

Genderbread Person

👤 Guided Discussion

🕒 101

🔒 Low Trust

🕒 15 mins

📁 LGBTQ

⚙️ Necessary supplies

- Whiteboard/easel
- Blank Genderbread Person v2 handout
- Genderbread Person V2 (with write-up) handout
- Writing utensils

🚩 Goals & objectives

- To distinguish between the L, G, B, Q, and the T of LGBTQ.
- To distinguish between sex, gender identity, gender expression, and attraction.
- Help individuals connect and have time to consider their own understandings of their sex, gender identity, gender presentation, and attraction.

1 2 3 Step-by-step walk through

1. Introduce activity (see example below).
2. Address the difference between the L,G,B, and T.
3. Map out gender identity, expression, and sex using continua and proper labels.
4. Explain how each aspect of gender is independent of one another, and sexuality.

Example introduction: We commonly lump a lot of letters together when we talk about the queer community: LGBT is the most common, but it's often extended out to things like LGBTQQIAATS, sometimes people get inventive and spell things like QUILTBAG, and so on. There are always pros and cons to everything, but there are also some specific issues that come up when we equate "gay rights" with "LGBT rights," as is often done in the news.

We want to spend some time in this activity separating some commonly conflated terms the most common being gender and sex. We also want to talk about how gender presentation, sex, and gender identity can all exist in different ways and may have no bearing on someone's attraction to other individuals.



Example lecture

When we discuss “LGBTQ” people, one thing we generally forget to make clear what, exactly, those letters mean. For example, there is no such thing as an “LGBTQ” person. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer are all different labels, representing different identities. Some individuals identify with a couple of those labels (e.g., gay and transgender), or even several (e.g., lesbian, gay, queer, and transgender), but we’re getting ahead of ourselves. Let’s start with the basics.

LGB all represent sexual identities. And the T represents a gender identity, as well as an umbrella term for many gender identities. Queer means different things to different people, for some it describes sexuality, for others their gender, for others both.

When we say “sexual identities” what we are talking about are the ways we categorize and define who we are attracted to, romantically, sexually, or otherwise. When we “gender identities” we are talking about the ways we categorize and define our genders.

Traditionally, we use the word “gender” to simply mean either “man” or “woman.” We describe this as the “gender binary,” a phrase you’ve probably heard. But in reality, the way folks experience gender is far more complex than that. We call this a “non-binary” understanding of gender. But the binary terms and general ideas they evoke — the idea of “man” and what that means, and the idea of “woman” and what that means — are helpful in understanding the more diverse ways folks experience and make sense of gender.

A simple way to think about non-binary gender is with a scale that goes from man-to-woman, where folks could plot how they identify somewhere along the line. Perhaps close to the “man” end if they strongly identify as “man,” close to the “woman” end if they strongly identify as “woman,” or somewhere in-between if they identify as genderqueer, bigender, or another one of the non-binary gender identity labels we have.

The problem with this depiction of gender is that it implies that the more “man” someone is, the less “woman” they are. Our gut reaction is that this is accurate, but when you dissect gender into its component parts, you’ll see this isn’t necessarily true.

Gender is best understood when broken up into three parts: gender identity (which is how you, in your head, define and understand your gender based on the options for gender you know to exist), gender expression (the ways you demonstrate gender through your dress, actions, and demeanor), and biological sex (the physical parts of your body that we think of as either male or female). Let’s talk about these one-by-one.

Gender identity can be thought of as the aspects of man-ness and woman-ness you either do or don’t align with. In this case, we are talking about the norms (social expectations),



and roles (ways we fulfill or act out those expectations) placed upon “men” and “women” in a society. A few typical norms of man-ness might be “strong-willed, logical, athletic” and a roles of “leader, builder, protector.” For woman-ness, we might think of the norms “empathic, sensitive, caring” and roles “teacher, caretaker, supporter.” Some folks identify with neither “man-ness” or “woman-ness,” but a third gender altogether. Some folks identify with aspects of both, and might use the label “genderqueer” to describe their identity.

Gender expression can be thought of as the aspects of masculinity and femininity you display in your clothing, grooming, speech, actions, demeanor, and more. As examples, masculine dress might be considered baggy, unprimped, or functional. Feminine dress is form-fitting, colorful, and frivolous. The term “androgynous” is used to describe gender expression that is both masculine and feminine.

Biological sex can be thought of as the aspects of “male-ness” or “female-ness” you embody in your physical self. Examples of “male-ness” are primary traits like “penis, testicles” as well as secondary traits (which are developed during puberty” like “course body hair, wide shoulders.” Examples of “female-ness” are primary traits like “vagina, ovaries” and secondary traits like “breasts, wide hips.” Some folks are predominantly male or female, while others are intersex.

Make it your own

You can include as much of your self in this lecture as you want or you can use a celebrity or well known individual as an example. This can sometimes also tease out that we may know *some* things about people but we rarely know how exactly they experience or understand their body (maleness/femaleness) how they identify (woman/man) or who they are attracted to.

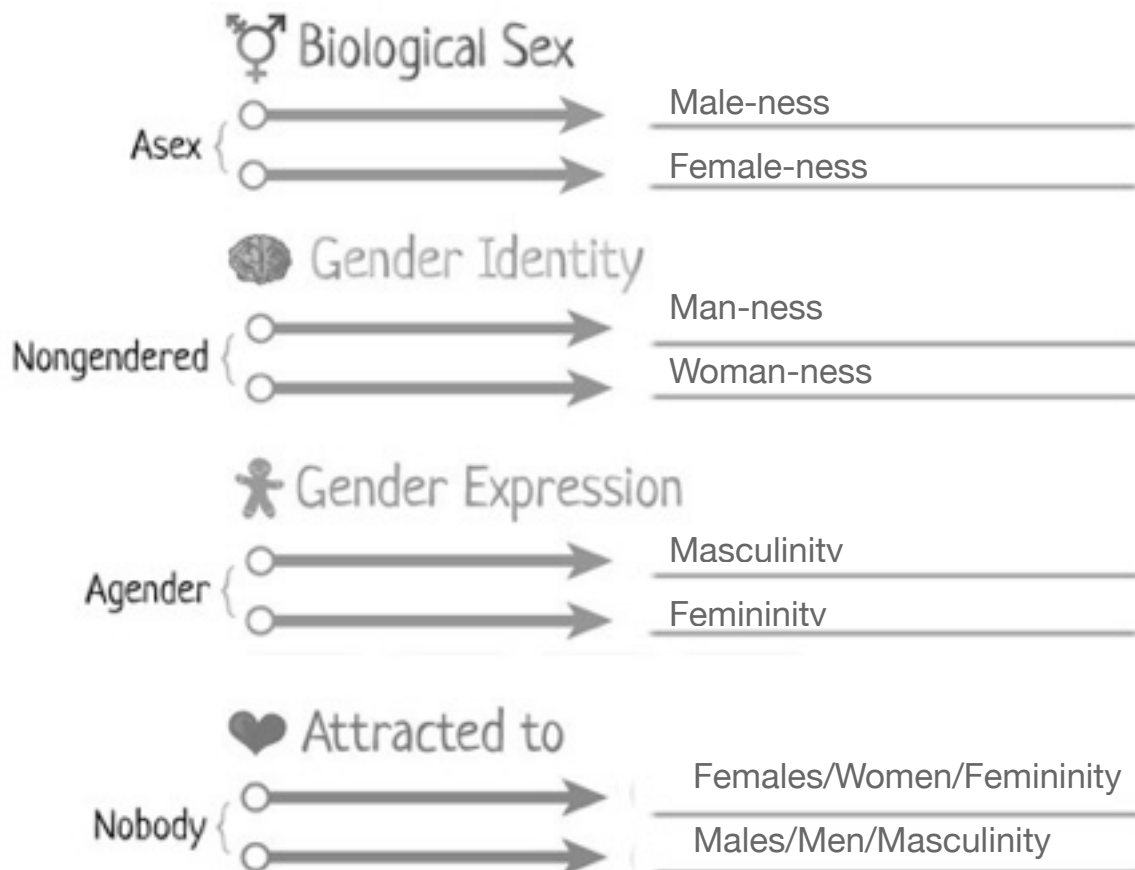
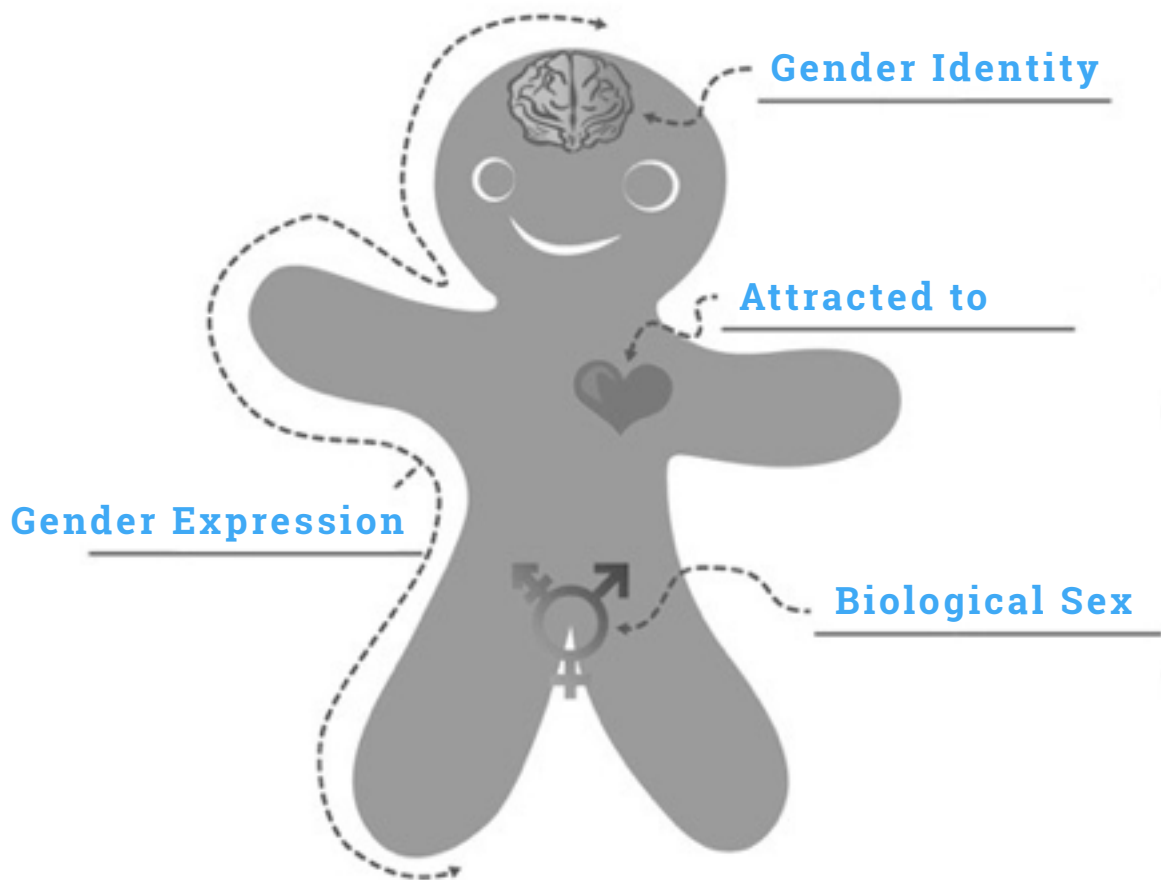
Notes

Please practice the activity before facilitating it for the first time. There are many components involved and you must be clear on the steps or your participants will be LOST. Gain understanding of all the terms and identity labels prior to conducting the activity. Read Sam’s [“Breaking through the Binary: Gender Explained Using Continuums”](#) article or book [A Guide to Gender](#) for a more intense intro to gender. Many of the terms are clarified in our vocab activity.

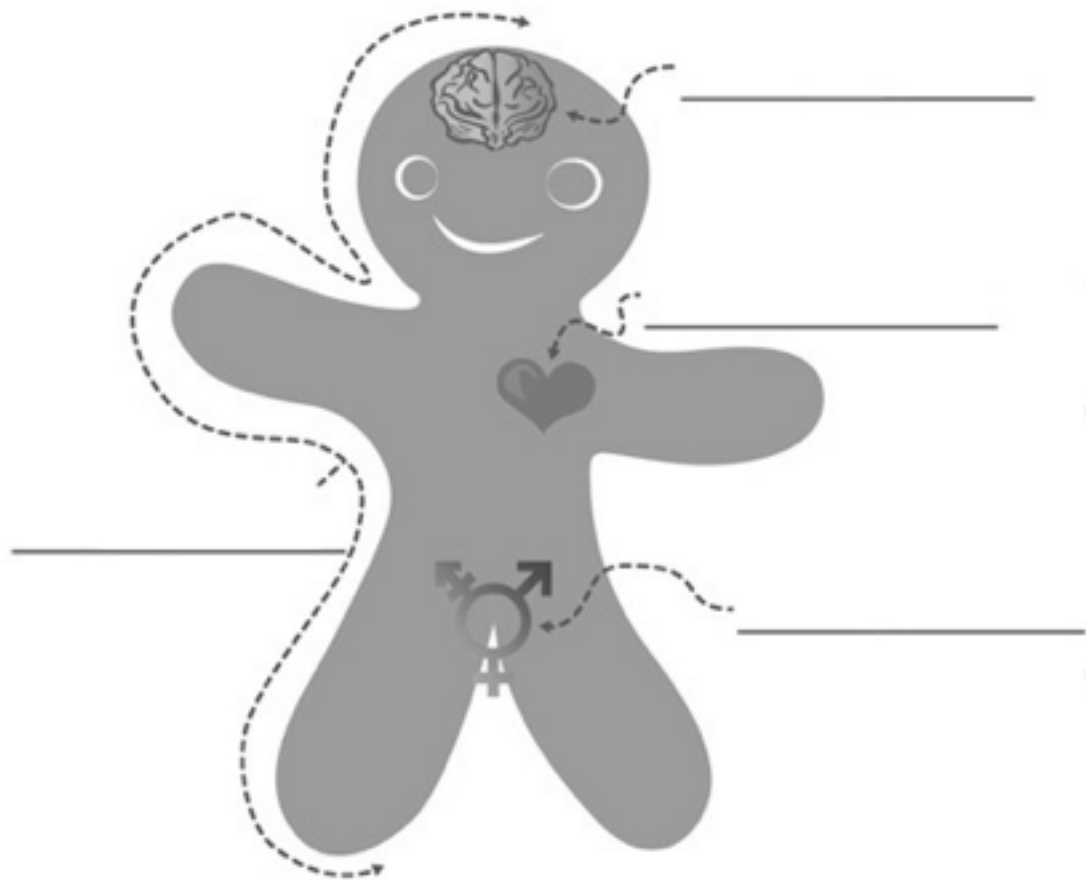
All-Star Tip

The best things evolve over time. If you look back at Sam’s Genderbread person version 1 it will look incredibly different than this Genderbread person, and that is not only OK but it is awesome to consider just how much something so useful has shifted and changed over the years. Wanted to point this out so that you remember things will change and evolve constantly and even those you may consider to be “experts” will sometimes almost reinvent something they’ve been doing and using for a long time.

Genderbread Person - Instructor's Sheet



Genderbread Person - Participant Sheet



♂♀ Biological Sex

Asex { ☐ _____ ☐ _____

🧠 Gender Identity

Nongendered { ☐ _____ ☐ _____

🧑 Gender Expression

Agender { ☐ _____ ☐ _____

❤️ Attracted to

Nobody { ☐ _____ ☐ _____