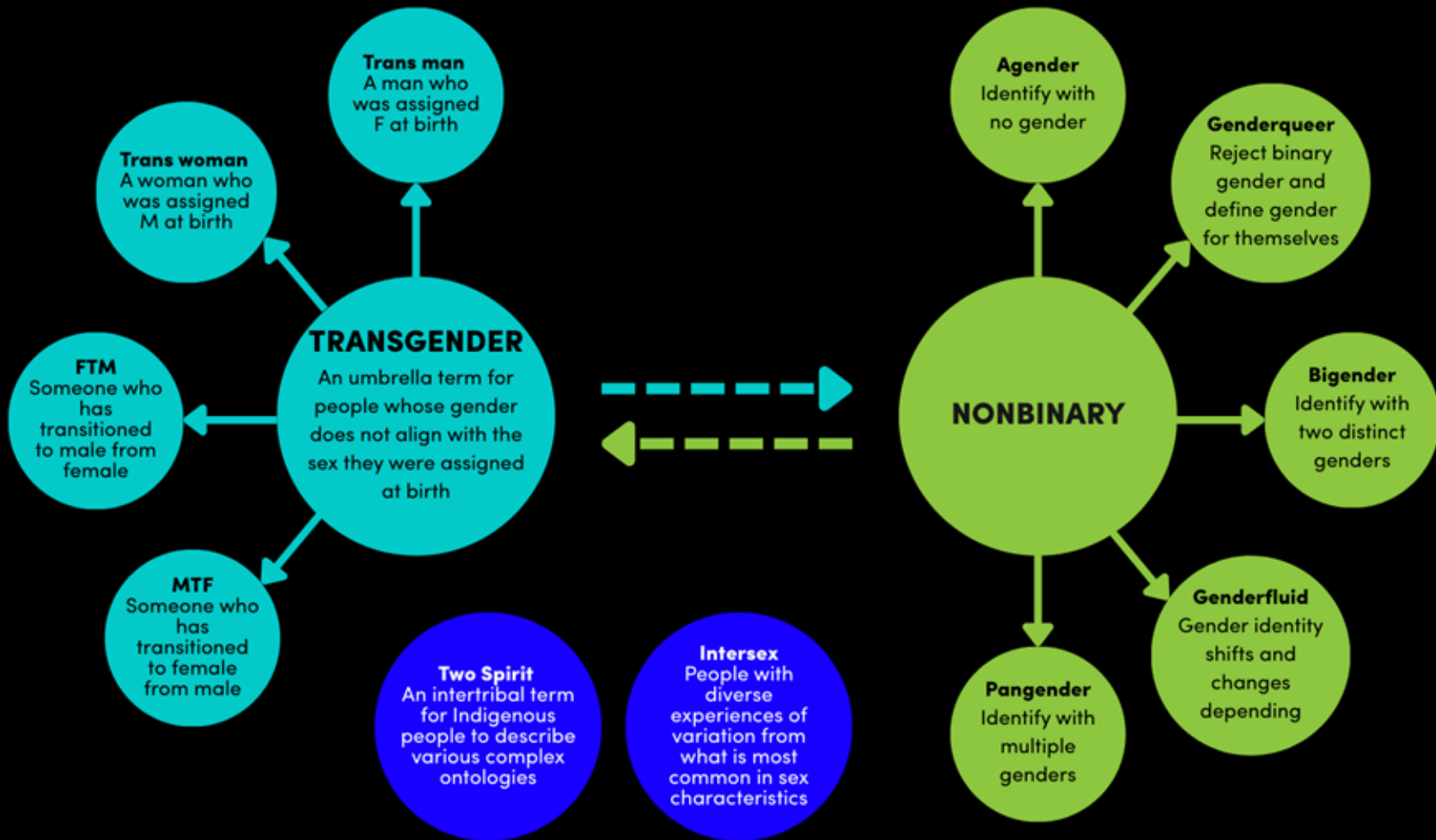
— Gina Rippon, Neurologist at Aston University, author of  
*The Gendered Brain*

**“Gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which “sexed nature” or “a natural sex” is produced and established as “prediscursive,” prior to culture, a politically neutral surface on which culture acts.”**

— Judith Butler, Philosopher, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*

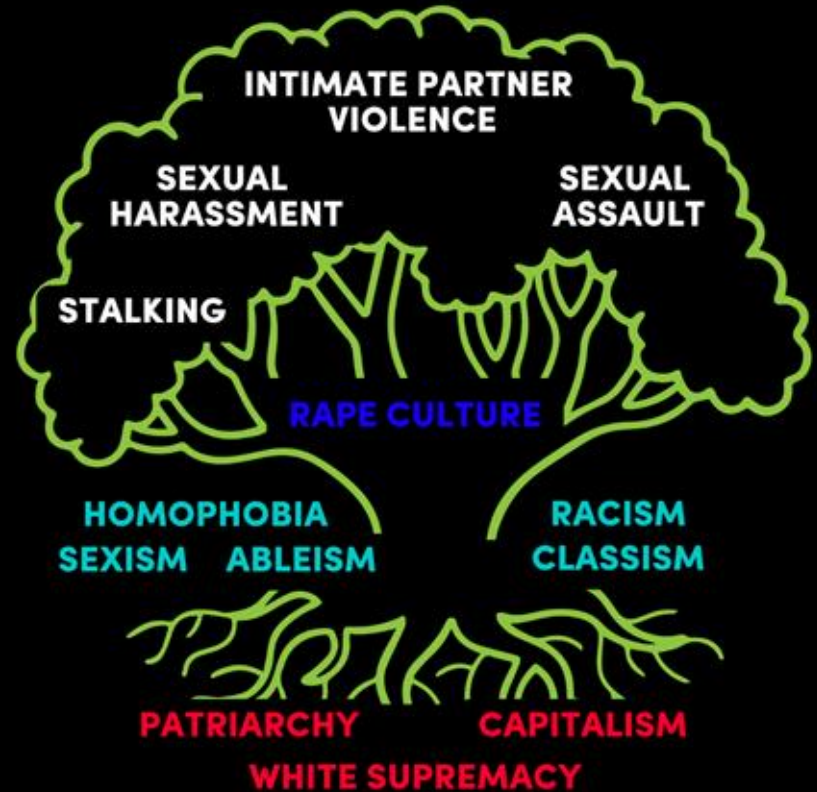
**“Transition is estrangement...to add difficulty to the seeming naturalness of things, and in doing so prolong and make strange our perception of the everyday so that we might see it anew...Transition’s estrangement affects everyone involved, from cisgender people who are asked to consciously consider pronouns (and what they signify) for the first time. To trans people who are constantly negotiating how we are seen, what exactly is being seen, what connects, and what separates us from any particular category of gender.”**

— Nathaniel Dickson, *Seizing the Means: Towards a Trans Epistemology*



**Why is it important to dissect traditional notions of sex and gender when thinking about violence prevention?**

# Primary Prevention: Root Causes of Violence



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# **Sexual Orientation: Chosen or Born This Way?**

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**ACTIVITY!**  
**Put your answers in the chat.**

Activity developed by [understandingprejudice.com](http://understandingprejudice.com)

# ALFRED KINSEY'S SCALE



## WHERE DID THEY PLACE THEMSELVES?



A woman who has had a number of romantic relationships with women and is not interested in pursuing relationships with men.

## WHERE DID THEY PLACE THEMSELVES?



A man who has had several romantic relationships with women and men, though he strongly prefers relationships with men.

## WHERE DID THEY PLACE THEMSELVES?



A man who is more attracted to men than women, although all of his sexual relationships have been with women.

## WHERE DID THEY PLACE THEMSELVES?



A transgender man who is psychologically, emotionally, and socially prefers the company of women over men, but whose sexual experiences have been exclusively with men.

## WHERE DID THEY PLACE THEMSELVES?



A person who was AMAB who has self identified as gay since their teens, but who has twice cheated on their current boyfriend by having sexual encounters with women.

# REFLECTION

- What made this activity difficult?
- What are some limitations of the Kinsey Scale?

# WHAT INFLUENCES SEXUAL ORIENTATION IDENTITY?

Our own  
gender  
identity and  
expression

Others'  
gender  
identity and  
expression

Our sexual  
desire

Our romantic  
desire

Physical  
traits we find  
attractive

Personality  
traits we find  
attractive

Our  
emotional  
desire

Our beliefs  
about gender  
and sexuality

What they  
believe about  
attraction

Our previous  
experiences

What we want  
and don't  
want to do

What we've  
been taught  
about  
attraction

**Is sexual orientation the result of  
our biology or culture?**

**“For me, it is a choice. I understand that for many people it’s not, but for me it’s a choice, and you don’t get to define my gayness for me. A certain section of our community is very concerned that it not be seen as a choice, because if it’s a choice, then we could opt out. I say it doesn’t matter if we flew here or we swam here, it matters that we are here and we are one group and let us stop trying to make a litmus test for who is considered gay and who is not.**

**Why can’t it be a choice? Why is that any less legitimate? It seems we’re just ceding this point to bigots who are demanding it, and I don’t think that they should define the terms of the debate. I also feel like people think I was walking around in a cloud and didn’t realize I was gay, which I find really offensive. I find it offensive to me, but I also find it offensive to all the men I’ve been out with.”**

— Cynthia Nixon, actress in *Sex and the City*

**“Are we first attracted to ways of being in the world,  
including bodily ways, which we later learn to associate with  
certain specific parts of the body?”**

— Amia Srinivasan, Philosopher at University of Oxford, *The Right to Sex*

## WHAT INFLUENCES SEXUAL ORIENTATION IDENTITY?

**NATURE**



**NURTURE**

**“There is no consensus among scientists about the exact reasons that an individual develops a heterosexual, bisexual, gay, or lesbian orientation...no findings have emerged that permit scientists to conclude that sexual orientation is determined by any particular factor or factors. Many think that nature and nurture both play complex roles.”**

— American Psychological Association

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# Tools for Teaching Sexual Identity

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# SOGIE

## **Sexual Orientation**

Who a person is physically  
and/or romantically  
attracted to

## **Gender Identity**

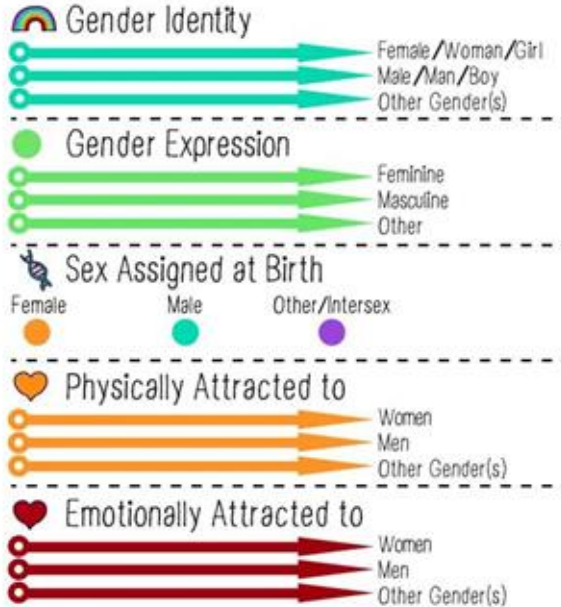
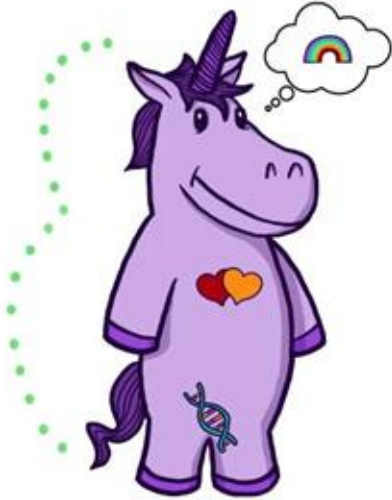
How a person feels inside  
about themselves and  
their own gender

## **Gender Expression**

How a person expresses  
their gender through  
clothing, behavior, and  
personal appearance

# The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:  
**TSER**  
Trans Student Educational Resources



To learn more, go to:  
[www.transstudent.org/gender](http://www.transstudent.org/gender)

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

**A TOOL TO INTRODUCE SEX  
AND GENDER**

# Gender Galaxy

TWO SPIRIT  
GALAXY



SEXUALITY  
GALAXY



ADD YOUR OWN PLANET (COMET OR MOON)!  
MAKE YOUR OWN SOLAR SYSTEM OR GALAXY!

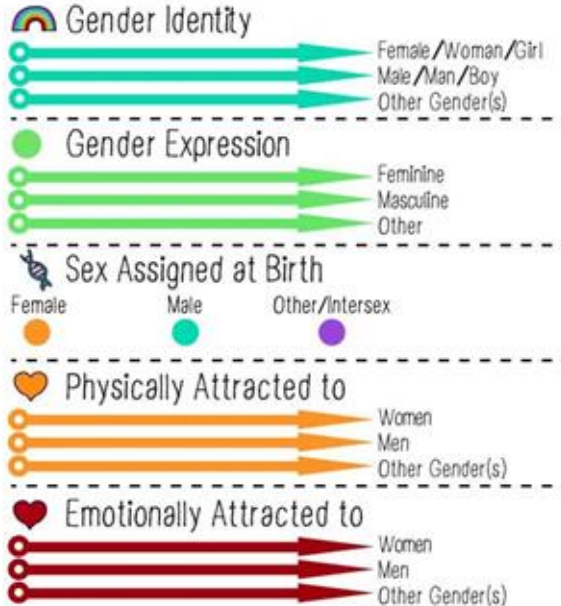
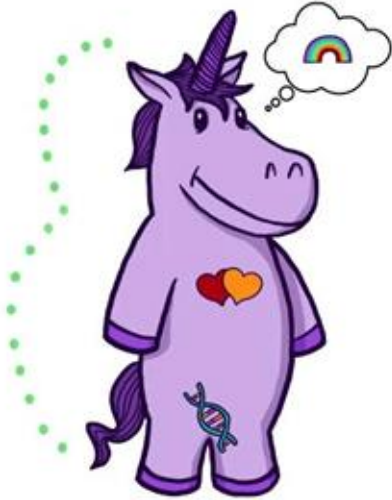
**A TOOL TO UNDERSTAND SEX  
AND GENDER**



**It's On Us Toolkit:  
Further Learning and Education  
Materials**

# The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:  
**TSER**  
Trans Student Educational Resources



To learn more, go to:  
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Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

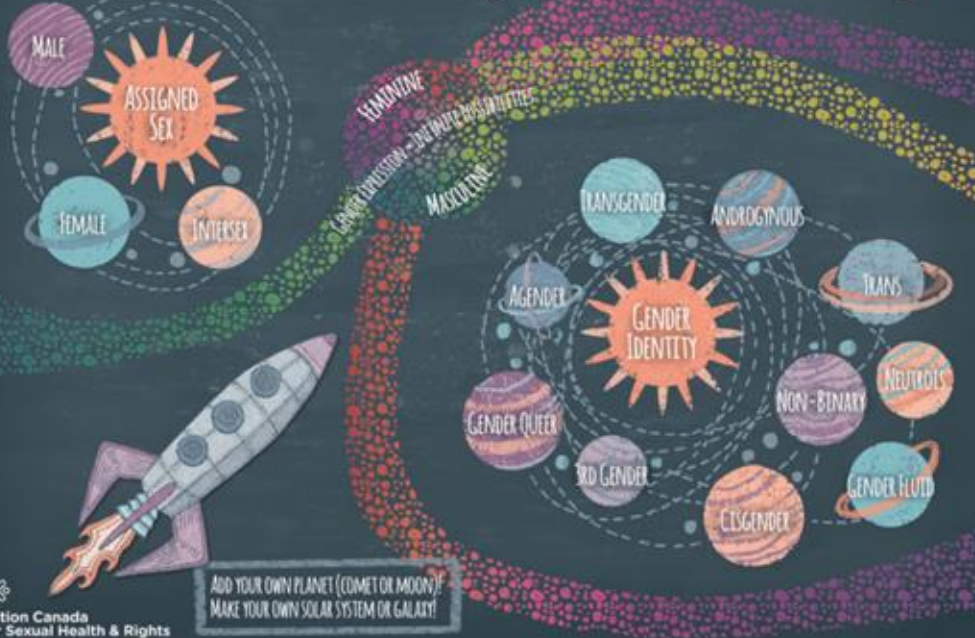
- **Use:** Education about sexual identity
- **Audience:** Peers, partners, and allies
- **Level:** Beginner; those who may be new to the topic
- **Find it:**  
[www.transstudents.org/gender](http://www.transstudents.org/gender)

# Gender Galaxy

TWO SPIRIT  
GALAXY



SEXUALITY  
GALAXY



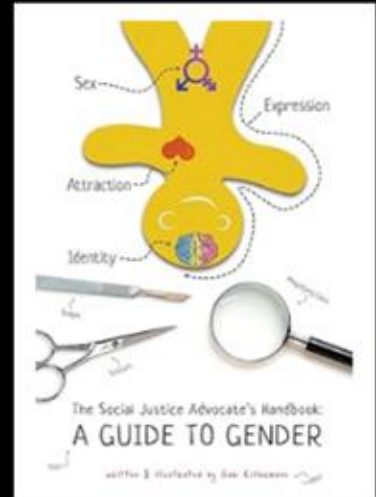
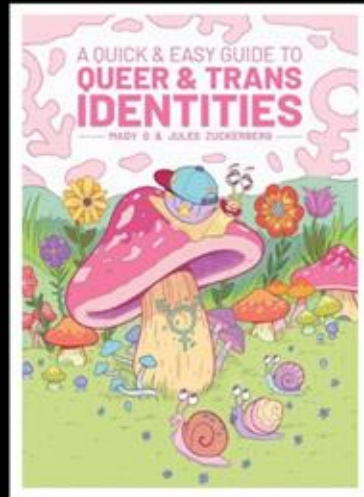
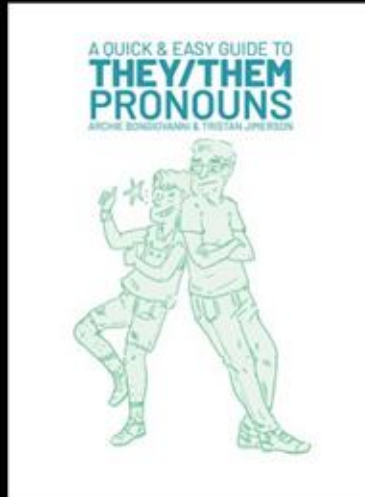
- **Use:** Education about sexual identity
- **Audience:** Peers, partners, and allies
- **Level:** Intermediate; those who are familiar with the topic
- **Find it:** [www.actioncanadashr.org/gender-and-sexuality-galaxies](http://www.actioncanadashr.org/gender-and-sexuality-galaxies)

# Sexuality Galaxy

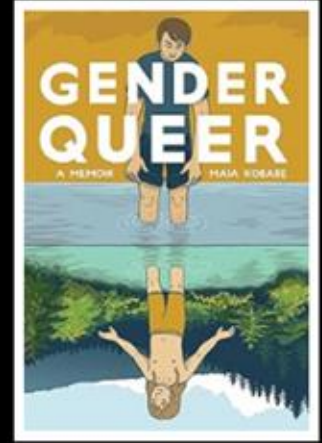
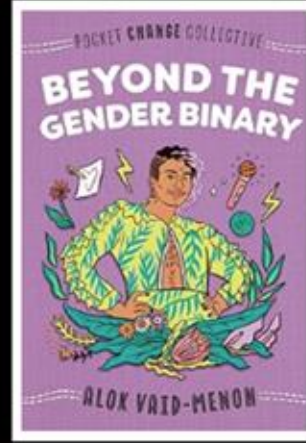
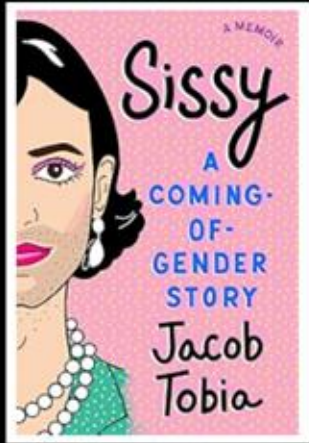


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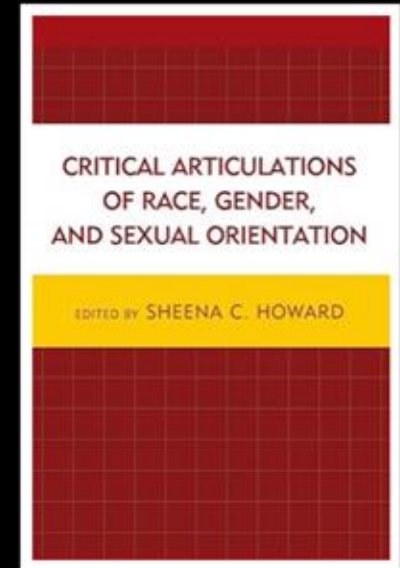
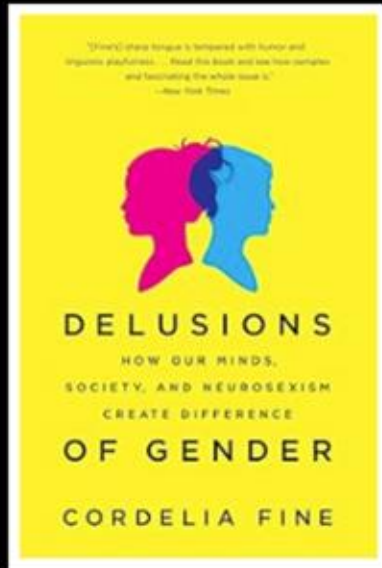
# Helpful Readings for Educating Others



## Dig Deeper: Personal Accounts from Queer Authors



# Build Your Knowledge: Readings for Academic Learning



## DAILY HABITS



- Drinking enough water
- Eating filling foods
- Getting enough sleep
- Talking to friends or family

**Taking care of basic needs is the beginning!**

## SELF-SOOTHING



- Taking a bubble bath
- Getting a massage
- Zoning out on social media
- Cooking a cozy meal
- Doing something fun with others

**Take time to tune out daily stressors.**

## MANAGE EMOTIONS



- Meditating or spiritual practices
- Exercising
- Snuggling up to a favorite movie
- Listening to calming music
- Venting to a friend

**Practice regulating your nervous system with familiar things.**

## EMOTIONAL WORK



- Journaling
- Counseling & therapy
- Reflecting
- Feeling emotions fully
- Practicing coping skills

**Work through your emotions towards healing.**

## HEALING WITH COMMUNITY



- Participating in cultural practices
- Engaging in spiritual or religious gatherings
- Group dancing or singing
- Advocacy and activism
- Group discussion or reflection
- Sharing a meal

**Intentional community with others is the ultimate path to healing!**