

Gender Equity Training Module

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November 2021

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Introduction:

The primary goal of this module is not only to comprehensively introduce the importance of gender equity to Oorja and its employees; many of them already possess this ever-normalizing knowledge. Rather, it aims to inculcate practices, philosophies, and alternative viewpoints that transform gender equity from a helpful concept into a foundational framework that Oorja uses to recruit, onboard, and collaborate with women at all levels of the organization. The module guides participants through a number of activities meant to encourage candid conversations concerning gender equity that hopefully result in broader understandings of the concept's importance and its role in impacting their lives and the lives of others in both professional and personal spaces. Further, these activities will teach participants to intelligently form their own gender-equitable opinions and enable them to communicate those thoughts transparently and respectfully.

To begin, participants will open up a conversation about the difference between gender and sex before transitioning into an activity meant to highlight the potential prevalence of gender divisions in non-gendered occupations or objects.

Part one of the module will primarily focus on perceptions. It will begin with a discussion about the distinction between equity and equality. Equity aims at ensuring equal outcomes for all genders and equality refers to equal opportunities, so by understanding this important distinction, will have tools to enable women to succeed within Oorja. The part of the module will then introduce bias. Everyone has inherent biases, so it is imperative to acknowledge those biases and begin to break them down by identifying their causes and idiosyncrasies before appropriate actions are taken. The part will end with a thought experiment that evaluates everyone's presumptions about gender and invites participants to describe their experience with the thought experiment as a concluding follow-up activity.

Part two of the module introduces perceptions versus performance. This section explains that women are often evaluated based on past performance, while men are contrarily assessed based on perceptions and future potential. After understanding typical assumptions about each gender in the workplace, section two will transition to a conversation of allyship within the workplace, outlining how men can advocate for women within their workplace and enable women to succeed.

Throughout the training, we are hoping to challenge people to understand intersectional identities—how might gender interact with race, ethnicity, social class, religion, sexual orientation, caste, etc.—and how they play a role in shaping the advantages or disadvantages that various people face. One could use this time to question the relationship these identities have with one another and their ability to oppress or advantage individuals both in the workplace or at home. We will finally apply each lesson to understand how we perceive intersectional identities and how we can work to reduce the bias we have in response to peoples' intersectional identities.

The training will conclude with questions that encourage participants to reflect deeply on their experiences both within the training and outside of it. The reflection process is a space for participants to voice their thoughts and feelings, and if they choose, share those feelings with the group as a whole.

The module works to solidify soft skills which can have a measurable impact. Measuring impact can be done in a number of ways. This module aims at measuring impact via increased female employees and customers. By fostering an environment that encourages equity for both men and women, Oorja will reach more female customers as the value placed on equity will be modeled at all levels of the company.

Course Logistics:

The facilitator should be a woman from outside of Oorja. A female facilitator is necessary because she will have more experience with gender discrimination and can pick up on any micro-aggressions or behavior that indicated that participants aren't taking the session seriously. By bringing in an outside source, Oorja employees will be able to be more authentic when completing the exercise as they will all be completing the session together. By conducting the training with all levels of Oorja employees, they will be able to communicate with one another about their individual experiences. This will paint a more holistic picture for the team as a whole and create a stronger company through collaboration and shared knowledge. In addition to the importance of understanding the shared experience of the team as a whole, the opinions of women are of the utmost importance during this training. Since there is only one female field worker, if the training were to be split in two, it might be harder for her voice to be heard among her male co-workers. By increasing the number of women participating in the training, increases the likelihood that women's experience in the field will be communicated.

Before the course begins, the facilitator should go through the entire module to familiarize herself with all of the activities in preparation for giving the training. She should be familiar with the module, the length of time for each activity, and how to bring participants back on track if they become distracted or disengaged.

The course will be conducted in three separate sections to ensure that participants both remain engaged throughout the training and so that they continue to be immersed in the material and conversations. We hope that multiple conversations over a number of days will encourage participants to continue to question their bias' and have tools to talk about the best ways to combat them.

Period 1: Introductions (1 hour)

The first session should not be as in-depth as the following two. In the first session, the facilitator will introduce the training to participants. She will explain the goals of the training and how the training will be conducted. After this explanation, she will begin by introducing the course ground rules and encouraging participants to create their own rules modeled after the ones exemplified in the module. Going through and creating rules allows the participants to engage with the material and craft their training in a way that is most effective for them. After creating ground rules, the facilitator will go through respect, personal attacks v. challenging conversation, and disagreement to prepare the participants for the training.

Period 2: Part One, Perceptions (2.5 hours)

The second session will be the longest, lasting for about 2.5 hours. Although this period is the longest, it is very interactive. The facilitator can manage the length of time by encouraging participants to move around the space and engage in conversation. The facilitator will keep track of time throughout each activity to ensure that the participants are staying on task.

Period 3: Part 2, Inclusion and leaning (1.5 hours)

The final section is meant to be a time for reflection and moving forward. It could be helpful for participants to have a writing utensil and paper to write down their thoughts and feelings. The beginning of Part 2 asks the facilitator to go over many terms for the participants. It can be helpful to have participants repeat the meaning of terms or how they imagine each term could impact or has impacted their life to gain knowledge of how well the participants retain information.

Facilitator Instructions:

You will guide the participants through this course. When participants are actively engaged during each activity, they can gain further insights and understanding of the importance of incorporating gender.

This course includes some activities that require participants to write, while others require participants to move around the space. Before the course begins, ask all participants if they have a writing utensil and paper, if they do not, provide these as they can help with reflection throughout the module. While many people reflect well by writing down their thoughts, others might find it easier to reflect internally, or externally through movement. There are activities in which participants will move around the room or space to encourage movement, one-on-one conversations, and more authentic large group discussions.

The training module begins by asking participants to introduce themselves and ensuring that the participants feel comfortable within the space, the facilitator begins to create an environment conducive to conducting challenging conversations. Beginning with something lighthearted helps participants feel comfortable to share and learn and helps buffer any feelings of uneasiness that might arise during the training sessions.

After introductions have been completed, the group will have a conversation about ground rules. Instead of telling the participants what rules they have to follow, they will create their own rules for the session. When participants create a set of guidelines for the discussion, they are actively engaging and communicating their expectations and needs. There is a list of potential guidelines for the module, however, participants are welcome to create their own as they see fit. After creating a list that each participant agrees upon, the facilitator will move on to leading a conversation about respect, challenging conversation, and planning for disagreement. These conversations will act as a continuation of the rules but ensure that participants have the opportunity to voice their needs before beginning the conversation about gender.

There may be points when participants feel uncomfortable, angry, or upset when they are asked to answer certain questions or reflect on certain experiences. When this happens, refer back to the course objectives and rules that the group created at the beginning of the session. Such references can be helpful to remind participants of the goals of the session to ensure that they proceed in accordance with the goals and rules that were created by everyone in the group.

This training module is designed to help Oorja grow both as an organization and as an individual. The module is designed for individuals to challenge their own assumptions, make mistakes, and then learn from those mistakes. As the facilitator, you have the opportunity to encourage compassion and learning throughout the training. When participants ask questions or seem skeptical of certain activities, clarify the goals of each exercise.

Be aware or make note of side conversations, body language, and general sentiment—examples mentioned below—about the session. When participants seem unengaged, ask them what their thoughts are and question how they are reacting. Hopefully, the inquiry will spark further interest and discussion about the topic at hand.

Examples of behavior to be aware of:

- ❖ If participants look agitated or are causing distractions for other participants
- ❖ If participants are not taking the material seriously
- ❖ If participants are responding to questions in a sarcastic or disingenuous manner

Throughout the module, there will be italicized text indicating further facilitator instructions.

Course Objectives:

- ❖ Introduce the concept of gender equity
 - Develop a further understanding of the distinction between Equity and Equality
- ❖ Understand how gender inequities and biases manifest in the workplace.
 - Hiring, Pay, and Office Culture Promotion
- ❖ Learn how individuals can work together to address gender inequities to make the workplace a more equitable space for all employees

Measurable Objectives:

- ❖ Increase the number of female employees within Oorja
- ❖ Increase Oorja's outreach to females within communities
- ❖ Resolve more reports regarding gender discrimination (or females being treated disrespectfully in general).
- ❖ Increase the rating of female employees' comfort within the workplace and on the job (a regular survey should be conducted to measure this)

Course Ground Rules:

- ❖ Begin the course by setting a tone for the group, parameters for discussion, and obligation to one another
- ❖ As a group go through this list of predetermined rules and decide on a list that the group agrees upon—the list should align with the goals of the module and the comfort level of the group;
 - Potential rules
 - Commit to understanding disagreements within the group and working toward a common solution
 - Take responsibility for your impact and intentions
 - This rule understands that our intentions can be different from the impact that we make
 - Understand the impact of your actions on others—whether you have previously realized it or not.
 - Be attentive to discussion even if you choose not to speak up

Respect:

Purpose: The purpose of this exercise is to create a basis for understanding everyone's perception of respect.

- ❖ How does someone demonstrate respect for you?
 - Have everyone write down their own personal answer to this question.
 - Then, read out each response anonymously and then facilitate a discussion about the group's different understandings of respect.
 - Finally, have the group collectively agree on a definition of respect that will be used for the entirety of the workshop.

Personal Attacks vs. Challenging the Conversation:

Purpose: The purpose of the conversation is to make distinctions between attacks and constructive conversation that challenges the group and moves the conversation forward.

- ❖ What is the difference between a personal attack on an individual and a challenge to an individual's idea or belief?
 - How can I challenge the beliefs of others to move conversations forward?
 - How can we maintain a level of respect while challenging each other?

Disagreement:

Purpose: Create a framework for dealing with disagreement to ensure that participants continue to foster an environment that promotes learning and communication.

- ❖ General points to keep in mind when addressing disagreements:
 - Disagreement isn't bad; in reality, it is necessary for the organization to progress towards new and innovative solutions.
 - It is possible to settle disagreements in an amicable way.
- ❖ Process of addressing disagreements:

- 1) Identify and agree on precisely what the disagreement is.
 - a) What caused the disagreement?
 - b) How do all the sides of the disagreement differ?
- 2) Determine whether this disagreement can be resolved through a compromise, or if there is one approach that must be fully taken.
 - a) How can we address this disagreement?
 - b) What are the possible solutions?
- 3) Each side should communicate their opinions clearly and effectively so those who disagree can understand.
 - a) How can we encourage ourselves and each other to speak vulnerably?
- 4) Genuinely consider the thoughts presented by alternative viewpoints.
 - a) How can we disconnect our egos from our point of view?
 - b) How can we recognize and acknowledge when we might be incorrect?
- 5) How can this disagreement be settled in a way that satisfies the most number of distinct parties involved that it can? (it's okay to not have unanimous support on every solution).

Part One: Perceptions

Goals:

1. Foster an environment that enables women and produces equal outcomes for men and women.
 - a. Equal numbers of men and women in each position
 - b. Equal pay for men and women
2. Create a baseline for how we understand bias and stereotypes and how they impact the way we interact with one another.
 - a. This can be measured through course checkpoints. Once participants of the course address their bias and certain stereotypes they each hold this will be considered a baseline.
 - b. For progress regarding breaking down bias and stereotypes, participants first need to consider their own biases.

Activity I: Crossing the Line

Instructions: All of the participants will stand together on a line. You will read aloud sentences instructing participants to move either forward or backward. At the end of the exercise ask participants to use the reflection questions to guide their thoughts about the activity. [Example Activity](#)

30 minutes

1. If your parents spoke English as a first language, take one step forward.
2. If, as a child, you had a room of your own with a door, take one step forward.
3. If you were raised in a community where the vast majority of police, politicians, and government workers were not of your gender, move one space back.
4. If you were denied a job or promotion because of your gender, move one space back.
5. If, in your home as a child, there were more than 10 children's books and 30 adult books, move forward.
6. If you were discouraged from pursuing activities, careers, or schools of your choice by teachers or guidance counselors, move back.
7. If one or both of your parents completed college, move forward.
8. If you have ever lost a job, a promotion, or did not get a job because you had to take considerable time off work to care for a sick child, parent, or partner, move back.
9. If you have ever been asked if you were the secretary, maid, housekeeper, janitor, or some other subordinate job, when you were the boss, the hotel guest, or homeowner, move back.
10. If your bags have never been searched in a store, move forward.
11. If, as a child, you were never told you must dress or act in a proper way, because it reflected on your whole race, take one step forward.
12. If you were insulted, belittled, demeaned, or ignored this week because of your gender, move one space back.
13. If you never had to wonder if you were hired to meet an affirmative action goal, move forward.
14. Take one step forward if you feel comfortable walking alone at night
15. Take one step back if you have ever felt limited by your gender.
16. Take one step forward if you completed secondary education
17. Take one step back if you have ever been abused (verbally, physically, or sexually).
18. Take one step back if you have ever felt objectified or sexually harassed.
19. If you own your own home, take one step forward.
20. Take one step forward if you always have access to the physical health services you need.
21. If you have had a mentor or role model in your life take one step forward.
22. If when you leave your house you are often followed or harassed please take one step backward.

Sample Reflection Questions:

30 minutes

- ❖ Are you surprised about where you ended up on the line?
- ❖ How does your position on this line compare to that of the other participants?
- ❖ What did you learn in this activity?
- ❖ How did you feel when you stepped forward or backward?
 - How did you feel when others took a step but you didn't?
- ❖ What statements were hard to admit to?

Gender vs. Sex

5 minutes

Gender	Sex
A societal construct based on culture and society. Perceptions of gender can change through time.	Biologically determined according to hormones, or reproductive organs.

Activity II: Gender divisions

30 minutes

Instructions: Each side of the room will be marked as either male or female. The facilitator will read each activity, role, and object aloud and participants will walk to the side of the room that they associate each word or phrase with.

Activities:	Roles:	Objects
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Cooking● Cleaning● Taking care of elders● Farming● Driving● Giving birth● Carrying heavy loads● Raising Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Mother● Head of the family● Farmer● Breadwinner● Father	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Pan● Keys● Hammer● Tie● Saree● Lipstick

Reflection:

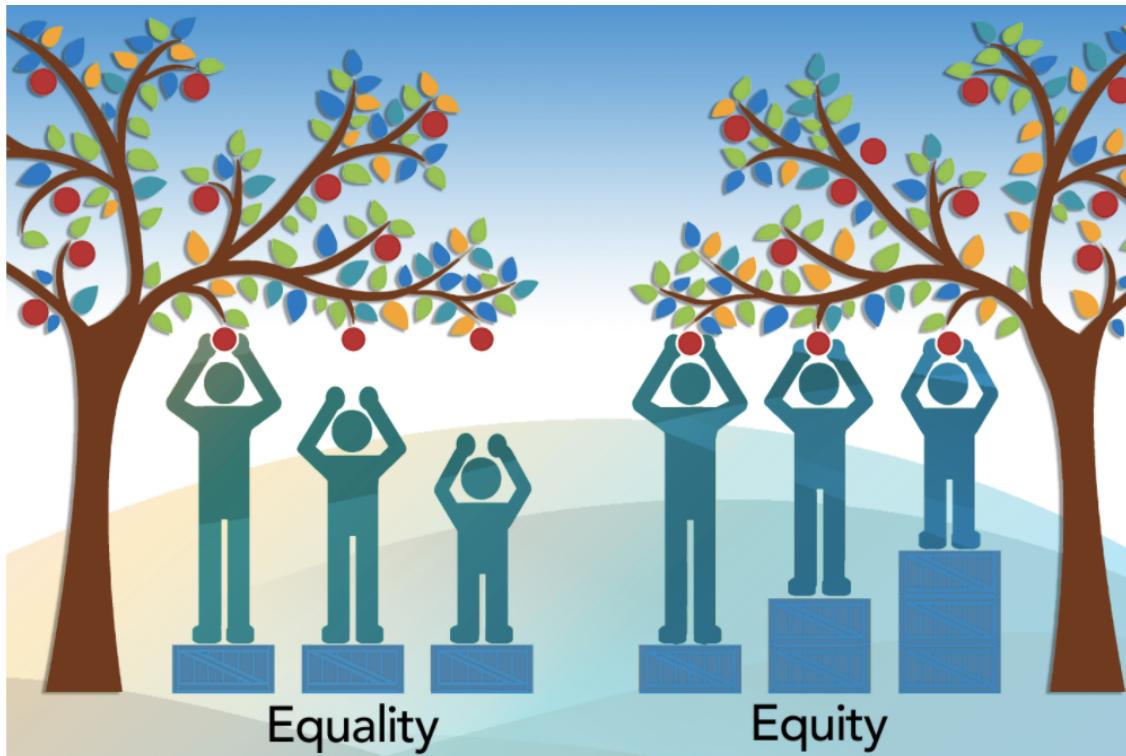
- ❖ Why do we associate certain objects, roles, or activities with certain genders?
- ❖ Do any of the answers above have biological reasoning?
- ❖ For those that aren't rooted in biology, why do we associate them with a particular gender?
- ❖ Discussion of various societal and economic positions
 - What positions are attached to men?
 - Can women carry out these?
 - What positions are attached to women?
 - Can men carry out these?
 -

Equity vs. Equality Definitions

5 minutes

Equality	Equity
Refers to all parties receiving the same treatment. <i>Equality gives equal resources without regard to one's starting position.</i>	Refers to fairness and justice. <i>Equity focuses on equal opportunity to obtain equal outcomes.</i>

Example I:



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30 minutes

Discussion:

- ❖ What do we see on the left when all of the people are given the same box to stand on?
- ❖ How does the image on the right change the narrative of the left?
- ❖ How might this apply to your own positions within Oorja, within your community, or even within your family?

Read to the participants:

Oorja has many positions held by both men and women. In order for both genders to have successful outcomes within Oorja, they will have different needs, one of which might be the support they receive in their positions. By supplying the same resources, equal outcomes won't occur. Understand the nuances within the way both men and women can carry out their responsibilities and where interventions must take place.

Examples within Oorja of equitable interventions:

- ❖ Women leaving the office before the sun sets
 - By giving more flexibility to women in terms of working hours, women can still complete the necessary tasks without risking their safety.
- ❖ Escorts for women in remote areas
 - To feel safe while carrying out their work, women need an escort in remote areas.
 - Public transportation is often dangerous for women to travel alone.
- ❖ Central meeting locations
 - Holding meetings in professional spaces rather than personal ones.
 - Central meeting locations help ensure the comfortability of both men and women.
- ❖ Maternity and Paternity Leave
 - Allowing new parents time off after they have children to ensure that the child can have adequate care in the beginning stages of life
 - Ensuring this for both parents can begin to shift the narrative that women are solely responsible for their children's upbringing

Bias

Read to the Participants:

We begin this section by accepting that everyone has biases. Biases occur because, we have created preformed expectations for various groups of people to patterns and create shortcuts to come to conclusions faster and have preformed Biases can be helpful in many instances, however, they can be harmful when the biases are negative or false and about a particular group of people. Biases are often unconscious but can impact workplace interactions greatly. Biases can impact who is recruited, hired, promoted, or treated within the workplace.

Examples of bias could include:

- ❖ We tend to like people who are more similar to us
- ❖ We treat people better who are prettier
- ❖ We see tall people as more competent
- ❖ Boys are good athletes
- ❖ Girls are good at helping

Gender Bias: This happens in the workplace when people are treated a certain way because of their gender as opposed to the quality of work that person produces. Gender bias either consciously or unconsciously contributes to systemic gender bias.

Example of gender bias in the workplace:

- ❖ If employers or co-workers expect that men will do better work than their female counterparts

Activity III: Bias

10 minutes

Read to the Participants

Now that you have a better understanding of what bias is and how it might impact workplace interactions, I will ask you to take part in an exercise.

“A father and his son are in a car accident. At the hospital, the surgeon says, ‘I cannot operate on this patient, he is my son.’ How is this possible?”

Have participants discuss possible solutions to the problem. After a few minutes of discussion, if no one answers correctly, explain the outcome.

Answer: The surgeon in the riddle is the boy’s mother

- ❖ Oftentimes when people answer this riddle, they do so with an unconscious bias. People often assume that a surgeon is a man who is gender-biased in action.

- ❖ By reflecting on how this was perceived, it is imperative to remember that we all have biases, but that we must question when they might be leading us astray.

Hypothetical Story:

30 minutes

Read to the participants

A collection agent wakes up in the morning and travels to work. Throughout the day, the collection agent interacts with farmers within the community and then returns home to their family that evening.

Describe the responsibilities of the collection agent once they return home.

Did you imagine a female or male collection agent?

What activities were described?

Why did you describe those activities with the selected gender of the collection agent?

Could the opposite gender carry out such activities?

The facilitator can continue to question participants if they see fit. The goal of the questioning is to help participants realize that many activities can be done by both men and women, despite the fact that one gender normally carries them out.

Short Reflection:

- ❖ Can you think of examples of gender stereotypes and/or bias from your own life?
- ❖ Why do you think those biases exist?
- ❖ What can you do to alleviate those biases and replace them with more gender-equitable views?
- ❖ From what you have learned thus far, why do you think equity is important?
- ❖ Can you articulate the importance of equity in relation to equality?

Part Two: Inclusion and Learning

1.5 hours

Read each section to the participants and allow for them to respond as they see fit. When asking questions, allow participants time to think and respond. Feel free to call on participants if no one volunteers to share.

Potential v. performance

5 Minutes

Read through and ask participants to respond to the reflection question.

Potential refers to how someone could act or the work they could produce in the future.

Performance refers to concrete results or works that someone has produced.

- ❖ Men are often judged on their potential and women are judged on their performance.
 - Within the workplace, it is important to remember this to control biases one might have about another employee.

Note: To be an inclusive leader who promotes an inclusive workplace, one must focus on accountability, ownership, and allyship. Each is a stepping stone for integrating inclusivity within the workplace. When such language and action begins at the leadership level, it can be adopted by the rest of the company.

Reflection Questions:

1. What is the difference between these?
2. How do performance evaluations change when focusing on potential rather than performance?

Accountability:

15 minutes

Read through and ask participants to respond to the reflection question.

- ❖ It is imperative to hold employees accountable for their behavior. When there is an instance of gender bias, leadership must act quickly and effectively to mitigate the situation and hold others accountable.
 - Example: One employee or staff member makes a comment that their co-worker can't carry out a task or do it well because of their gender.
 - The leadership team must immediately address the comment as inappropriate and talk to both parties to resolve the argument.
 - Comments that demean the opposite gender are not only inappropriate but can also be very harmful to the target of the comment.
 - If the perpetrator of the comment is unwilling to apologize and communicate openly about the situation they could be subject to termination of employment.
 - Fostering a safe and inclusive work environment for all employees is imperative to company success and those who jeopardize such safety hinder the prosperity of the company as a whole.

Reflection Question:

1. How would it make you feel to be told you couldn't do something because of a quality about yourself that you cannot control?

Allyship

5 minutes

Read through aloud.

- ❖ Allies are people with the power and privilege to level the playing field.
- ❖ **Allyship means actively supporting people from marginalized or underrepresented groups.**
 - *Example: If women are being actively discouraged from reaching higher education levels or job opportunities.*
 - *Men can be allies by addressing comments that discourage women. They can also use their position in society to help women reach higher education levels and job opportunities.*
- ❖ Listening, compassion, and empathy for the stories and experiences of others.

Facilitator: Ask if anyone has clarifying questions about what it means to be an ally. Before beginning the activity, make sure everyone understands the meaning of the word allyship and how they can be allies themselves.

Activity IV: Becoming an Ally

30 minutes

Participants will section off into groups of two or three. Using a piece of paper, participants will write down their own definitions of allyship. After 3 minutes, each of the groups will be invited to share their definitions.

Next, participants will go back to their groups and brainstorm how they can show that they are allies or What should allies do when they see gender discrimination or behavior that demeans women?

Example:

- *Allies intervene when they hear gender discrimination both in their personal and professional lives.*
- *Allies intervene when they see someone being harassed.*
- *Allies recognize their privilege and use it to advocate for marginalized groups rather than speak over them.*

Reflection Questions:

1. How does it make you feel to have others enabling you to succeed?
2. How does it feel to enable others to succeed?

Be Honest, Curious, and Compassionate

5 minutes

Read aloud.

- ❖ Ask questions that work to understand the perspectives of those around you.
- ❖ Have humility when engaging in challenging conversations so that you can learn from them.

- ❖ Be courageous when engaging in conversations pertaining to gender
 - Take risks and be vulnerable
 - Example: Talk about your own experiences and your perceptions of gender.
 - Explain what you've learned from the session and if you have questioned any of your previous beliefs
 - Expressing your thoughts enables others to do the same. Your perspective is important and can support a better conversation.

Acknowledge and learn from mistakes

5 minutes

Read aloud.

- ❖ We are humans and that means that everyone makes mistakes.
- ❖ We have created this course with the knowledge that mistakes will be made and challenging conversations will happen
 - Lean into those conversations and learn from the mistakes that you make.
 - Have compassion when addressing the mistakes and understand that everyone is trying their best.
 - Example: *Making a comment that demeans or hurts another participant, even if you were unaware at the time that you were doing so.*
 - “Controlling the household’s money and how it is spent should be a man’s responsibility.”
 - Although this might be a cultural norm and many participants might believe it to be true, the comment could hurt some participants.
 - When a mistake occurs, the facilitator can ask follow-up questions regarding why they think this is true and allow other participants to respond.

Activity V: Final Reflection

30 minutes

Have participants answer these questions on their own in a journal or notebook.

- ❖ Are there any times when you feel that your behavior is limited by society? The people you work with? How people might think of you or talk about you?
 - How do you feel about these limitations?
 - When do you feel them?
- ❖ Do you feel that there are certain ‘privileges’ that men carry in society?
 - What are these privileges?
 - Do they have an adverse effect on women?
- ❖ Do you feel that there are certain ‘privileges’ that women carry in society?
 - What are these privileges?
 - Do they have an adverse effect on men?

Ask the group to reflect on what they have written with a partner. After sharing in pairs, ask the group if they would feel comfortable sharing what they have learned from the exercise.

After participants have reflected on their writing, ask if they have anything else they would like to add after completing the session.