

# GENDER 101: MYSELF IN THE WORLD

*Brooke Wells*

This lesson encourages participants to explore various facets of their own and others' identities and how these impact the way they interact in and with the world. Using interactive activities, group discussion, and personal reflection, this lesson offers participants the opportunity to learn distinctions between gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation and how these intersect with race; to examine their own and others' assumptions and biases around these; and to explore how each of these facets of identity influence sexual identity and behavior.

## KEYWORDS

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Bias  
Effemophobia  
Gender  
Homophobia  
Masculinity  
Race  
Sexual Orientation  
Stigma

## THEME

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Society &  
Culture

## FORMAT

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Workshop

## TIME

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110 minutes





# PREPARATION

The facilitator(s) should use this section to prepare for the lesson.

PREPARATION

## WHY THIS LESSON IS IMPORTANT FOR BLACK MEN

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*Intersectionality* is a term that names the ways that structures of power, domination and oppression are interconnected and impact the lived experiences of marginalized groups (Crenshaw, 1989). Black gay men in particular can be impacted by multiple structures of oppression as well, including heterosexism, homophobia, racism, sexism, and classism. This compounded impact has lasting implications for Black gay men's quality of life, sexual decision making, and health outcomes (Garcia et al., 2016; Van Sluytman et al., 2015). It is therefore important to understand how both external and internalized discrimination based on race, gender, and sexual orientation may impact sexual decision making, sexual health, and overall quality of life among BMSM.

### GOAL

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Increased understanding of how societal expectations based on multiple facets of identity impact sexual identity, decision-making, and well-being.

### OBJECTIVES

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By the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Define race, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.
- Identify internal and external perceptions and biases around race, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.
- Discuss how societal influences regarding race, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation may impact their own sexual decision making.

## TIME

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<b>STEPS 1-2</b>	Introductions and Opening Activity	10 min.
<b>STEPS 3-8</b>	“What Do You See?” Activity	40 min.
–	Optional Break	5 min.
<b>STEPS 9-13</b>	Johari Window Activity	45 min.
<b>STEPS 14-16</b>	Closing Activity	10 min.

## REQUIRED BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE FOR EDUCATORS

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In order to effectively implement this lesson, the facilitator(s) should possess:

- Thorough understanding of the differences between gender identity, gender expression, sex assigned at birth, and sexual orientation.
- Familiarity with the Johari Window and how to apply it to various facets of identity.
- Working knowledge of the influence of stigma and discrimination on sexual and relational decision making.

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

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This lesson is written for groups of 10–15 with two co-facilitators. However, it can be adapted for smaller groups. For groups of five or less participants, all activities can be completed as a full group and with a single facilitator.

## MATERIALS

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The facilitator(s) should have the following materials for the lesson:

- Computer
- LCD projector, screen, and connector cables
- “Myself in the World” slide presentation
- Flip chart paper or newsprint
- Easel (or tape)
- Markers

## HANDOUTS

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Each participant should be provided with the following printed materials:

- H1, “Johari Window”
- End-of-Session Evaluation

## KEY TERMS

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**Gender identity:** a person's understanding, definition, or experience of their own gender, regardless of sex assigned at birth.

**Gender expression:** the way a person expresses their gender through gestures, movement, dress, and grooming.

**Race:** a social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly skin color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social economic and political needs of a society at a given period in time.

**Sex assigned at birth:** the categorical label of male, female, or intersex assigned at birth. Typically based on genital appearance, but also sometimes chromosomal and/or hormonal profile.

**Sexual orientation:** the unique pattern of one's sexual attractions, identity, and/or behavior.

**Johari Window:** a model developed by group psychologists in the 1950s to help people develop self- and other- awareness in the context of interpersonal dynamics.

**Intersectionality:** a metaphor or cognitive model established by Kimberlé Crenshaw to explain how multiple forms of inequalities/oppressions overlap themselves into unique obstacles experienced by individuals with multiple minority statuses—obstacles that are not readily observable through conventional ways of thinking. Black gay men, for example, are impacted by various structures of oppression such as heterosexism, homophobia, racism, sexism, and classism that combine to affect quality of life, sexual decision making, and health outcomes.

**Internalized homophobia:** the involuntary process by which LGBTQ people come to believe and possibly perpetuate prejudicial ideas about the LGBTQ community.

**Effemiphobia:** a fear of behaviors, appearances, or traits that are considered feminine or associated with the female gender.

## FACILITATION PREP

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The facilitator(s) should complete the following tasks before the lesson starts:

- ❑ This lesson includes a two-part slide presentation, “Myself in the World,” which can be found on the SWAG Toolkit website. It is strongly encouraged that you review the slides at least one day prior to your session, and that you become as familiar with the concepts as possible.
- ❑ Check your space 60 minutes in advance of the session to ensure that a computer, projector, and projector screen are available and in working order, and that the presentation can be seen and navigated properly. If you do not have access to technology, print out the presentation as follows:
  - Part 1, “What Do You See?”: print a copy for each participant, or at least the estimated number of small groups you believe will be created during the session (a suggested number is 4–5 sets.) Ensure that all details in the slides are clearly visible (printing them in color, if possible). Fold each slide and place it in an envelope, keeping each set of slides together and in order within their respective envelopes once you’re done. Keep the envelopes out of sight until you are ready to use them during the session.
  - Part 2, “Johari Window”: print a copy for each participant.
- ❑ Review all lesson materials prior to the session, particularly if you are unfamiliar with its content.
- ❑ Label two pieces of flip chart paper, one with “**Assumptions about Me**” and one with “**Impact of Assumptions.**” Keep both sheets hidden until the appropriate time.
- ❑ If your space will allow, arrange all seating in a circle, keeping seats open for facilitator(s) to sit with the group during discussion.
- ❑ Create handouts of local referrals for mental health, sexual health, identity-based support groups, and any other relevant referral source for each participant. Have them ready to distribute at the end of the lesson.
- ❑ Greet participants as they enter the room, making sure to say hello and introducing yourself to each individual. Let them know where the restrooms are, direct them to any food or beverages you are providing, and invite them to take a seat.



# PROCEDURE

The facilitator(s) should follow the steps in this section to facilitate the session, and use the margin for notes and prompts.



## Introductions and Opening Activity

### STEP 1

Welcome participants to your session and conduct brief introductions (name, pronouns) with the group as needed. Review all established group agreements and reaffirm consent from the group. If group agreements have not been completed, please create them at this time (*use the Community Agreements lesson, if necessary.*)

### STEP 2

(*Optional*) If you have a group that is unfamiliar with each other, you may wish to select an icebreaker activity to help participants get comfortable.



## “What Do You See?” Activity

### STEP 3

Ask participants, by a show of hands, to share if they have ever been involved in being stereotyped or stereotyping others. Introduce the activity by explaining to the group that the experience of judging others and being judged is, though not always an experience that feels good, one that most if not all individuals participate in at some point in life.

### STEP 4

Ask participants to count off so that they end up in groups of 3–5 people (*For groups of less than 10, break them into pairs; less than five, have them work alone.*) Once groups are together and settled, remind them of the group agreements, and then explain to them that they will now do an observation exercise.

### STEP 5

Open the slide presentation included with this lesson, Slides S1, “Myself in the World.” Proceed through Part A, “What Do You See?” as follows. (*If you have printed the presentation, instruct the group to open the first envelope you’ve prepared for them.*)

## S1.A

**SLIDES 1-5** What do you see?

As you proceed through each slide, **instruct** small groups to discuss the following questions, also pre-written on each slide:

- What can you tell about this person by looking at them?
- Are they open to hooking up? Dating?
- What kinds of people do they like to date? To have sex with?
- What sexual role(s) do they take? What kinds of sex do they like to have?
- What makes you think that?

**STEP 6**

As groups are talking, **circulate** around the room and take mental note of what participants are discussing (these will be used in the next activity). **Ensure** that participants are staying on topic and redirect as appropriate. **Repeat** this process for each photo slide, giving groups five minutes discussion time per slide.

**STEP 7**

After all slides have been reviewed, **reveal** the sheets of flip chart paper labeled “Assumptions About Me”, and “Impact About Assumptions”. **Proceed** through the following Discussion Questions:

1. “On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being Completely Easy, and 5 being Completely Difficult, what was it like doing this activity?”
2. “What could you tell about the people in the pictures?”
3. “How did you come to those conclusions? (**Highlight** any responses that appear to represent judgments about the people in the pictures, or those that may be influenced by stereotypes.)
4. “What do you think others assume about you based on how you present (in dating profiles, in person, etc.)?” (**Highlight** any responses that center on differences between how they identify in regards to gender and sexual preferences and how they are perceived in those regards. **Record** answers to this question on the “Assumptions About Me” sheet of flip chart paper.)
5. “How do you think these assumptions that we make about one another impact sex and relationships?” (**Highlight** any responses that reference the negative effects of race, gender, and sexual orientation stigma and discrimination on sexual decision making. **Record** answers to this question on the “Impact of Assumptions” sheet of flip chart paper).

**STEP 8**

**Conclude** the activity by thanking everyone for their participation. **Point out** that, generally speaking, there is often a difference between how we appear to others and how we identify. **Explain** that while we may know this about ourselves, we often forget it about others and take what is presented to us at face value. **Explain** that everyone has been taught different messages based on personal experiences and the experiences of others, and that the messages we carry with us may be based in stereotypes and biases. Finally, **highlight** to the group that messages—especially those around race, gender, and sexual orientation—can impact the ways we behave, make decisions, and experience the world. **Solicit** any final comments, questions, or concerns about the issues discussed during the activity before moving on. **Instruct** participants to return themselves/their chairs back to the original position they had during the beginning of the session.

**Optional Break****Johari Window Exercise****STEP 9**

**Introduce** the activity by summarizing the prior activity. **Highlight** any major observations made of the group and their discussion process, particularly if they include any assumptions that were made about individuals in the photos. **Explain** that it is important as individuals to check in with our own selves about our identities, so that we can be clear about how assumptions show up and affect us as well.

**STEP 10**

**Ask** participants, by a show of hands, if they have heard of the Johari Window. **Read** the brief description of the Johari Window provided in the Key Terms section of this lesson, and then **explain** that it can be used as a tool to help us reflect on ourselves and the assumptions and expectations society places on us.

**STEP 11**

**Reopen** the slide presentation included with this lesson, **Slides S1, “Myself in the World”**. **Proceed** to **Part B, “Johari Window”**. *(If you have printed the presentation, distribute a copy to each participant.)*



**STEP 12**

Proceed through the slides as follows:



**S1.B**

**SLIDE 7** How Do I Identify?

Ask for a show of hands of participants who have heard the term “Intersectionality” before. Solicit 2–3 responses from those hands before reading the definitions noted in the Key Terms section of this lesson. Explain that intersectionality recognizes the multiple, overlapping oppressions a person can experience because of holding two or more marginalized identities at once. As an example, explain that a Black bisexual man, by virtue of having all three social identities, may experience particular oppressive experiences (e.g., being perceived as being “in a phase” sexually) that are not experienced in the same way as white gay men, Black heterosexual men, or even Black gay men. Ask participants if they have any other examples of how they may see intersectionality emerge in individual social experiences before moving on.

**SLIDE 8** Aspects of Our Identity

Explain that Race, Gender, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression are four primary aspects of our identity that can multiply one’s threat of discrimination and oppression. Clarify for participants, however, that other parts of one’s identity can also represent unique intersections including citizenship status, health status, economic status, etc. Review each term listed on the slide, and then conclude by reminding the group that this slide focuses on sexual orientation and gender, which is different from one’s sex assigned at birth.



**H1**

Distribute a copy of **Handout H1**, “Johari Window” to each participant. Explain to the group that our race, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation illustrate how we are represented in the world, and how we show up in the world. Instruct participants to take a moment to reflect on their identity, then complete the side of the handout entitled “How do I identify?” Explain to participants that their responses can include any parts of one’s identity they choose to include, and that doing so will be helpful for the remaining part of the session.

**SLIDE 9** What Is the Johari Window?

Ask for a show of hands among participants if they have ever heard of the Johari Window; solicit 2–3 responses from those hands raised, if applicable. Explain that the Johari Window is a tool to help people better understand their relationship

and perceptions of themselves and others. **Explain** that it has four quadrants: the open area; the blind spot; hidden area; and unknown, as well as four descriptors at the edge of the quadrants: “unknown to others”, “known to others”, “known to self”, and “unknown to self”. **Instruct** participants to use the list of identity markers that they have created to continue through the rest of the slides and complete their own Johari Window.

**SLIDE 10 Johari Window: Open Area**

**Describe** the Open Area quadrant of the Johari Window according to the information noted on the slide. **Give** participants three minutes to complete the related part of the handout using the content on the “How Do I Identify?” list.

**SLIDE 11 Johari Window: Blind Spot**

**Describe** the Blind Spot quadrant of the Johari Window according to the information noted on the slide.

**SLIDE 12 How Do Others See Me?**

**Give** participants three minutes to complete the Blind Spot section of the handout by asking themselves the question, “How do others see me?” **Encourage** them to think deeply and consider what others may say that they don’t always pay attention to.

**SLIDE 13 Johari Window: Hidden Area**

**Describe** the Hidden Area quadrant of the Johari Window according to the information noted on the slide.

**SLIDE 14 How Does My Perception of My Identity Compare to How Society Views Me?**

**Give** participants three minutes to complete the Hidden Area section of the handout by asking themselves the question, “How does my perception of my identity compare to how society views me?” **Encourage** participants to think about the parts of themselves they choose not to share with others, but that may exist when they are alone.

**SLIDE 15** Johari Window: Unknown

Describe the Unknown Area quadrant of the Johari Window according to the information noted on the slide. Explain to participants that there may be information about them that neither they nor others know, including HIV status, sexual and relational desire and/or sexual and relational boundaries. Explain that in some cases, certain parts of themselves that they believe they know well may actually be unknown to us until we are put in specific circumstances (e.g., sexual desires and boundaries). Give participants 3–5 minutes to complete the related part of their handout by thinking about those potential hidden areas.

**STEP 13**

Explain to participants that if they look at their window in total they may see that parts of their identity have showed up in more than one quadrant, which is normal. Explain that sometimes we may feel inclined to shift parts of ourselves in certain spaces to maintain safety or that, in other instances, we may not know or may not want to know certain parts of ourselves out of fear of how others may perceive us. Proceed through the following Discussion Questions:

1. “What have you learned about yourself in completing your Johari Window?”
2. “Think back to the last activity when you were asked to make assumptions about the people in the images. What were some of those assumptions? How does that relate to the Johari Window?” (Encourage participants to consider how participants’ assumptions about others may or may not be accurate, drawing attention to the Blind Spot quadrant of the Johari Window.)
3. “How does looking at the differences between what you and others see help you understand yourself in sex and relationships?” (Encourage participants to consider how being misread feels, and how it must feel for others, as well as how making assumptions can lead to miscommunication and hurt feelings on all sides.)
4. “How can you use this information in your life? (Encourage participants to consider how they might check their own assumptions about others and if there are parts of their identities in the various areas of the Johari Window that they would like to move to different areas (e.g. wanting to move gender identity from Hidden Self to Open Area; wanting to move HIV status from Unknown to Hidden Self).



## Closing Activity

### STEP 14

Thank participants for sharing and engaging in the discussion. Acknowledge that gender and orientation can be sensitive topics to talk about—especially in thinking about the ways in which they impact how we’re treated. Reinforce the community accountability agreement to ensure confidentiality and offer participants referrals for additional support.

### STEP 15

Ask if anyone has any outstanding questions about the lesson. Respond to these as necessary. Distribute a copy of the End-of-Session Evaluation to each participant. Allow participants 5–7 minutes to complete the evaluation, and collect them as they are completed. After five minutes, invite any participants who have not completed the evaluation to do so after the next activity.

### STEP 16

Check out by instructing participants to share one part of the session they will think through further once they leave. Once everyone has shared, thank the participants again for participating and then adjourn the session.



## HANDOUT

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### JOHARI WINDOW

How do I identify?	How do others see me?
<b>Open Area</b> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	<b>Blind Spot</b> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
<b>Hidden Self</b> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	<b>Unknown</b> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____