

Phase I Group Idea

As a group, we want to learn more about how gender norms have shaped our thoughts and actions. We aim to promote a positive attitude towards growth and educate ourselves and our peers about these norms. This will help us all express ourselves more freely.

Our top priority is to create a safe and welcoming space in our meetings where people can share their personal experiences. We also want to be open to new experiences we may not have encountered before. This will help us better understand the bigger picture of how gender norms affect our lives.

We're looking for people who are genuinely interested in learning about gender norms and are willing to advocate for change. We want members who will do more than just scratch the surface, who will research and share their own thoughts and feelings on the subject. When we choose new members, we'll ask about their motivations and what they hope to achieve.

Gender norms are highly relevant to our class topics such as Consciousness Raising, Privilege and Oppression, Gendered Body because they reveal how society constructs and enforces expectations, roles and behaviors associated with gender. The article, "Becoming a Gendered Body" written by Karen Martin, is a perfect one for us to research gender norms for young kids. In addition, we can apply the concept of Intersectionality to understand how gender norms intersect with other forms of identity and oppression, including race, class, and sexual orientation which we learned in "Mapping Margins Intersectionality" written by Kimberle Crenshaw.

Phase II: Definitions and Group Identity—Manifesto

Starting in September 2023, Our Consciousness Raising Group is aiming to raise awareness about issues surrounding gender norms and identity. To achieve our goals, we have developed a group set of definitions to facilitate our conversations about gender identity. Gender

norms are social principles that dictate the expected behavior of individuals in society, prescribing what is deemed appropriate for girls, boys, women, men, and others, thereby constraining their gender identity (Save the Children, n.d.). Gender identity, on the other hand, is constructed based on the use of sex assignment determined by genitals at birth, contributing to the establishment of a social binary between men and women (Lecture, 9/3/2023). The term "gender expression" refers to how individuals present their gender to the world, serving as an external reflection of their internal identity, according to the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC). Gender roles are defined as the specific behaviors or roles considered suitable for a particular gender, shaped by prevailing cultural norms (Cambridge Dictionary). Lastly, gender ranking involves the cultural preference for masculine qualities over feminine ones, as discussed in a lecture on 9/13/2023.

Promoting inclusive education involves two key strategies. First, advocating for a comprehensive curriculum review and overhaul, incorporating diverse perspectives on gender roles, history, and contributions. This ensures educational materials are free from gender biases, fostering a more equitable learning environment. Simultaneously, implementing mandatory teacher training programs focused on gender-sensitive teaching methods encourages critical thinking and open dialogue about traditional gender norms in the classroom.

Second, in media reform for gender representation, the focus is on developing media literacy programs to enhance critical thinking about gender portrayal. These programs empower individuals to challenge harmful stereotypes in various forms of media. Fostering industry accountability is also crucial, encouraging ethical codes that promote positive and diverse gender portrayals. Supporting inclusive decision-making initiatives contributes to authentic narratives challenging traditional gender norms.

Our enduring objectives remain unchanged as we continue to deepen our understanding of gender norms for self and peer education, fostering free expression in society. Additionally, we persist in cultivating a psychologically safe environment, dedicating time to share our diverse

experiences with gender norms and dismantling harmful conventions in our lives. Furthermore, we aim to expand our research by incorporating the perspectives of marginalized groups, utilizing surveys and interviews to gather diverse data on the extent of gender norms in different cultures.