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| Title | **What Defines a Man, What Defines a Woman** |
| Objective | * Develop an awareness that differences between men and women are often a result of socialisation
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| Target audience | Men and women |
| Group size | 16  |
| Estimated time | 40 minutes |
| Materials  | Two sheets of flip chart paper, marker pens |
| Printouts/downloadable resources | - |
| Source | Three Mountains Learning Advisors |

1. **Steps:**

Small group work (10 minutes)

* Divide the group in two, creating a group of men and a group of women. Give each group a sheet of flip chart paper.
* Ask each group to draw the shape of a body on the paper.
* Ask the female group to write or draw the physical and social aspects of a man, and ask the male group to write or draw the physical and social aspects of a woman. Ask them to put the physical aspects inside the outline of the body, and the social aspects outside.

Whole group work (30 minutes)

* Bring the two groups back together and invite each group to present what they have written or drawn.
* Once the presentations are complete, use the following questions to start a discussion:
* What are the key differences, both physical and social, between men and women?
* Which physical traits are gradual and might vary for either sex? (e.g. strength, height, length of hair, etc.).
* Which physical traits are absolute and remain the same for each sex? (e.g. having a penis, having a vagina).
* Which features are a result of socialisation? (e.g. wealth, decision-making power).

* End by explaining the difference between gender and sex. Use the drawings, and the discussion responses, to point out that there are very few absolute differences between men and women, and that most differences relate to socialisation.
* Ask participants whether this exercise has changed their perception of gender differences.

**2. Key message**:

Gender and sex are two different concepts with different meanings. Sex relates to the physical and biological state of being male or female, whereas gender relates to social construct. Gender sometimes leads to discrimination between what men and women can do or be in society. When we explore this further, we find that both men and women are capable of doing many of the same things.

**3. Notes for facilitators:**

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| **Sex** refers to the biological characteristics of a person based on their genitalia and reproductive organs. For example, women have a vagina and men have a penis. There are other characteristics which tend to distinguish the sexes, such as women having breasts and men having facial hair, although the size and amount may vary hugely within a sex. Whatever the case, our sex is defined before we are born. It is part of our physiology.**Gender** refers to the societal norms expected of a person based on their sex. For instance, the difference in the way men and women are expected to behave and dress, as well as the roles and jobs they can undertake. As gender is defined by society, it can develop and change over time. For example, it used to be the case that women could not own land, or that men would be looked down on for cooking at home. These are things that are changing alongside culture and society. **Gradual traits** refer to physical traits between all men, and all women, which vary. For example, not all men are the same height and not all women have the same hair colour. **Absolute traits** are general traits that remain the same throughout either sex. For instance, all men have a penis and all women have a vagina. The size and shape might vary (be gradual), but the general physical trait is absolute. **Dealing with absolute and gradual differences**Be aware that there are gradual biological differences between men and women, but there are always exceptions to those general differences. For example, men are generally taller than women, but some women are taller than a lot of men. Women generally have higher voices than men, but some women speak with voices lower than some men’s.**Gender roles** are learned from birth. They are often reinforced by parents, teachers, peers and society. Gender roles reflect the way society is organised around us, and may vary according to age, social class and ethnic group. Men are often responsible for activities that require physical strength, such as building houses. Because only women can bear children, many societies use this biological fact as a basis for allocating other roles, such as domestic chores and caring for children. |