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| Title | **Ideal Men and Ideal Women** |
| Objective | Understand how gender ideals can prevent people from fulfilling their full potential |
| Target audience | Community members |
| Group size | 20–25 mixed male/female participants |
| Estimated time | 1h |
| Materials | Whiteboard or blackboard, whiteboard markers or chalk, markers and flip chart |
| Printouts/downloadable resources | * [House construction](https://www.threemountains.academy/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/role-of-a-woman-roofing-the-house-small.jpg) |
| Source | Adapted from [gender sensitisation module for gender trainers](https://rozan.org/sites/default/files/Training%20manual%20for%20Gender%20trainers.pdf) compiled by Rosan, p.31 |

1. **Steps:**

Introduction (5 minutes)

* Introduce the exercise and explain its objective. Point out that before we can learn to analyse the role of gender in our lives, it is important to know what society expects from men and women. We need to be aware that we have also internalised these roles.

Small group work (25 minutes)

* Divide participants into male and female. Give the two groups a sheet of flip chart paper and marker pens.
* Ask the male group to list what society expects from an ideal woman.
* Ask the female group to list what society expects from an ideal man.

Whole group work (20 minutes)

* Ask a volunteer from each group to present the findings of their discussion.
* Next, lead the group in a whole group discussion.

**2. Questions to help guide discussion:**

* What are the differences and similarities between the two lists?
* Where do these gender role expectations come from?
* Has the definition of an ideal man and an ideal woman changed over the generations?
* Do you live up to these gender stereotypes in your own lives?
* How do you feel about trying to meet these ideal gender expectations? Does it limit you or is it liberating?

**3. Key message**:

We expect others to live up to the ideal gender expectations for men and women, but it is not possible to live up to them in reality. The definition of the ideal man or woman changes over time. We should look beyond these ideals and give everyone a chance to fulfil their individual potential.

**4. Notes for facilitators:**

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| The most important thing to know is that these expectations are unrealistic.  No one can live up to all of the ideals on the list. People are different and should be allowed to express their individuality.  When we place impossible ideals on people and judge them by how we think they should behave, this places stress on them and stops people from fulfilling their potential. For example, if we impose the ideal that women belong at home doing housework, we prevent women from following their dreams of building houses, becoming high-flying entrepreneurs and aeroplane pilots. If we impose the ideal that only women cook and make clothes, what becomes of the man who has a passion for cooking or wants to become a fashion designer?  Seeing people only within the framework of traditional gender roles prevents them from exploring individual talents and becoming happy and fulfilled human beings. |