



GUIDE

LET'S BE INCLUSIVE

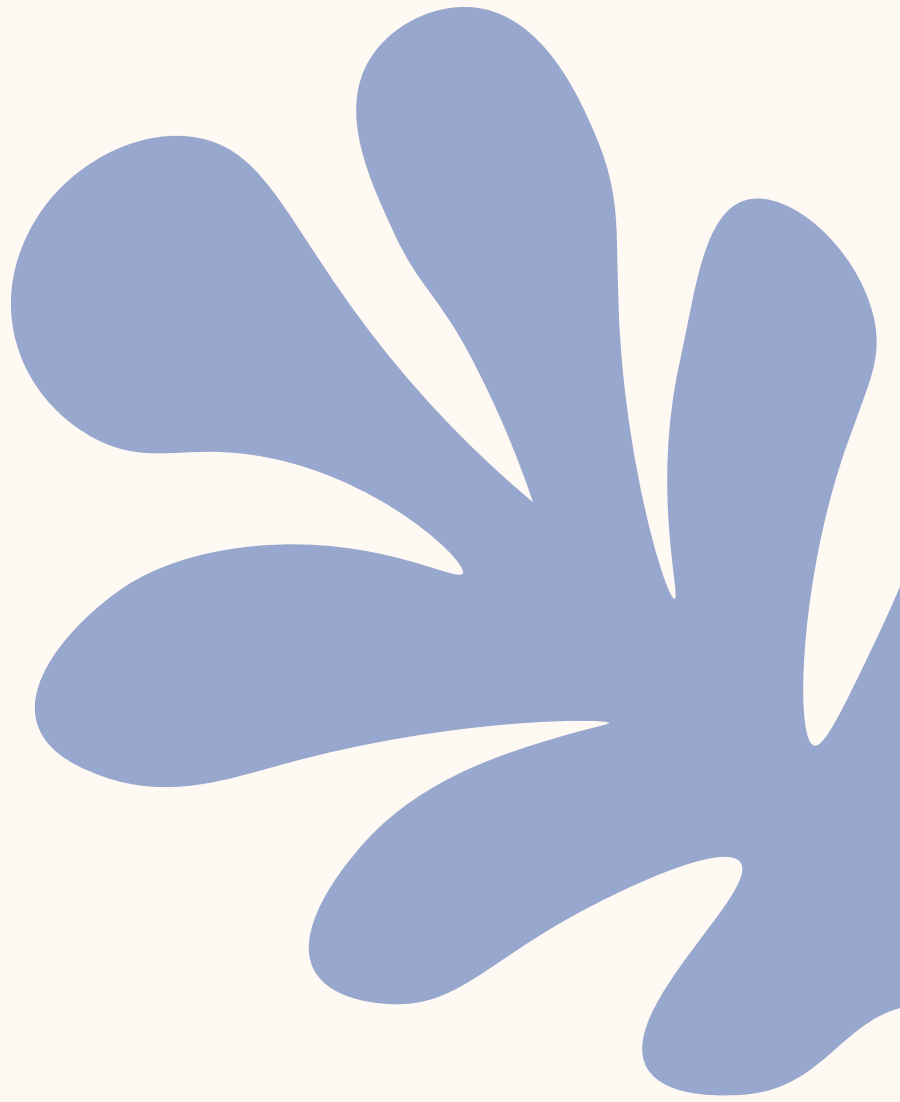
**AWARENESS-RISING TRAINING
ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY AND
DIVERSITY**

GUIDE 2023-3-DE04-KA210-YOU-000175960



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Project Overview

GUIDE - Promoting gender equality and diversity in international youth work through the use of gender-sensitive language.

Project partners:

iKoBi e.V. in Germany
Verein InterAktion in Austria
Mobilizing Expertise in Sweden

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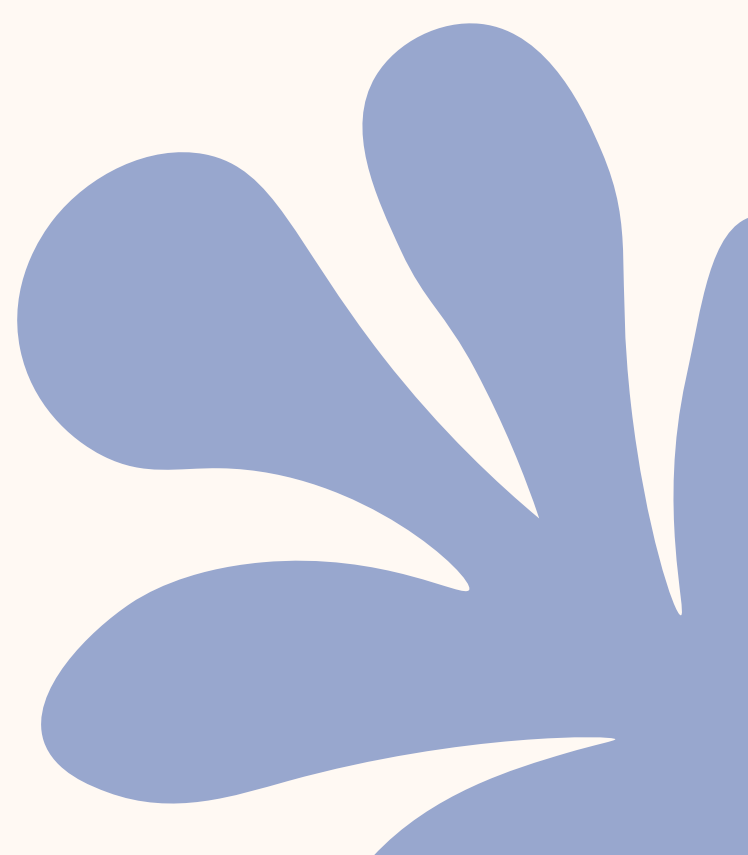
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Introduction

LET'S BE INCLUSIVE



GUIDE is an internationally oriented project funded under the Erasmus+ programme. The aim of the project is to promote the use of gender-sensitive language in youth work, thereby contributing to the creation of an inclusive and diverse environment.

We pursue this by raising awareness of the importance and impact of gender-sensitive and gender-neutral language – both at the organisational level and in direct work with young people – and by strengthening awareness and professional knowledge around gender equality and diversity.

The first project outcome, “**GUIDEance – Workbook to Gender Equality and Diversity by the Use of Gender-Sensitive Language**”, focuses primarily on reflecting on one’s own use of language and provides youth work professionals and educators with practical tools for self-reflection and group work. Building on this, the awareness-raising workshop “**Let’s Be Inclusive**” goes beyond language reflection and aims to foster a practical understanding of gender equality and diversity among young people. As a structured educational format, the workshop offers young people aged 13 to 20 the opportunity to engage interactively with key issues of gender equality, diversity, and empowerment, and to critically reflect on them.

The “Let’s Be Inclusive”-training is designed for youth groups of all backgrounds and is particularly suitable for young people who are interested in taking part in international youth exchanges.

The training is modular, interactive, and suitable for implementation by youth workers, educators, or facilitators both nationally and internationally.

It can also be adapted for use in formal educational settings such as project days. The training concept is designed for a half-day format and includes core thematic blocks that promote a deeper understanding of gender justice and the richness of diversity.

Participants will engage with the following topics:

1. The relevance of SDG #5 (Gender Equality)
2. Exploration of gender identities and terminology
3. Reflection on stereotypes and traditional gender roles
4. Personal attitudes and beliefs regarding gender and diversity

Through a variety of methods – including icebreakers, role-based games, self-reflection, and group discussions – young people are encouraged to question biases, examine social norms, and understand the impact of language and behaviour in diverse social settings. All activities conclude with guided reflection sessions that foster open dialogue and critical thinking.

For each of the following themes two specific activities were developed:

- gender equality and empowerment
- stereotypes, role models, and reflection methods
- gender identities and terminology

Each activity includes tips and suggestions for instructors on how to deepen, adapt, or extend the exercises based on group dynamics or context. Individual activities from the training programme can also be used independently when thematically appropriate, making the training concept a flexible pool of exercises that can be implemented as stand-alone sessions, combined selectively, or delivered as a complete unit.

The recommended half-day workshop structure begins with an introductory icebreaker, followed by the interactive exercise “Take a Step Forward”, which serves as a powerful entry point to the training. Afterwards, facilitators can select one activity from each of the three core topics (gender equality, gender identity, stereotypes/roles), choosing from the two options provided per topic. This flexible design allows facilitators to tailor the training to the needs and interests of their specific group.

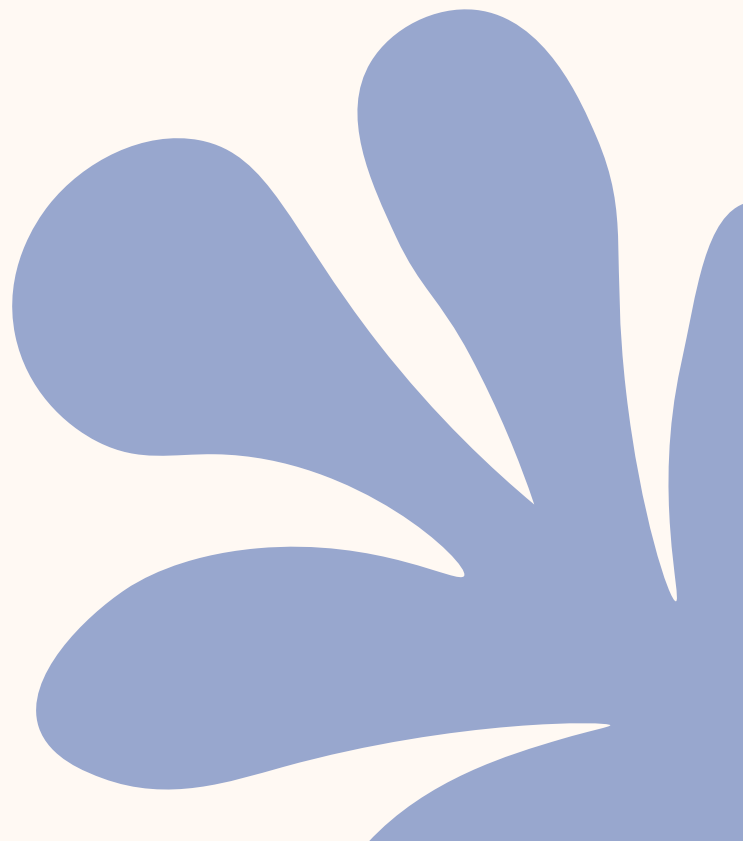
All activities conclude with a reflective discussion to promote critical thinking and open dialogue. By promoting understanding, encouraging critical reflection, and breaking down stereotypes, “Let’s Be Inclusive” contributes to our overarching objective: fostering inclusive, discrimination-free environments in youth work.

Ultimately, this training aims to empower young people to act as agents of change – questioning societal norms, embracing diversity, and contributing to a more inclusive and gender-equitable future.

Icebreaker

TAKE A STEP
FORWARD

“Explore gender norms, roles, and privileges
with this icebreaker game.”



Take a Step Forward

Duration:	40-60 minutes
Objective(s):	• Raise awareness about gender norms, expectations, and discrimination. • Reflect on how gender identity, roles, and stereotypes affect life experiences. • Understand how intersecting identities influence privilege and access. • Foster empathy by stepping into someone else's shoes. • Create space for dialogue around gender equality and inclusion.
Materials Needed:	• Printed role cards (1 per participant) • Printed statements list (for facilitator) • Open space (large enough for participants to form a straight line and move forward) • Optional: tape to mark a "starting line" • Reflection worksheet or sticky notes for closing activity

Activity Instructions

1. Introduction/Set-up

Begin with a short introduction on gender identity, roles, and stereotypes. Connect this to broader goals like gender equality (SDG 5) or current social issues.

Explain the purpose of the activity: In this activity, you will step into someone else's life and experience how gender, social expectations, and identity shape people's daily realities. We'll explore how these factors impact access to freedom, safety, and opportunity.

Ask participants to be respectful and mindful throughout the activity, even if they disagree or feel uncomfortable at times.

2. Activity Steps

Step 1 – Distribute Role Cards (5 minutes)

Give each participant a role representing a person with a specific gender identity, expression, or societal situation. Ask them to silently read and reflect on their character.

Step 2 – Set the Scene (2 minutes)

Ask all participants to line up shoulder to shoulder in the middle of the room. Explain:

“I'll read a series of statements. If the statement applies to your character, take a step forward. If not, stay where you are.”

Step 3 – Read the Statements (15–20 minutes)

Read each statement clearly and pause between them to allow participants to move and reflect. Avoid discussions during this phase.

Step 4 – Observe the Spread (2 minutes)

Once all statements are read, ask participants to look around. They'll notice the distance between people, symbolizing different levels of privilege or exclusion.

Step 5 – Group Reflection (10–15 minutes)

Invite participants to sit in a circle and facilitate a group discussion using the questions below.

3. Mini Reflection/Discussion

- What did you notice as the activity went on?
- How did it feel to take many steps forward? How did it feel not to move much?
- Did any statement feel especially powerful or unfair?
- What does this activity tell us about gender norms and stereotypes?

Encourage participants to think beyond their role and connect the discussion to their own experiences and communities.

4. Tips for Instructor:

- Foster a safe space: remind participants that emotions are valid, and all perspectives deserve respect.
- If someone becomes emotional, pause and offer support—do not rush the discussion.
- Clarify that the goal is not to compare pain, but to build awareness and empathy.
- If participants are hesitant, use anonymous methods (e.g., writing reflections privately).
- For younger participants or those unfamiliar with gender diversity, offer brief explanations of key terms (gender identity, non-binary, cisgender, etc.).

5. Self-Reflection/Closing Activity:

Ask participants to complete one of the following:

- Sticky note reflection: “One thing I learned or felt during this activity is...”
- Silent journaling: Provide 5 minutes for personal writing about their character’s journey and their own.
- Pair share: Invite participants to discuss with a partner how they felt in the role and what they’ll take away.

You can collect and display the reflections on a wall or flipchart to honor the space created.

Adjustments or Variations	Short on time? Use 10–12 statements instead of the full list and skip deep discussion. • Working with large groups? Run multiple smaller circles with separate facilitators. • For younger or new audiences: Choose more relatable roles and provide clearer definitions or visuals. • Add depth: Use real-life stories or stats alongside roles for extra context.
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Appendix I: Role Cards Take a Step Forward

You are a cisgender girl in a low-income family, expected to take care of your younger siblings daily.	You are a cisgender boy pressured to hide your emotions and "be tough."
You are a young woman passionate about science but constantly told it's a "man's field."	You are a boy who wants to become a nurse, and people question your masculinity.
You are a non-binary teen who struggles to have your pronouns respected at school.	You are a young man from a traditional community where your masculinity is judged based on your job.
You are a cisgender boy from a wealthy family, attending a private international school.	You are a young woman of color, often overlooked in class and rarely see yourself in leadership roles.
You are a trans person trying to access gender-affirming healthcare in a system that barely understands your needs.	You are a girl who excels in sports but is told you're "too aggressive."

Appendix II: Role Cards Take a Step Forward

You are a boy who loves literature and fashion, and your interests are seen as “feminine.”	You are a young person with a disability, often assumed to be asexual or incapable of independence.
You are a gender-nonconforming person who avoids public spaces out of fear of harassment.	You are a teen mother, and everyone assumes you won’t finish school.
You are a migrant girl in a conservative family where your choices are heavily restricted.	You are a cisgender girl in a progressive urban environment, with highly supportive parents and teachers.
You are a non-binary teenager in a major city with access to LGBTQIA+ youth centers and supportive peer networks.	You are a popular male athlete in school, admired by peers and teachers alike.
You are a cisgender girl from a middle-class family who excels in science but feels pressure to be “feminine.”	You are a gender-fluid person who is accepted in online communities but hides your identity at school.

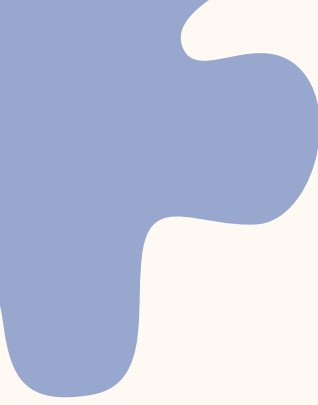
Annex I: STATEMENTS “Take a step forward”

Each statement is written to reflect privilege, access, or safety. Participants should step forward if the statement is true for their assigned character

- I can express my emotions without being judged or told to "man up" or "calm down."
- I feel comfortable wearing the clothes I like without fear of being mocked or stared at.
- I can express my gender identity freely in my home or community.
- I've never felt pressured to change how I speak or behave because of my gender.
- I feel accepted for who I am, even if I don't fit into typical gender roles.
- I am encouraged to study or work in any field, regardless of gender stereotypes.
- People believe I can be a leader, no matter my gender.
- I've never been told a subject or career is "not for people like me."
- My teachers and classmates take my contributions seriously.
- I feel confident that I'll be treated fairly in future jobs, regardless of my gender.
- I have a group of friends or a community where I feel completely accepted.
- I am not expected to take on more chores or caregiving roles than others in my household.

Annex I: STATEMENTS “Take a step forward”

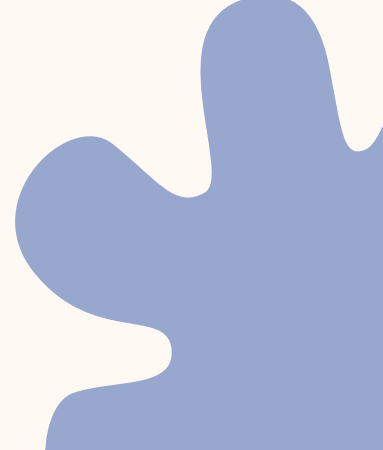
- I have the freedom to make choices about my future without being controlled by family expectations.
- My family respects my gender identity and/or the way I express myself.
- I feel safe walking alone in public spaces, during the day or night.
- I’ve never been harassed because of how I dress or present myself.
- I can use public restrooms without fear of being questioned or confronted.
- I’ve never had to hide parts of who I am to avoid being bullied, harassed, or excluded.
- I feel I can say "no" in uncomfortable situations without fear or pressure.
- I’ve never been judged or shamed for my relationships or sexual orientation.
- I can show affection in public without fear of negative reactions.
- I’ve never felt the need to hide who I love or who I’m attracted to.
- I regularly see people like me represented positively in media, books, or leadership roles.
- I believe I can achieve my dreams, regardless of what society expects of someone like me.

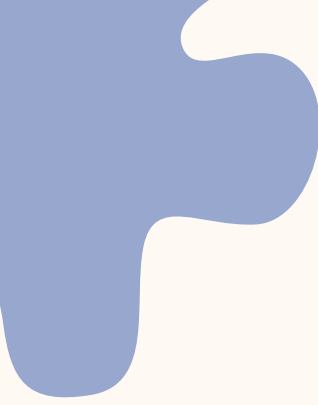


Chapter 1

GENDER IDENTITIES AND TERMINOLOGIES

“Reflect on your gender identity, explore its diversity, and learn respectful, inclusive language.”

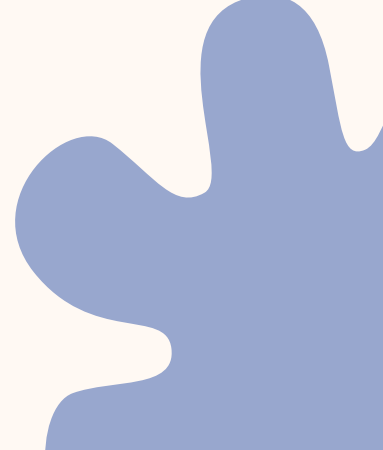




Activity 1

Team Puzzle: Who Am I?

"I often see people like me portrayed in a positive way in media, literature, or leadership positions."



Team Puzzle: Who Am I?

Duration:	30 Minutes
Objective(s):	• Understand the meaning of key terms related to gender identity and diversity. • Recognize that gender is diverse and cannot be reduced to a binary. • Reflect on personal attitudes toward gender identities. • More confident using gender-inclusive terminology. • Empowered to engage in respectful conversations about identity and inclusion.
Materials Needed:	• Term & definition cards (annexed below) • Flipchart or whiteboard • Markers • Sticky notes

Activity Instructions

1. Introduction/Set-up

Today we'll do a short activity to explore key terms related to gender identity. You'll work in small groups to match terms with their meanings, and then we'll talk about them together.

It's all about learning together and creating a space where we can speak more respectfully and confidently about gender and diversity.

2. Activity Steps

Activity 1) Gender Identities and Terminology:

Introduction by the instructor:

Gender identities are the ways people understand and feel about their own gender — like feeling male, female, both, neither, or something else.

Terminologies are the words we use to talk about gender, like trans, non-binary, or pronouns.

Step 1: Building groups

Participants are divided into five groups of approximately five people each. This can be done, for example, by counting off from 1 to 5, with everyone who has the same number forming a group. The groups then gather and sit together in a circle. (approx. 5 minutes)

Tip: The number and size of the groups can be adjusted according to the total number of participants

Step 2: Match terms and definitions

Each group receives a set of **term cards** (e.g., “non-binary,” “pronouns,” etc.) and a set of **definition cards** (shuffled and mixed up).

As a group, they try to match each term with the correct definition.

Participants are encouraged to discuss their thoughts within the group – uncertainty or unfamiliarity with terms is an expected and valuable part of the learning process.

At the end, the matched term-definition pairs are laid out next to each other. (10 Minutes)

Step 3: Short Presentation

Once all groups are ready, each group takes turns coming to the front to **post their matches** on the wall or flipchart. We’ll go over the answers together in the next step. (7 Minutes)

3. Mini Reflection/Discussion

Possible questions for the reflection:

- Which term was new to you today?
- Was there a term that surprised you or meant something different than you thought?

If some participants are shy or hesitant to speak, invite them to share anonymously by writing on sticky notes or through a group discussion format.

4. Tips for Instructor:

- Give space for silence – sometimes participants need a moment to think.
- Affirm contributions: “Thanks for sharing,” “That’s a good point,” etc.
- Be ready to explain or rephrase a question if needed.
- You can choose how many cards to give each group depending on your group size — 3 term-definition pairs per group usually works well.

5. Self-Reflection/Closing Activity:

Activity 1: Gender Identities and Terminology

- Ask participants to individually reflect.
- “How can using the right terms make a difference for someone?”
- “How can we help make spaces (like schools, youth encounters) more inclusive for people of all gender identities?”
- Give each participant a sticky note or marker to write their reflection and place it on a flipchart or board.

Adjustments or Variations

If You Have Less Time (15–20 minutes total):

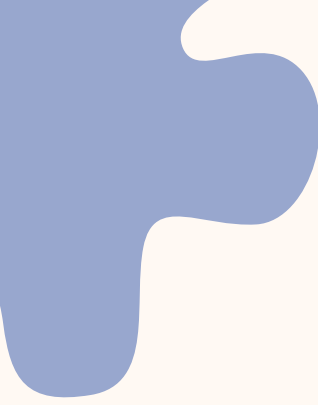
- **Use fewer terms:** Choose only 5–6 key terms to shorten the activity.
- **Whole-group activity:** Instead of working in small groups, facilitate the matching together as a class. Use the board or wall to post terms and definitions.
- **Work in pairs:** Matching terms in pairs can feel less intimidating than in larger groups.
- **Silent matching walk:** Spread the cards around the room. Participants walk around silently to make matches. Review answers together afterwards.

Appendix: Concept and definition cards

Term Cards	Definition Cards
Gender Identity	How someone personally feels and experiences their own gender — for example, as a woman, a man, both, neither, or something else.
Cisgender (cis)	A person whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth.
Transgender (trans)	A person whose gender identity is different from the sex they were assigned at birth.
Non-binary	A gender identity for people who don't identify strictly as male or female. They may feel both, neither, or something different.
Genderqueer	A term some people use to describe a gender identity that is outside the traditional categories of male and female. Often overlaps with non-binary.

Term Cards	Definition Cards
Social Gender	How someone expresses their gender through clothing, behavior, voice, or appearance — which may or may not match societal expectations.
Biological Sex	The classification of people as male, female, or intersex based on physical and biological characteristics at birth.
Pronouns	Words like “she,” “he,” “they,” or “ze” used to refer to someone in place of their name. They often reflect a person’s gender identity.
Misgendering	Using the wrong gender or pronouns when talking to or about someone — often hurtful and disrespectful.
Gender Spectrum	The idea that gender exists on a wide spectrum — not just male or female — and includes many diverse identities and experiences.

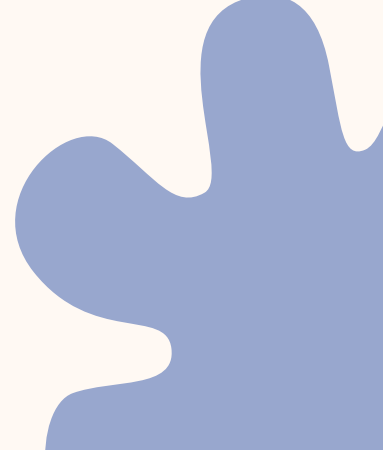
Term Cards	Definition Cards
Intersex	A person who is born with physical sex characteristics (like chromosomes or genitals) that don't fit typical definitions of male or female.
Agender	A person who does not identify with any gender — they may feel like they have no gender at all.
Deadnaming	Using a trans person's birth name (the name they no longer use). This can be harmful, especially if done on purpose.
Ally	Someone who supports and stands up for the rights and dignity of people of all gender identities — even if they are not part of that group themselves.
LGBTQIA+	A short way to refer to a diverse community of people with different gender identities and sexual orientations. The letters stand for: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual — and the "+" includes all other identities.



Activity II

Me & My (Gender) – Identity Portrait

"I feel accepted for who I am."



Me & My (Gender) – Identity Portrait

Duration:	30 Minutes
Objective(s):	• Encourage personal reflection on gender identity and how it relates to other aspects of self. • Recognize that gender identity is unique, diverse, and may shift over time. • Empower participants to express gender in ways that feel authentic to them.
Materials Needed:	• A4 or A3 paper for each participant • Colored pens, pencils, or markers • Optional: printed "identity words" (e.g., non-binary, playful, queer, introvert, confident, sister, creative, exploring, etc.) • Tape or wall space for optional gallery • Soft background music (optional, for a calming atmosphere)

Activity Instructions

1. Introduction/Set-up

- Today's activity invites participants to explore their own gender identity and how it relates to their overall sense of self.
- Let the group know that there is no "right" or "wrong" way to approach this reflection. Emphasize that sharing is completely optional — no one should feel pressured to disclose anything they're not comfortable with.
- Encourage participants to be honest with themselves and simply notice what thoughts or feelings come up during the reflection.

2. Activity Steps

Step 1: Prepare your gender identity portrait

- Each participant gets a blank sheet of paper.
- In the center, they draw or write a symbol, word, or image that represents themselves. (It could be their name, initials, a shape, - anything that feels personal.)

Step 2: Provide question to reflect on their identity (provided on a slide or read aloud):

- What is your gender identity — and what words feel right for you (today)?
- What are three words you would use to describe yourself?
- What has shaped how you understand your gender (family, culture, media, experiences)?
- How do I express my gender in daily life (clothing, behavior, language)?

- What has shaped how you understand your gender (family, culture, media, experiences)?
- How do I express my gender in daily life (clothing, behavior, language)?
- Is gender a part of your identity you think about often? Why or why not?
- Who has inspired or influenced how I see myself?
- What's one thing a teacher/coach/leader can do to support all genders?
- What kind of person do you want to grow into?
- What do you want to understand better about yourself?

Step 3: Create your gender identity portrait

- Around the symbol in the center, they add stars or dots. Next to each star or dot, they write down their answers to the previous questions to show different parts of their (gender) identity (12 – 15 minutes)

Step 4: Silent Gallery Walk OR Optional Sharing

- If the group feels safe and open, participants may lay out or tape up their portraits and walk around silently to view each other's work. (5-7 minutes).

3. Mini Reflection/Discussion

On a sticky note each participant answers:

- “One thing I want others to understand about gender identity is...”

They can choose to share it, keep it private, or add it anonymously to a group board.

4. Tips for Instructor:

- Say things like: “There are many ways people experience gender – all of them are welcome here.”
- Make it clear that no one has to present or impress anyone.
- Let participants draw, write, use symbols, or cut-and-paste – not everyone is comfortable putting things into words.
- Emphasize choice and safety: “You decide what you want to share or keep to yourself – both are valid.”

5. Self-Reflection/Closing Activity:

Guide a short group reflection by using some of the following questions:

- “What was easy or hard to express?”
- “Did you discover something new about yourself?”
- “What can help make it easier to share and express our gender identities?”

Encourage respect, no pressure to speak, and affirm all contributions.

Adjustments or Variations

- For younger or more hesitant groups: Use more visual prompts (colors, emojis, pre-cut symbols).
- For online use: Convert the portraits into a digital whiteboard or form with open prompts.
- In mixed-experience groups: Emphasize that “I’m still figuring it out” is a valid identity.



Chapter 2

GETTING TO KNOW SDG5

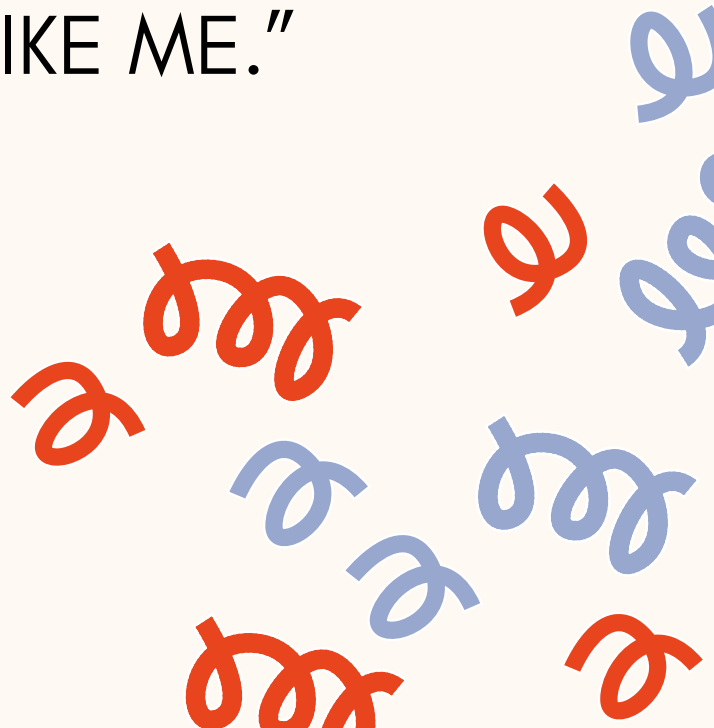
“Develop empathy, recognize social influences on your and others’ goals, and learn strategies for equality and self-determination.”



ACTIVITY I

STEPPING INTO HER SHOES

"I BELIEVE I CAN ACHIEVE MY
DREAMS, REGARDLESS OF
WHAT SOCIETY EXPECTS OF
SOMEONE LIKE ME."



Stepping into Her Shoes

Duration:	60 - 90 minutes
Objective(s):	• Develop empathy • Explore how societal expectations can shape, limit, or empower dreams. • Reflect on what kind of environments and support are needed for women to realize their potential. • Connect participants' reflections to the goals of SDG 5: Gender Equality.
Materials Needed:	• A3 or flipchart papers • Sticky Notes • Markers • Printed character cards (annexed below)

Activity Instructions

1. Introduction/Set-up

Explain to the group that we are going to step into the shoes of women and girls who are navigating different societal pressures. We'll explore what kinds of expectations they face and how they might feel on the inside.

2. Activity Steps

Step 1. Character selection (5 - 10 minutes)

- Divide participants into small groups of 2-5.
- Give each group a fictional character card (the cards can be adapted according to the group's needs)

For example:

- A migrant mother trying to build a new life;
- A sporty, short-haired teenage girl;
- A 30-year old single woman who is about to get promoted at work;

Step 2. Stepping into her shoes (5 - 10 minutes)

In the small groups, have a short description about the ideal life of their character:

- How does she spend her days?
- What do her relationships look like?
- What does she want to achieve?

Step 3. Silhouette creation (20 minutes)

- Groups receive large papers and draw the silhouettes of their character.
- First, the groups work on the outsides of the silhouettes:
 - They list external expectations, stereotypes, or pressures this woman faces from her family, community, media, or institutions (10 minutes)
- Then, on the inside of the silhouette:
 - They list how these expectations make her feel (e.g., stressed, unseen, determined, proud etc.). (10 minutes)

Step 4. What Would Help Her? (10 - 15 minutes)

- Introduce the task: *"Imagine you could redesign the world around her. What would she need more of or less of so that these pressures don't hold her back anymore?"*
- The participants get sticky notes and collect supportive elements that could ease the pressure of the expectations.
- If needed, give examples: e.g. a friend who listens without judgment; a policy that protects her rights (e.g. anti-discrimination, paid maternity leave); access to education or financial independence; a role model who reflects her identity; mental health support, etc.
- The participants stick the notes around the silhouette, like protective layers or sources of strength surrounding her.

Step 5. Presentation (10 minutes)

Each group presents their silhouette to the wider group, sharing:

- Who the character is
- What society expects from her, and how does it affect her?

3. Mini Reflection/Discussion (15 min)

Have a short discussion with the whole group.

- What common expectations or pressures did you notice across the different characters?
- What kinds of support appeared across multiple characters?
- How can real communities offer these supports?
- Which of these things could we help create - even on a small scale?

Participants should focus on what could support and empower these women, and what can we do in real life to support someone like them?

4. Tips for Instructor:

Offer flexibility: let participants choose how they contribute (drawing, speaking, writing).



5. Self-Reflection/Closing Activity:

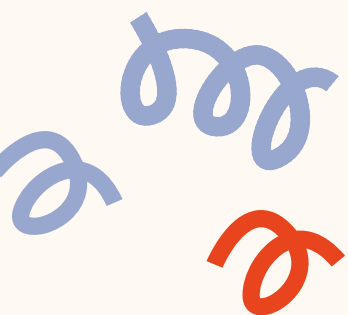
Ask participants to reflect silently for 1–2 minutes on the experience.

Then, give each participant a sticky note and ask them to complete the sentence about their characters: “If this character were my friend, I would...”

Ask each participant to stick their notes on a common flipchart. They can share what they wrote, or the instructor

Adjustments or Variations

- For less verbal groups, focus more on the visual aspect of the silhouette. You can use old magazines to create collages instead of writing words.
- You can use digital tools like Padlet for the silhouette creation activity.



Appendix: Figure Cards

Noura – First-Generation University Student

- Age: 20
- Context: Comes from a low-income immigrant family
- Background: Noura is studying law and wants to become a lawyer. Her family is proud but doesn't fully understand her academic world. She feels torn between two cultures.

Sofia – Trans Woman

- Age: 27
- Context: Lives in a conservative religious community
- Background: Sofia is a talented graphic designer who wants to start her own business. She hides her relationship from her family and fears rejection. She finds solace in online communities.

Farah – Migrant Mother

Age: 35

Context: Recently moved to a new country

Background: Farah is raising two children while learning the local language and working part-time. She dreams of becoming a nurse but faces bureaucratic and cultural barriers.

Lena – Sporty Teen Girl

Age: 15

Context: Passionate about football, short-haired, often mistaken for a boy

Background: Lena wants to play football professionally, but her school and family don't take her seriously. She's confident, but often feels isolated.

Appendix: Figure Cards

Petra – Farmer’s Daughter

- Age: 17
- Context: Lives in a rural village
- Background: Petra helps on the farm but dreams of studying environmental science. Her parents expect her to stay and take over the family land. She feels deeply connected to nature.

Mei – Aspiring Artist

- Age: 22
- Context: Lives in a rural area with limited creative opportunities
- Background: Mei dreams of studying art abroad. Her family wants her to pursue a “stable” career. She spends her time painting and sharing her work online.

Samira – Religious Student

- Age: 19
- Context: Wears a hijab, studies science
- Background: Samira is passionate about space exploration. She faces stereotypes both for her religion and her gender in STEM fields. She’s determined and curious.

Ana – Woman with a Disability

- Age: 28
- Context: Uses a wheelchair, lives independently
- Background: Ana is a writer and activist. She faces physical and social barriers daily but continues to advocate for accessibility and inclusion.

The top-left corner of the page is decorated with several stylized, hand-drawn swirls in red and blue. These swirls are of varying sizes and are arranged in a loose, organic pattern.

ACTIVITY II

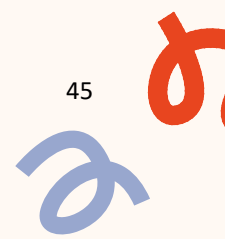
Whose Voice Counts?

"MY TEACHERS AND
CLASSMATES TAKE MY
CONTRIBUTIONS SERIOUSLY."

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Whose Voice Counts?

Duration:	60–70 minutes
Objective(s):	• Reflect on who feels heard and taken seriously in school or society • Explore how gender roles influence who speaks, who is listened to, and how contributions are valued • Raise awareness around self-expression, interrupting patterns of exclusion • Connect participants' experiences to SDG 5's goal of promoting equal participation in all areas of life
Materials Needed:	• A4 paper or index cards • Markers • Character cards • Flipchart papers • Prepared character cards (see annex)



Activity Instructions

1. Introduction/Set-up

Explain to the group that we are going to explore gender stereotypes and reflect on the impact they have on our lives.

2. Activity Steps

Step 1. Warm-Up (10 minutes)

Ask participants if they are aware of the SDGs, especially SDG5 (“Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”)

Ask participants to think of a time when:

- They shared an idea or answer but felt ignored or dismissed
- Someone else repeated the same idea and got credit for it
- They held back from speaking up because they didn’t feel confident

Invite a few volunteers to share examples (optional). Introduce that they are going to explore who gets listened to - and how we can change that.

Step 2. Role Game: “The Meeting” (30 - 40 minutes)

- Divide the participants into 2 groups.
- Each group receives a group scenario:
 - **Group 1:** *“You are planning the end-of-year celebration for your class. Your task is to come up with three ideas and agree on one final plan.”*

- **Group 2:** *“You are planning a school trip with your class. Your task is to come up with three ideas and agree on one final plan.”*

Give participants prepared character cards (see annex) with short descriptions. This helps them step into diverse roles without assuming prior knowledge. Participants may also create their own roles if they wish.

Each group has 7 minutes to prepare and then presents their scene. At the same time, individual participants may opt out of acting if they prefer, or take an observer role.

- Each group presents their scene.
- While one group is presenting, the other group should observe and take some notes.

Suggested observation prompts:

- Who speaks the most?
- Who gets interrupted or ignored?
- Whose ideas are picked up?
- Who seems hesitant or excluded?
- Who makes the final decisions?

After the play, switch roles and watch the second group's acting. For that, the other group becomes the observer.

Discuss the experience with the whole group.

Suggested discussion prompts:

- “How did people's identities affect their influence?”
- “Did some people feel naturally more *listened to*?”
- “What assumptions influenced who was taken seriously?”

Step 3. Mini-Posters: “Our Voices, Our Responsibility” (20 minutes)

To reflect on the role-play, ask the participants to create mini-posters in groups of 2-3. The two-part poster reflects both what helps them speak up and how they support others to do the same. Use for example text bubbles or drawings.

Part 1: Ask the participants to finish the sentence on their poster: “*We feel confident to speak when...*”

If needed, give examples like:

- "We're not afraid of being wrong."
- "Others don't interrupt us."
- "Different opinions are respected."

Part 2: Ask the participants to finish the sentence on their poster: “*We help others feel heard by...*”

Groups present their posters briefly or hang them on the wall.

3. Mini Reflection/Discussion

Begin by reminding participants of the goal:

“We’ve just explored how different identities influence who gets heard. Now we’ll reflect together and connect this to a global goal—SDG 5: Gender Equality.”

Briefly explain SDGs and SDG 5:

“Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 global goals adopted by all United Nations Member States that aim to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure peace and prosperity for all by 2030. Each goal addresses a specific global challenge, from education and health to climate action and equality.

SDG 5 is about achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. It asks us to challenge stereotypes, promote equal participation, and make sure everyone’s voice counts—in school, in work, and in society.”

Use open-ended questions to guide the conversation.

Suggested Questions:

- “In the role-play, who was listened to the most? Why?”
- “Did anyone feel ignored or dismissed? What made that happen?”
- “How did gender roles or stereotypes influence the group dynamics?”

- “Can you think of real-life situations where this happens?”
- “What can we do to make sure everyone feels heard and valued?”

4. Tips for Instructor:

Be an active observer during the role play, take notes and help the groups reflect on the experiences.

Encourage quieter participants to share, but don't pressure anyone.

Use follow-up questions like “Can you say more about that?” or “How did that make you feel?”

5. Self-Reflection/Closing Activity:

To close the session, invite participants to take a quiet moment to reflect, either individually or in their small groups.

Example questions:

- “What's one small change I can make so others feel heard?”
- “What surprised me about how voices are shared - or silenced - in group spaces?”

Adjustments or Variations	If time is short, you may shorten the scenes, but both groups should still have the chance to present, even in a brief form. This ensures that participants who prepared something are not left out. Participants who do not feel comfortable can opt out of presenting or contribute as observers.
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Annex: Character Cards

High-achieving boy – confident, used to being praised
Shy girl – has good ideas but hesitates to speak
Creative non-binary student – expressive, but often misunderstood
Outspoken student – speaks often, but sometimes interrupted
Quiet boy – reserved, rarely volunteers ideas
Queer student – confident in identity, but worried about prejudice.
Class clown boy – distracts others, but gets attention
Ambitious girl – wants leadership roles, sometimes called “bossy”
Newcomer migrant student – still learning the language, shy in groups
Popular student– well-liked, easily gets agreement
Student with a disability – often overlooked in discussions
Loud but insecure student – talks a lot, but fears rejection



Chapter 3

STEREOTYPES AND ROLE MODELS

“Reflect on your dreams and goals, regardless of what others expect, find creative ways to make them visible, and seek out people who will support you in your endeavors.”





ACTIVITY I

Dream Like Blob

"I believe I can achieve my dreams, regardless of what society expects of someone like me."



Dream like Blob	
Duration:	1.5 hours - 2 hours
Objective(s):	• Encourage young people to think and visualise their dreams, goals, and aspirations regardless of societal expectations. • Have young people reflect on their current situation and develop an idea of where they want to be in the future • Inspire young people to channel their creativity into making a collage that represents their dreams, breaking free from the stereotypes society places on them.
Materials Needed:	• Blob Tree Handout [Source: https://www.blobtree.com/] • Markers + pens • Flipchart paper or A3 paper (one per person) • Magazines, or photos (ask participants to prepare beforehand).

Activity Instructions

1. Introduction/Set-up

You will need the Blob Tree Handout ready, 1 per participant. Encourage participants to sit together with leaders in a semicircle.

- Introduce the concept of stereotypes.
- Emphasize that today's session is about visualizing those dreams freely, without being limited by others' expectations.

Definition: Stereotypes are simplified and generalised ideas about specific groups of people. They describe how people “typically” are based on characteristics like gender, origins, age or occupation.

Important!

- Stereotypes are often incomplete or incorrect.
- They can reinforce prejudice and discrimination because they reduce people to certain characteristics.

2. Presentation of the Blob Tree (15 minutes)

Present the Blob Tree image to the group (an image showing different figures in various positions and emotional states). Download a template of the Blob Tree in advance and print it out.

Ask participants to spend a few quiet minutes individually reflecting on the image:

- Which figure best represents where you are right now in your life?
- Why do you identify with that figure? Circle the image you connect with the most.

After individual reflection, ask participants to choose a second figure:

If you could make some changes and imagine a better version of your life, free from the stereotypes society places on you, which figure would represent where you want to be?

Intimate Reflection – Paired/ Group Discussions (20 min)

Due to the personal nature of this exercise, divide participants into pairs or small groups of 3.

In their groups, invite them to discuss:

- Here is where I am now, but here is where I want to be — free from the limits that stereotypes or others' assumptions might place on me.”
- What steps could help them transition from their current figure to their future figure, while challenging stereotypes that could hold them back?
- What aspects of their journey are within their control, including how they respond to and dismantle stereotypes they encounter?

Encourage a supportive, non-judgmental atmosphere where participants feel comfortable sharing as much or as little as they wish.

Creative Visualization – Dream Collage Creation (30 min)

- Provide participants with magazines, newspapers, scissors, glue, markers, and paper.
- Ask them to create a collage representing their dreams, goals, and aspirations, combining images, words, and symbols that resonate with their future vision.
- Encourage creativity and individuality—there is no "wrong" way to express dreams.

Mini Reflection/Discussion 15 minutes

Invite volunteers to share their collages and any reflections they feel comfortable discussing.

Close the session by reinforcing the idea that dreaming, visualizing, and planning are important steps toward personal growth and that change starts with small, intentional actions.

Ask participants to reflect how they can go from figure 1 to figure 2.

- What support do they need?
- Who can enable this change?
- What resources or things would be helpful?

Tips for Instructor:

This activity could be read as assuming a participant will pick a “sad or negatively emotional figure” and want to transition to a “happier or more positive figure.”

Assuming that participants do pick positive figures the activity can still remain but you should adapt some of the questions:

- How can I ensure I stay in this position?
- What would make my dream better or brighter?

This activity is not meant to ignore tough feelings—it's totally normal to feel sad or confused sometimes. But when it comes to gender identity, those feelings can feel even stronger because of things like shame, rejection, or not being understood. This activity is here to help youth explore those feelings in a safe and supportive way.

- At the beginning of the session, remind everyone that this is a safe space. You can say something like: “What’s said in this room, stays in this room.”
- Let them know that what they share is confidential and they’re not expected to share more than they feel comfortable with.

Also, explain the idea of a trigger warning and that it helps others prepare for sensitive topics. For example: “Trigger warning: I’m going to talk about something difficult like death or abuse.”

Then they can decide if they want to listen or take a break. Everybody reacts differently – warning them is a kind and respectful way to take care of each other.

Adjustments or Variations	• Depending on the group size and time you can skip Step 4 and just make the activity a discussion and reflection activity around the Blob Tree.
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Appendix: Example image of a Blob Tree



More examples can be accessed on <https://blobtree.com>



ACTIVITY II

Ally

"I have a circle of friends or a community in which I feel completely accepted."





Ally	
Duration:	1.5 hours
Objective(s):	• Help young people understand the concept of an ally and recognize key allies in their lives. • Provide information and resources to guide them in finding positive role models and sources of support. • Encourage discussions about the qualities of a good friend and the importance of feeling accepted by peers. • Support them in building a strong, supportive community around themselves.
Materials Needed:	• Large Flipchart paper • Pens and markers

Activity Instructions

1. Introduction/Set-up

- Explain to the group that we are going to speak about friendship, allies and being part of a community today.
- Sit the group in a semi circle, and ask them what a friend is to them
- Now ask them what is an ally?

Definition: An ally is someone who supports and stands up for LGBTQIA+ people, even if they're not part of that community themselves. They listen, learn, speak out against unfair treatment, and help create a safe, respectful environment for everyone.

(Source: <https://au.reachout.com/>)

2. Main Activity (30 minutes)

- Split participants into small groups (max 5–6 people)
- Give each group flip chart paper.
- One person lays down on the Flipchart paper and the others draw an outline around them. You may need to tape together 2 or 3 pieces of paper. (Alternatively they can also draw the outline of an imaginary person).
- Ask groups to design and decorate their person: add a name, clothes, and features.
- Explain that this person represents their “ally.”
- Have the groups discuss: Who is this ally? How do they act and behave?
- Write and draw words, phrases, and visuals around the person.
- Each group presents their “ally” and shares their discussion with everyone.

3. Self-Reflection/Closing Activity: 15 minutes

- Explain that allies are there for everybody, not just people identifying as LGBTQIA+.
- Ask each participant to come up with a definition for “ally” (this can be done in groups or individually)

Additional question: Why could somebody who is heterosexual and cisgender decide to be an ally to the LGBTQIA+ community?

4. Tips for Instructor

Keep in mind that allies are very important for members of the LGBTQIA+ community and other minority groups (i. e. muslim teens, teens of colour).

When creating the ally-flipchart participants should reflect:

- What does it mean to be an LGBTQIA+-ally?
- How can I be a good ally?

Instructors should be well informed and up-to-date to effectively facilitate these discussions (More information: <https://au.reachout.com/relationships/allyship/how-to-be-a-good-lgbtqia-ally>)

Appropriate for:

- young people who identify as LGBTQIA+
- anybody who wants to support their friends
- groups promoting understanding, strengthening relationships and creating an inclusive environment

Emphasize that allies are important for many minority groups and use practical examples (i.e. Black-Lives-Matter movement) to show how allyship can promote change.

5. Summary and Reflection

Ask participants to name one thing they want to do in the future to be an ally or something they have learned. This can be done in the group or in pairs.

Adjustments or Variations

- Consider the group sizes carefully, if groups are too big it might be difficult for everyone to actively participate. If you have some larger personalities in the group or are very aware of allies consider mixing the groups up more.
- Adapt the conversation depending on the target groups you are working with.



“LET'S BE INCLUSIVE“

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