

# Genderbread Person

Lecture + Guided Discussion – 101 – Low Trust – 20 mins –

[szp.guide/genderbread](http://szp.guide/genderbread)

## Materials

- Whiteboard or easel/paper and markers
- Facilitator guide and participant handouts
- Pens/pencils

## Setup

- *(suggested)* Draw the Genderbread Person on the whiteboard or flipchart paper and have the continuums with the blanks drawn as well.

## Facilitator Framing

- This is the most lecture-heavy part of Safe Zone curriculum. If you are going to use the sample lecture give it a read a few times before doing it so that you can know the flow and general sense of it before facilitating.

## Goals & Learning Outcomes

- Participants will be able to understand that there is a difference between gender and sexuality.
- Participants will be able to describe the difference between biological sex, gender identity, gender expression, and attraction.
- Participants will know at least one reason it is helpful and important to recognize these different components within gender.

## Process Steps

1. Frame the activity. For example, “When we talk about ‘LGBTQ’ we’re talking about a lot of sexualities and genders. For the next few minutes, we’re going to focus in on gender itself. This graphic is called the Genderbread Person, and will help us better understand what we mean when we say ‘gender,’ and all the different ways it shows up in our lives.”
2. Work through the genderbread person, first filling in the blanks and defining terms, then making the different components of gender salient — either by having participants reflect for themselves (see our example lecture), or by working through hypothetical examples.
3. Open up the space for questions about the models.
4. Wrap-up the activity.

## Genderbread Person Example Lecture + Guided Discussion

**Moving into the next handout**, the genderbread person is a diagram that helps us understand gender and sexuality, and the parts that make up both. This model is meant to accurately depict the

complexity of how these concepts show up in our society; it is not a depiction of what dream society could be. We're going to start with the **top half of the sheet**, so we encourage you to fold the paper in half.

To begin, let's fill in the blanks and name the different parts of the genderbread person.

On the first line, pointing to the brain, we can write "Identity." Gender identity is who we, in our heads, know ourselves to be, based on what we understand to be the options for gender, and how much we align (or don't align) with one of those options. Gender identity is our psychological sense of gender.

On the line below that, pointing to the heart, we can write "Attraction." Attraction is the different ways we feel pulled to other people, often categorized based on our gender and the gender of those we feel drawn to. This categorization is referred to as sexual orientation.

On the bottom line on the right, we'll write "Sex." Sex, here referring to anatomical sex, refers to the physical makeup of our bodies, and specifically all the body parts we've named as sex characteristics -- both the primary traits we're born with, and the secondary that we might develop later in life.

On the left we have a line pointing to the entire diagram. On this line we can write "Expression." Gender expression is all the different ways we present ourselves through our actions, our clothing, and our demeanor, and the gendered ways those presentations are socially interpreted.

Does anyone have any questions about those terms, or their definitions?

### **Let's now unfold our paper and move on to the bottom half.**

Here you'll see some scales and blank spaces. These are not fancy arrows. You can think of each of these as one-way continuums, or scales, depicting how the different components above may show up for us. For some people, it's helpful to imagine a 0% on the left, and a 100% on the right.

Again, we're going to start by filling in the blanks.

With gender identity, people often think of social roles, gender norms, and personality traits, and the expectations baked into these things. In the top blank, we can write "Woman" and in the bottom blank we can write "Man", and we're going to add a "-ness" to both of these, because these lines indicate all the varying degrees of potential "Woman-ness" and/or "Man-ness" with which someone might identify.

With gender expression, people often think of hair styles, grooming, make-up, clothing, nonverbal mannerisms, and other things we see on the outside. We'll write "Femininity" in the top line and "Masculinity" in the bottom line, as these are the two words that people generally use to describe the different ways our expressions show up.

And with anatomical sex, the first things that people think of are genitals and reproductive organs, but lots of things make up what we call sex, including body hair, hip to shoulder ratio, chromosomes, pitch of voice, and more. On the top line, we'll write "Female-ness," and on the bottom line we'll write "Male-ness," because here we are depicting the varying degrees someone might embody these traits,

as opposed to the sex a person is assigned at birth (which is generally solely determined by external genitalia at birth).

Does anyone have any questions about these scales, or the words we're using to label them?

**Now we're going to fill in the blanks in the attraction section.** People experience attraction (or don't) in a lot of different ways. Two common ways people describe the attraction they may or may not be experiencing is as "sexual" and "romantic." You can think of sexual attraction as the drive to engage in physically intimate behaviors like touching, kissing, or intercourse, and romantic attraction as the drive to engage in socially intimate behaviors like flirting, dating, and marriage.

Some people experience both, some only one, and some neither. And within those experiences of attraction, we often focus on the gender of others that we are attracted to.

In the top blanks on the write, you can write "Women" and in the bottom we can write "Men." But we can also write all the words from above. That is, in the top line we might write "woman-ness, femininity, and/or female-ness," and in the bottom line "man-ness, masculinity, and/or male-ness," because our sexual or romantic attraction might be to a particular part of gender. For example, someone might be attracted to people who identify with a lot of woman-ness, but express a lot of masculinity.

Does anyone have any questions about these scales, or the words we're using to label them?

**What we'd like to do now is take a moment to consider where we land on these scales.** How much woman-ness do you identify with? How much man-ness? Maybe neither? How much femininity and/or masculinity do you express? A lot of both? A lot of one and not a lot of the other? How much female-ness or male-ness do you see yourself embodying? You can draw a dot on each continuum, several dots to indicate a range, or leave it blank -- be as creative as you'd like.

**We won't be collecting these, or asking you to share your answers. We're going to give you 2 minutes.**

We are socialized to oversimplify all of this, and to think that once we know one thing about someone, we can fill in the rest of their blanks. For example, if we learn someone is a woman, we have a picture in our mind of what that person looks like and who she's attracted to. We might assume she expresses gender in feminine ways, was assigned female at birth and embodies female-ness, and is exclusively attracted to men. This image is simple, however, is not true or complicated enough for many, if not most, of us. Many of us exist in different degrees on the scales above, and may zig-zag through them in ways that break assumptions and norms.

To highlight this, we want to use the blank space between the gender and sexuality scales to write two things: "Identity ≠ Expression ≠ Sex," and "Gender ≠ Sexual Orientation."

As we said at the beginning, the Genderbread is a model that shows us how complex gender and sexuality are in our current society, not the ideal world we would want to live in. Our hope is that understanding might lead to a healthier world, and we hope that this intro was a helpful step for you toward a better understanding of yourself and others.

## Make it your own

This activity can be done in exclusively lecture format or can be made interactive by asking participants for examples or suggestions during the lecture. It is best to give definitions for the terms before asking for examples.

The three main ways people facilitate the Genderbread Person are either making it personal for the participants (as in the example lecture above), using themselves to make it personal (with anecdotes or personal examples), or using generic/fictional examples. All have their pros and cons.

## Unlock the Magic

As much as possible, finding a facilitator “voice” that is authentic for you for this activity will make the biggest difference. Don’t necessarily facilitate it how you may have seen it done, or exactly how it’s explained above, if either of those will compromise your voice. When Genderbread goes really well, it hits hard for people — personally, and in their sense of the social implications of gender. For it to do this, you need to be able to make an authentic connection between the material and your participants. connect yourself, these concepts, and the participants.

## Notes

The Genderbread Person is not meant to be a “utopian” vision of society and gender, but to more accurately depict the ways we experience gender today.

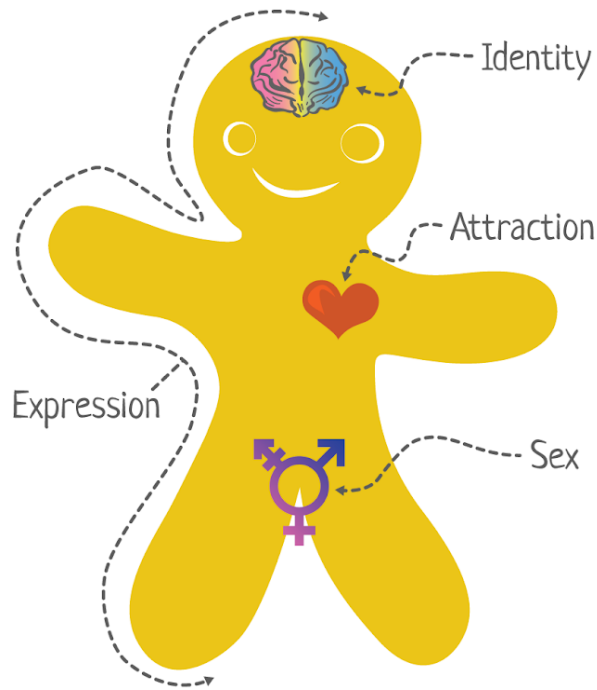
To gain deeper understanding of all the terms and identity labels prior to conducting the activity, read Sam’s “[Breaking through the Binary: Gender Explained Using Continuums](http://szp.guide/bttb)” article ([szp.guide/bttb](http://szp.guide/bttb)) or book [A Guide to Gender](http://szp.guide/g2g) ([szp.guide/g2g](http://szp.guide/g2g)). Both are uncopyrighted and freely available for your reference or use.

Many of the terms that come up throughout this activity are clarified in our vocab activity. When in doubt, the definitions can be used word-for-word in the lecture.

# Genderbread Person Handout

## Facilitator Guide

The Genderbread Person v4 *by its pronounced METROsexual.com*



⊘ means a lack of what's on the right side

Gender Identity

- ⊘ → Woman-ness
- ⊘ → Man-ness

Gender Expression

- ⊘ → Femininity
- ⊘ → Masculinity

Anatomical Sex

- ⊘ → Female-ness
- ⊘ → Male-ness

Identity ≠ Expression ≠ Sex  
Gender ≠ Sexual Orientation

Sex Assigned At Birth  
 Female  Intersex  Male

Sexually Attracted to... and/or (a/o)

- ⊘ → Women a/o Feminine a/o Female People
- ⊘ → Men a/o Masculine a/o Male People

Romantically Attracted to...

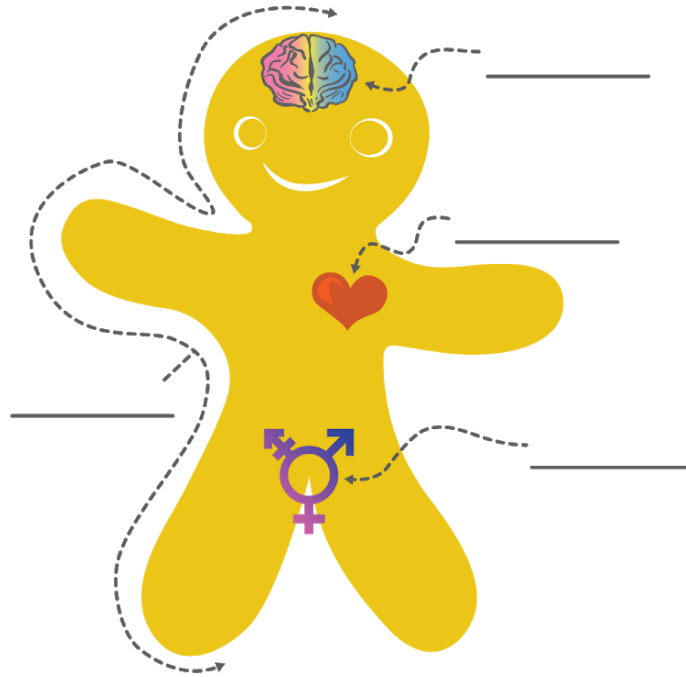
- ⊘ → Women a/o Feminine a/o Female People
- ⊘ → Men a/o Masculine a/o Male People



# Genderbread Person Handout

## Participant's Sheet

### The Genderbread Person v4



☉ means a lack of what's on the right side

 Gender Identity

☉ → \_\_\_\_\_  
☉ → \_\_\_\_\_

 Gender Expression

☉ → \_\_\_\_\_  
☉ → \_\_\_\_\_

 Anatomical Sex

☉ → \_\_\_\_\_  
☉ → \_\_\_\_\_

 Sexually Attracted to...

☉ → \_\_\_\_\_  
☉ → \_\_\_\_\_

 Romantically Attracted to...

☉ → \_\_\_\_\_  
☉ → \_\_\_\_\_