TIME: 1 hour 25 minutes

OVERVIEW: Participants will place themselves along a gender and sexuality spectrum and start to see the diversity in gender identity and sexuality and will begin to understand the nuances and complexities of gender justice as it connects to our many identities. This exercise invites people to begin to define their own gender: how they express it and how their gender is perceived in society.

AUDIENCE: People who are ready to apply what they know so far about gender.

PROCESS:
I. Watch Transgender Basics
   20 MINUTES
II. Debrief the video
   10 MINUTES
III. The Authentic Gender Model
   20 MINUTES
IV. Connecting Identity to Gender Justice
   30 MINUTES
V. Wrap up
   5 MINUTES

VIDEO
We are going to start this session off by watching a video called Transgender Basics by the NYC Gender Identity Project. Watch the video, Transgender Basics, from the NYC Gender Identity Project
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXI9w0PbBXY

DEBRIEF THE VIDEO
Turn to someone next to you and spend 5 minutes talking about the following questions:

► What is your reaction to the video?
► Did this video challenge your assumptions about gender and sexual identity? If so, how? If not, why not?
► What does it mean for our work that gender and sexual identity is so complex?

Facilitators: Draw out any highlights from the pair conversations - just allowing people to reflect and react to what they saw. You’ll be reviewing the authentic gender model in more detail in just a bit.
Facilitators: You will put yourself along these spectrums yourself as an example (in front of the participants) before you ask the participants to do the same:

For example, say “I have female sex characteristics, so I would place myself on the “Female” end of this spectrum. I have certain characteristics; being bossy, assertive, confident, etc., so my gender role is more on the side of masculine (so how the world sees me, what my role is in the world). My gender identity, how I feel about myself, is that I am very femme; I wear feminine clothes, makeup, etc. so I express my gender as very femme. And my sexual orientation is that I am attracted to both men and women, so I’m somewhere in the middle of that spectrum”

Spend a few minutes, on your own piece of paper, placing yourself on each one of these spectrums. How do YOU identify along each of these lines? Are you at one end of the spectrum, somewhere in-between?

Heads up: You will be sharing your identity along these spectrums with the full group by coming up to the front and putting a dot that represents you along each of the lines here. You won’t be asked to talk about how you identify unless you choose to share with the full group or with a smaller group.

Once you’re ready, come to the front of the room and place a dot/circle where you identify on each line.

Facilitators: Have this model available to participants, but also draw this model on a large sheet of flip-chart paper with room for each participant to place themselves, with a dot, circle, etc., along the spectrum. Come prepared with markers or circular stickers, give each participant four to place along the Model.

Assure folks that this isn’t for us to analyze everyone’s individual identities, it’s an exercise to see the diversity in the room. Once everyone has placed themselves along the spectrums, bring the group back together.
CONNECTING IDENTITY TO GENDER JUSTICE

Ask the group how it felt to do that activity - were folks uncomfortable? Why?

Facilitators: Be sure to draw out responses that highlight experiences of people who are often able to “pass.” As well as what it’s like, once you dig deeper, to realize how so many of us, regardless of how we present, don’t actually fit the rigid standards of gender, sex, sexuality, etc. that society defines for us.

Make sure you highlight that this is uncomfortable because we never actually talk about these things but we are always communicating these things to each other, often nonverbally. Often, this can lead to miscommunication or misunderstanding, so if we CAN talk about it, we’ll be more successful in creating change that actually works for folks across all spectrums.

Let’s all look at the variety of dots and notice - what are we seeing? Are most people on one end or the other? How much diversity do we see in the middle or somewhere in between the dichotomies? What does this mean?

Facilitators: Highlight how important it is to understand that we all have a sex, gender role, gender identity and sexual orientation. Often, we think only those whose identities that don’t align with the mainstream actually HAVE those identities, but we all do. Gender identity isn’t something only transgender or gender non-conforming folks have. Cisgender people also have a gender identity.

Talk about the following question with the full group:

► What is the value in acknowledging the complexities of gender identity and sexuality and how does intersectionality show up in this Authentic Gender Model?

Get into groups of 4-5 and discuss the following questions:

► When have you seen the Authentic Gender Model so completely disregarded when making policy decisions?
  ▶ In our communities; city, county, state, federal
  ▶ Our organizations
  ▶ Our schools and other institutions

WRAP-UP

Ask the groups to share what they talked about in their smaller groups before closing out the session.

Facilitators: Make sure the groups are talking about their work in the context of the following questions:

► What are specific policy implications for such complexity in gender and gender identity?
► What does gender justice look like if we acknowledge the Authentic Gender Model?