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Pathway to Person Centered Healthcare Encounters: Gender Bias

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Conflict of Interest Statement

I have no relevant financial relationships or conflicts of interest with presented material that need to be disclosed.

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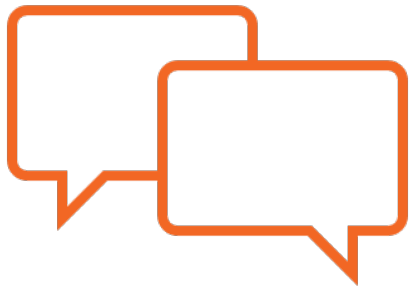
Objectives



Discuss the importance of acknowledging the difference between sexism and gender bias.

Identify at least two outcomes of gender bias in healthcare.

Explain how gender bias is further perpetrated in the context of social determinants.

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Implicit and Explicit Bias

Implicit

Subconscious feelings, emotions, prejudices that have developed from previous mental imprints. Hostility does not need to exist to have implicit bias.

Explicit

Aware of the prejudices, bias, and thoughts regarding an individual, a group of individuals, or situations based on our mental maps.

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Definitions

Sexism is prejudice or discrimination based on one's sex or gender. Sexism can affect anyone, but it ***primarily affects women and girls.*** It has been linked to stereotypes and gender roles and may include the belief that one sex or gender is intrinsically superior to another.

Gender bias is behavior that shows favoritism or prejudice toward one gender over another…In order to define gender bias completely, we first must make a distinction between the terms ***gender and sex***.

https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9781405165518.wbeosg011

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Gender Bias Language

When looking to be inclusive of all people (and gender identities), we often use the so-called gender ***catch-all "he or she."*** But when making it a goal to be inclusive of all people under the transgender umbrella, ***it's important to remember that binary pronouns don't fit all genders***, terminology such as people, teammates, they/them are more inclusive.

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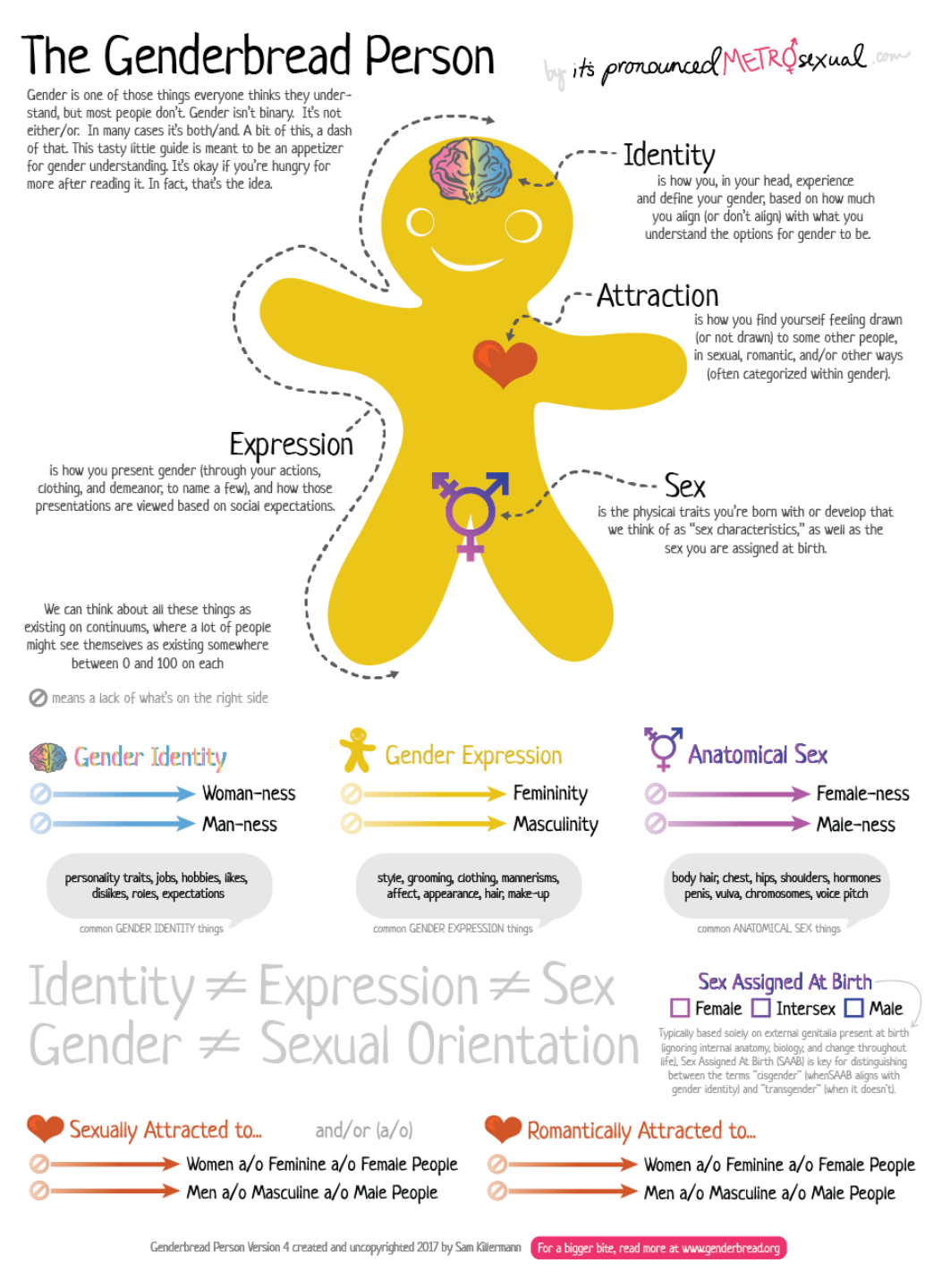
Helpful Tool



Gender Bias in Healthcare

Access

- *Inclusive provider representation, not able to see myself in your practice, misgendered or gender assumptions.*

Interactions

- *Classic bi-nary communication, asking the "wrong" questions, lacking empathy related to the experience.*

Care

- *Poor outcomes, dismissive, non-inclusive, incongruent with personal gender identity.*

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Healthcare Outcomes

Healthcare has a long history of treating women as emotional beings versus individuals with healthcare needs like men.

17% or female identifying persons stated that they were treated differently based on gender.

Men report pain at a lower rate than females related to their self-bias of stoicism and masculinity.

Belief that the difference is in sex and reproductive organs only.

Transgender persons, both male and female, experience a higher incidence of mental health challenges that are undertreated.

Transgender persons are often misdiagnosed, after misgendering, for lack of inclusion of hormonal therapies in the diagnostic process.

Gender Identity is a primary consideration of patients when deciding to seek medical care.

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Gender Bias and Social Determinants

Economic Stability

- Prohibitive cost of care, equipment, specialist care, employment opportunities, dependent insurance or under

Neighborhood/Physical Environment

- Access, physical and psychological safety, transportation,

Education

- Assumptions regarding education, access, financial ability to achieve higher education, often more informed than healthcare team

Food Security/Insecurity

- Access, nutritional needs, support for preparation, procurement ease, dependent on economic stability

Community and Social Context

- Supportive network, access, lack of inclusivity, perception of the person in the community and social context

Healthcare System

- Limited healthcare worker skill and understanding of gender identities, lack of inclusion in public health, lack of representation in healthcare providers

World Health Organization 2021

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Reducing Gender Bias

- Create inclusive healthcare teams.
- Advance gender identities into research and clinical trials.
- Ensure that all are visible in your processes and policies.
- Use open-ended questions and gender-neutral language.
- ASK how a person identifies, then address them accordingly.
- Standardize questions for all, not just for certain genders.

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