



BODY, GENDER, SEX, INTIMACY

Module 5



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Learning Objectives

By the end of this module learners will:

Understand	the difference between sex and gender
Understand	different attitudes associated with sex and sexuality
Understand	the relationship between culture and gender/bodies
Detect	gender roles across cultures
Apply	effective tools to overlap the cultural gap when caring for persons from another culture
Engage	critically with cultural differences regarding gender and sex
Reflect	on our cultural identities and how they create real life intercultural communication problems

Introduction

A friend of mine described a very difficult situation that she dealt with. One day an Iranian mother and father admitted their thirteen month old child to the pediatrics unit where she works. After three days of rigorous testing and examination it was discovered that Ali had Wilm's tumor, a type of childhood cancer. Fortunately, the survival rate is 70-80% with proper treatment.

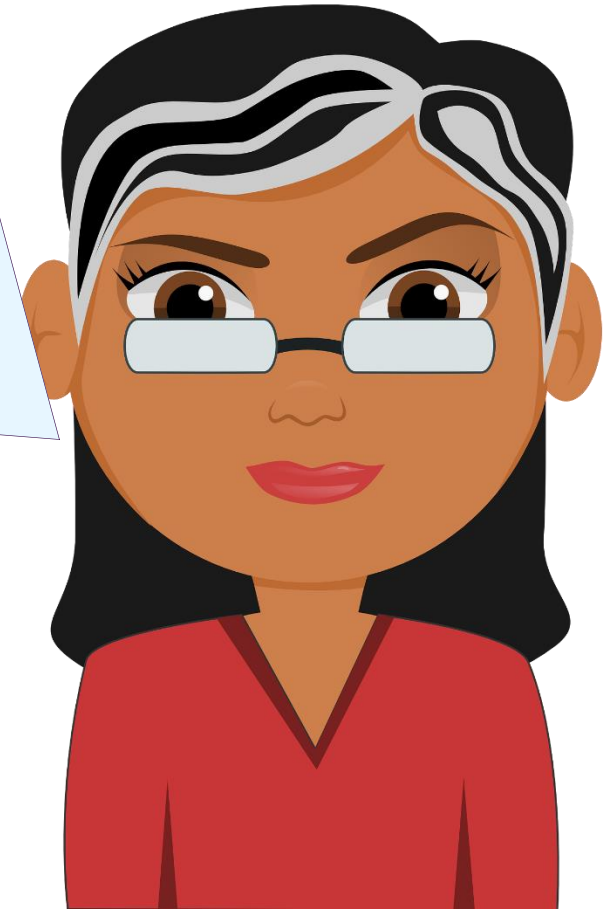
Before meeting with my friend, who is a pediatric oncologist to discussed Ali's treatment. Mr. and Mrs. Mohar were frightened yet cooperative.

After meeting her, however, they became completely uncooperative. They refused permission for even the most routine procedures. Mr. Mohar would not even talk with the physician or the nurses. Instead, he called other specialists to discuss Ali's case.

After several frustrating days my friend decided to turn the case over to a colleague. He met with the Mohars and found them extremely cooperative.

What caused their sudden reversal in behavior?

What would you do in her place?



Source: pixy.org

audio



Questions

Why do we have to be tolerant of every kind of sexual difference which is unlike ours?

Why should someone whose profession is not related to sex still care about sex?

An example



Source: pixabay.org

A twenty-eight-year-old Arab man named Abdul Nazih refused to let a male lab technician enter his wife's room to draw blood. She had just given birth.

Exercise

- Why do you think the husband refused to let the male technician in to the room to take blood from his wife?
- Write down your answer.



A row of six stylized paper figures in brown, white, and light pink, holding hands in a circle. The text 'SEX AND GENDER' is centered over them.

SEX AND GENDER

Sex and gender

- **Sex:** set of biological and physiological features that define masculine and feminine.
- **Gender:** socially and culturally constructed identities/roles regarding male and female.
- **Gender identity:** how someone perceives himself/herself regarding gender. Gender identity is not binary neither static.
- **Sexual orientation:** to which gender one person is attracted to.

“One is not born a woman, but rather becomes, a woman.”

Social constructionism

Social constructionism

Everything we see and know is **partially socially constructed**.
Meaning does not exist out of social circumstances and is dependent to them. Gender theorists draw from this theory to analyze gender issues.



Source: pexels.com

Gender performativity

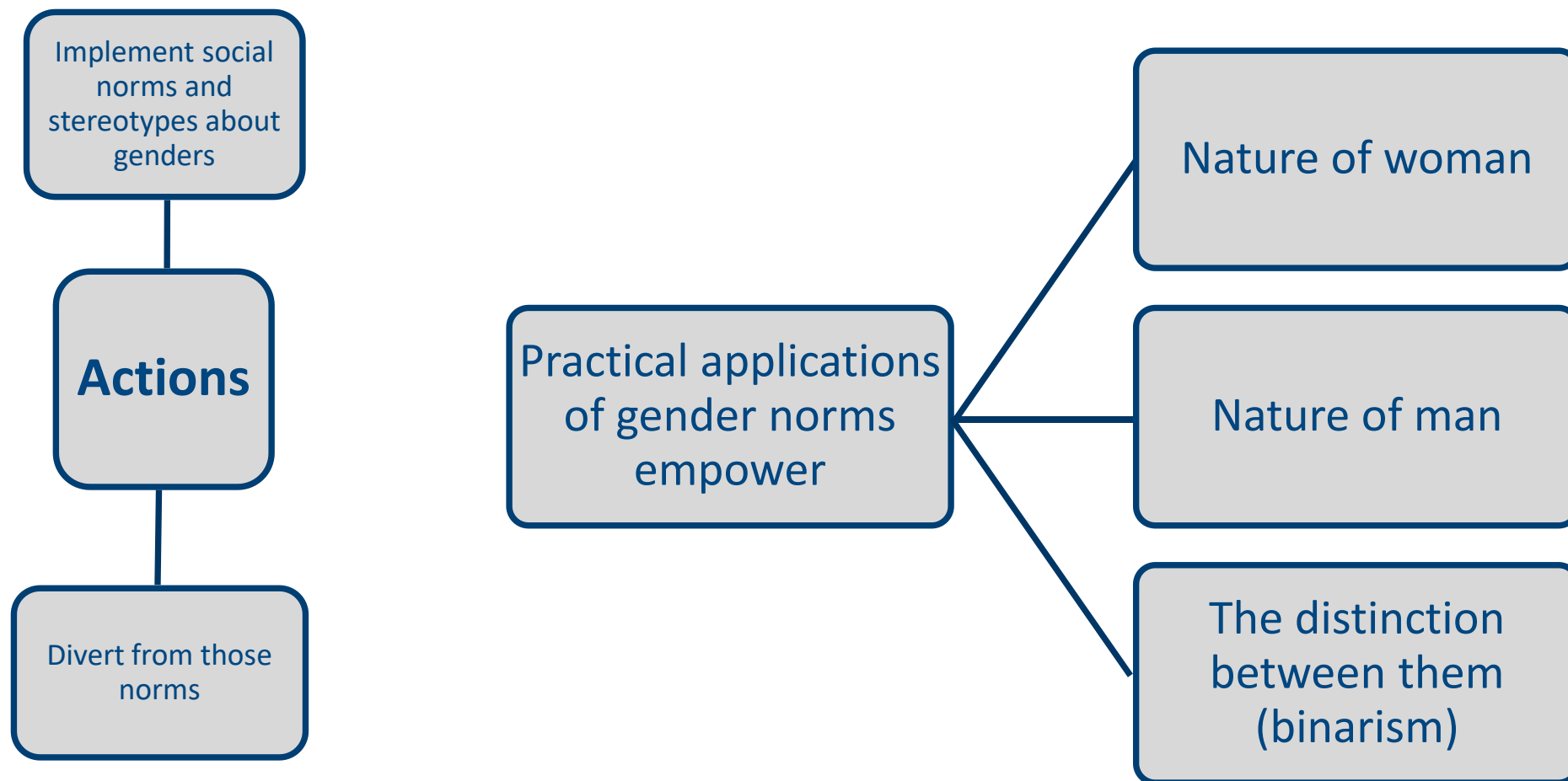
Gender Performativity

Identity is constructed and reconstructed through repetitive acts. People tend to conform because of social pressure, but there is also the possibility to resist. This is how different gender identities are formed.

*Gender “is a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo.... Gender is... an identity **instituted through a repetition of acts.**”*

Judith Butler

Gender as a social construction



Gender as a social construction

*What are little boys made of?
Snips and snails,
And puppy dog tails,
That's what little boys are made of.
What are little girls made of?
Sugar and spice,
And everything nice,
That's what little girls are made of.*

Exercise

Reflect on the lyrics of this familiar nursery rhyme

- What information do we get through this rhyme about correct expressions of gender?
- How do we perceive these perceptions today in the West?
- What is the association between gender expression-time-space?

Summary

- *Sex is the biological features that differentiate masculine and feminine, while gender is the socially and culturally constructed identity.*
- *Gender Performativity theory states that gender identity is constructed and reconstructed through repetitive acts.*
- *Our daily actions either implement the social norms or divert from those norms.*



BODY

Bodies

- The body is an important element of a person's identity. It is the vessel through which identities, cultural or individual, are expressed.
- Cultures and sub-cultures, such as class, religion, nationality affect the way people perceive themselves and others.
- Across different cultures there are different perceptions of body.
- This fact implies that there is no such thing as 'natural' when we talk about bodies.

Bodies (cont.)

- Perceptions regarding the body do not present differences only in relation to space or culture, but also in relation to time. Societies are not static, but change constantly (BODY Culture, Body, Gender, Sexuality in Adult Trainings, 2013).
- What is considered to be acceptable depends on the particular cultural context. For example, tattoos and piercings may be common among carriers of one culture, but unacceptable and a reason for discrimination in other cultures.

Differences regarding body perceptions



Exercise

Reflect on the situation in your family's country of origin:

- Would it be accepted for a teacher in a school or a university to have many tattoos?
- Do people with many piercings face any discrimination in the work environment?

REFLECTION

Clarification: There are no right or wrong answers, since these are socioculturally determined issues.

Summary

- *Identities and cultures are expressed through the body.*
- *There is no such thing as natural when we talk about bodies.*
- *Body perceptions change through space and time.*
- *What is acceptable about our bodies is defined by our culture.*

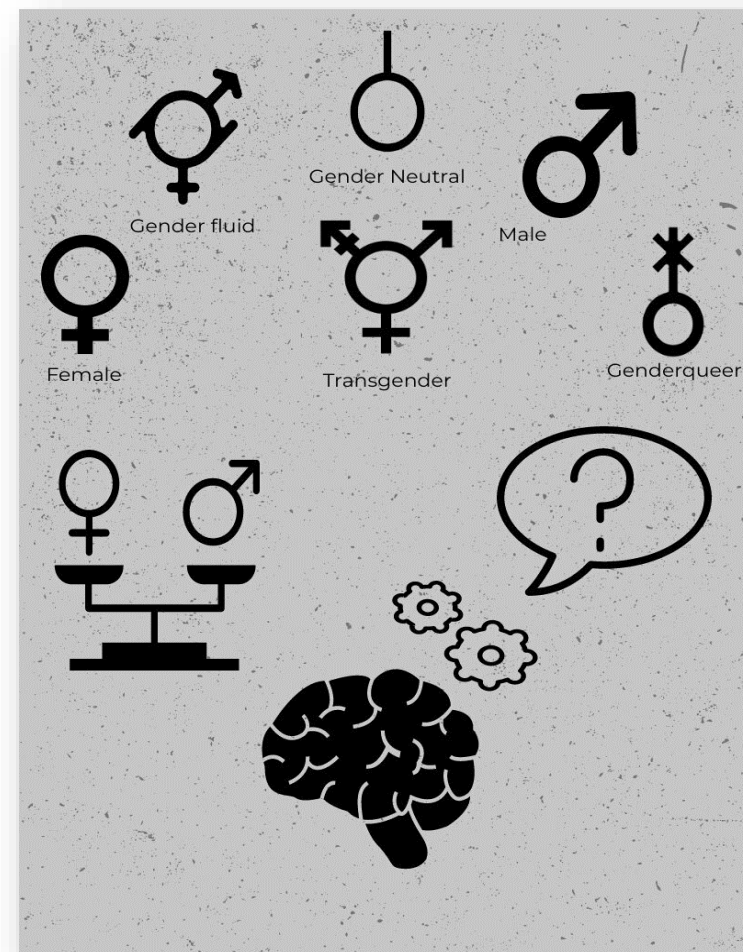


A row of six stylized paper figures in various shades of brown, tan, and white, holding hands in a line across the middle of the slide.

CULTURES AND SEX-GENDER

Cultures and sex-gender

Cultural anthropology disturbs the common belief, that humans everywhere are the same. It shows that several aspects of human existence and life, like sexuality, emotions, social relations and structures differ largely depending on the culture.



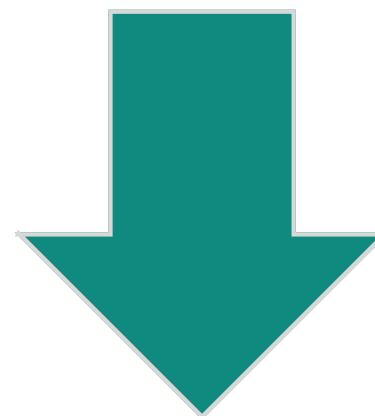
Made with Piktochart.com

Cultures and sex-gender

- Sexuality is a major aspect of each cultural and national identity. Ethnic and racial borders are identified as sexual borders too. Nations define and guard their people's sexuality.
- **Normative Heterosexuality:**
 - *defines what sexual identity, orientation and behavior is acceptable inside the borders of a nation and a culture.*
 - *the deviations from the rules are not only unacceptable but also fought against because they disturb the national and ethnic ideological construct.*

Cultures and sex-gender

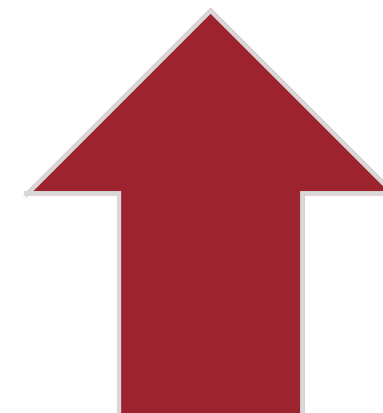
Each culture determines the gender roles inside its boundaries. These roles are produced through communication, because communication influences and shapes our ideologies and mentalities. It also affects the differences regarding gender roles. The differences between gender roles and gender manifestations are expressions of specific values and norms.
(Neculaesei, 2015)



Masculine societies
gender emotional roles
are absolutely and
clearly different- men
are expected to be
authoritarian and
tough, while women
should be gentle and
soft



Feminine societies
boundaries between
genders are more fluid
and less clear



Cultures and sex-gender

Different cultures view gender expressions and gender roles differently. The power distribution between genders should not be considered as 'normal' in any culture, because it is time and space related. The established power relations are not stable, but rather dynamic. What people from one culture see as restriction, others see it as normality.



Source: pixabay.com

Exercise

- Which kind of culture do you live in?
- What are the potentials for a change in power relations between the genders?
- Reflect on recent cases and debates that have arose in your country regarding gender, gender equality, gender roles.



Summary

- *Cultural anthropology has shown that sexuality, emotions, social relations and structures differ from culture to culture.*
- *Ethnic and racial borders are identified as sexual borders too.*
- *Each culture determines the gender roles inside its boundaries. Masculine vs. feminine societies*
- *The existing power relations between genders is not stable.*

A row of six stylized paper figures in various shades of brown and white, holding hands in a circle. The word 'INTIMACY' is centered over them.

INTIMACY

Individualism vs collectivism

Intimacy differentiates across cultures. These differences are connected with the notions of individualism and collectivism. (Marshall, 2008)

Individualism

- verbal, explicit, direct, and expressive communication styles place greater emphasis on self-disclosure for enhancing intimacy
- belonging to a greater number of in-groups has potential for risky self-disclosures but may have fewer social consequences

Collectivism

- indirect, nonverbal, ambiguous, contextual, and less expressive communication styles place less emphasis on self-disclosure
- tightly knit networks increase the likelihood that inappropriate disclosures will be criticized very negatively

Quiz



Source: pixabay.com

Imagine you are a young girl in ancient Hindu culture. What kind of kiss would you use?

a. French kiss: an amorous kiss in which the participants' tongues extend to touch each other's lips or tongue

b. Throbbing kiss: when our lower lip moves our lover's lower lip but not the upper.

c. Pressed kiss: when we press our lover's lower lip with much force

d. Touching kiss: when our tongue touches our lover's lip and, closing our eyes, our hands touch our beloved's

Quiz

The correct answer is:

b. Throbbing kiss: when our lower lip moves our lover's lower lip but not the upper



Source: <https://giphy.com>

Summary

- *Intimacy is different in different cultures (collectivism v. individualism).*
- *Individualism cultures enhance intimacy and individuals adopt expressive communication styles.*
- *Collectivism cultures prefer indirect, nonverbal, non expressive communications styles.*

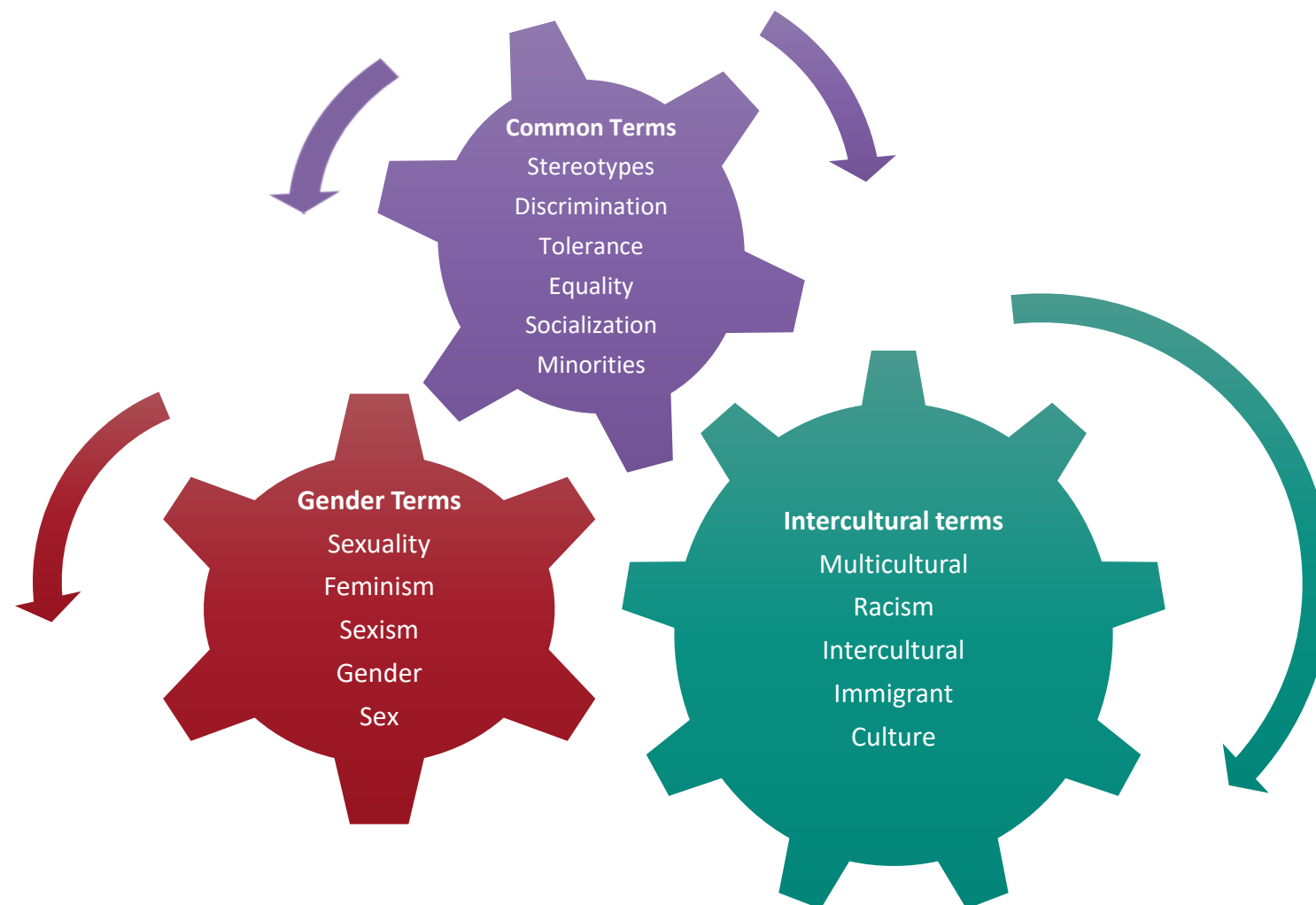
A row of six stylized paper figures in various shades of brown and white, holding hands in a circle, symbolizing diversity and unity.

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE HEALTHCARE

Intercultural communication and gender

These terms relate to intercultural communication and gender.

They are often interconnected.



Intercultural competence and sex-gender

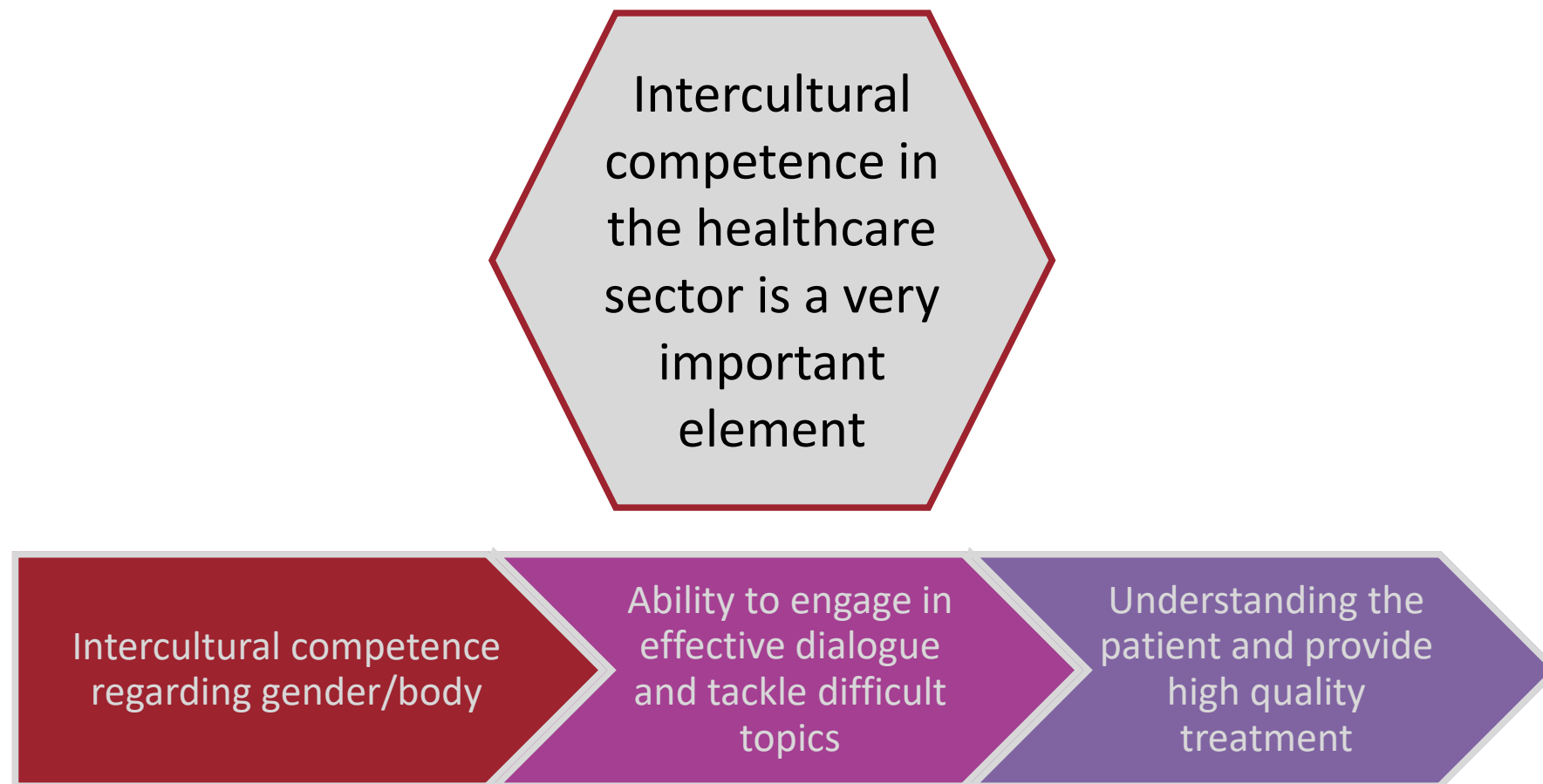
**It is not
necessary**

- to be aware and speak all sex and gender “languages” that exist
- to tolerate all sexual behaviors and norms

**It is
necessary**

- to be able to understand the relativity of right and wrong, ethical and unethical regarding sex and gender norms
- to be able to self reflect and be open to diversity
- to understand ourselves and our cultural norms

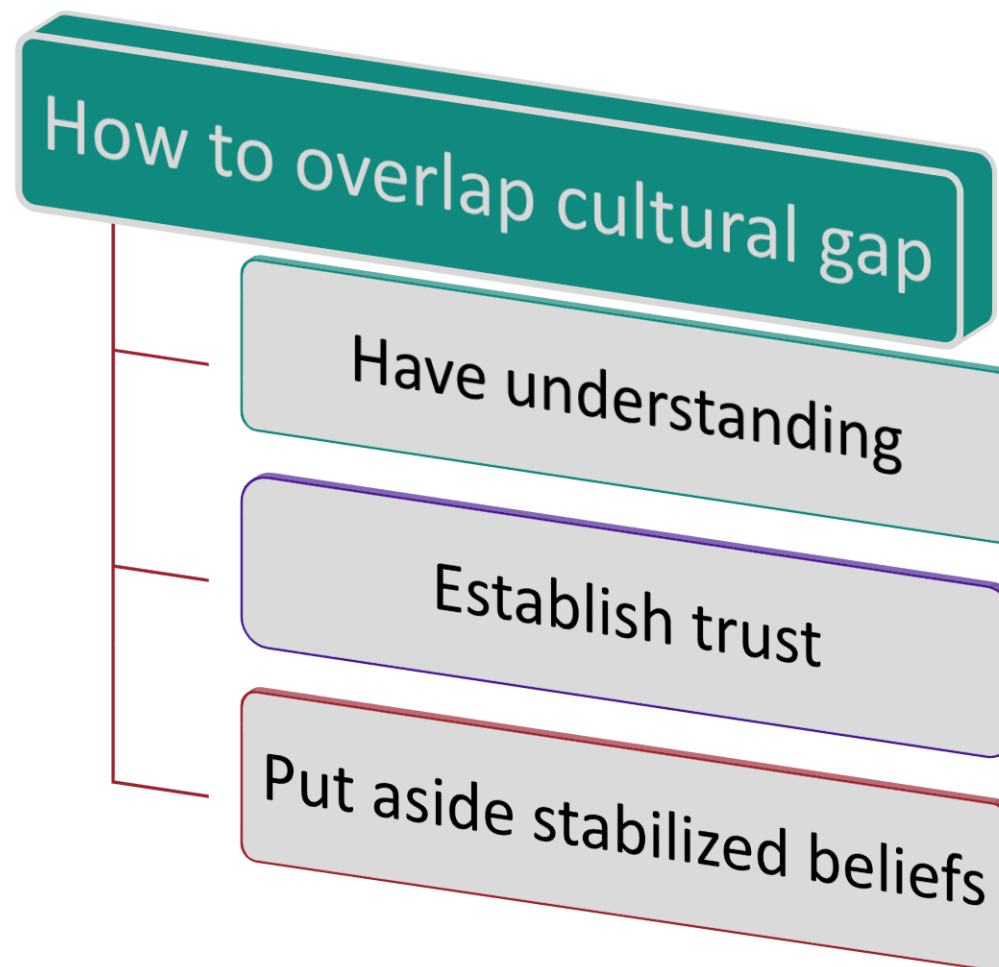
Intercultural competence at healthcare



Intercultural competence at healthcare



Source: pixy.org



Exercise/ Case study (1)

Lamar Johnson, a thirty-three-year-old African American patient had been deemed a ‘frequent flyer’, (a term used to describe those who keep coming to the hospital for the same reason, often assumed to be drug seekers,) by the nurses and doctors in the emergency department. Each time he came in complaining of extreme headaches he was given pain medication and sent home. On his last admission, he was admitted to the ICU, where Courtney, was a nurse, had just begun working there. When she heard him described as a ‘frequent flyer’, she asked another nurse why he was thought to be a drug seeker. She was told, “He has nothing else better to do; I’m not sure why he thinks we can supply his drug habits.”

- What are your thoughts after reading this story?
- How do you explain the behavior of the health personnel?
- What would you do if a person like Lamar Johnson appeared to the hospital/facility where you work and had the same symptoms?

Exercise/ Case study (1)

Although Courtney says her instincts told her that something else was going on, she saw his tattoos, observed his rough demeanor, and went along with what everyone else was saying. While she was wheeling him to get a CT scan, Mr. Johnson herniated and died. It turned out that he had a rare form of meningitis and truly was suffering from severe headaches. If some of the staff had not stereotyped him as a drug seeker on one of his earlier visits, perhaps his life could have been saved. This incident left a lasting impression on Courtney, who vowed never to judge a patient on his looks, and to trust her instincts, rather than let others influence her nursing care.

- Would you do anything differently now that you read about the ending of this story?
- Do you believe that his tattoos affected the behavior of the health personnel?

Exercise/ Case study (2)

Amiya Nidhi was a young woman in her twenties who had recently immigrated to the United States from India. She was in the hospital to give birth. Her support person was her sister, Marala. Marala kept telling her to get an epidural, but Amiya said that even though she would like one, she could not get one; her husband would not allow it.

- What do you think about the relationship between Amiya and her husband?
- How do you feel about Amiya?
- How would you manage this situation as a health care provider?

Exercise/ Case study

- What Amiya's nurse actually did:

Cindy, her nurse, overheard the conversation. Having learned that husbands are the authority figure in the traditional Indian household, she went to speak with Mr. Nidhi. She explained why an epidural would be advisable. She said that he seemed pleased that she came to him about it. He said he would think about it, and let her know. About thirty minutes later, he came to Cindy and told her that he would like his wife to have an epidural. Everyone was pleased. By being culturally aware, Cindy helped her patient get the care she wanted, while still respecting the authority structure within the family.

Summary

- *Intercultural competence regarding gender/body is the ability to engage in effective dialogue and tackle difficult topics.*
- *Intercultural competence regarding gender/body means:*
 - *understand the relativity of right and wrong*
 - *to self reflect and be open to diversity*
 - *to understand ourselves and our cultural norms*

General Summary

- *Gender identities are formed through repetitive acts that tend to conform to social pressure.*
- *The body is the vessel through which identities, cultural or individual, are expressed.*
- *Perceptions of body differ across space and time.*
- *Each culture determines the gender roles inside its boundaries.*
- *The power distribution between genders is also time and space related.*
- *Differences regarding intimacy are connected with the notions of individualism and collectivism.*
- *Intercultural competence in the healthcare sector does not mean approval of all sexual norms but understanding and respecting diversity.*

Reflections

- Consider 3 of your behaviors that are associated with gender and body from the past that you identify now as culturally incompetent:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- What will you do differently now as a result of your learning?



Further information

- <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/infographs/womenmen/index.html?lang=en>
- <https://open.lib.umn.edu/sociology/chapter/11-1-understanding-sex-and-gender/>
- <https://opentextbc.ca/introductiontosociology/chapter/chapter12-gender-sex-and-sexuality/#:~:text=Sex%20refers%20to%20physical%20or,with%20being%20male%20or%20female.>
- <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-gender/#SexDis>
- <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/cochise-sociology-os/chapter/the-social-construction-of-gender/>
- <https://opentextbc.ca/socialpsychology/chapter/person-gender-and-cultural-differences-in-conformity/>

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- BODY Culture, Body, Gender, Sexuality in Adult Trainings. (2013). *BODY IN CULTURE – CULTURE IN BODY*. <http://www.bodyproject.eu/media/Final-anthology-mht-May2013.pdf>
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- Marshall, T. C. (2008). Cultural differences in intimacy: The influence of gender-role ideology and individualism—collectivism. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 25(1), 143–168. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407507086810>
- Neculaesei, A.-N. (2015). *CULTURE AND GENDER ROLE DIFFERENCES*. *Cross-Cultural Management*, 31–35.

This learning module has been developed as part of an Erasmus+ KA2 project
INTERCULTURAL CARE IN THE SOCIAL AND HEALTHCARE SECTOR (I-CARE)
and is funded with support from the European Commission.



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Co-funded by the
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