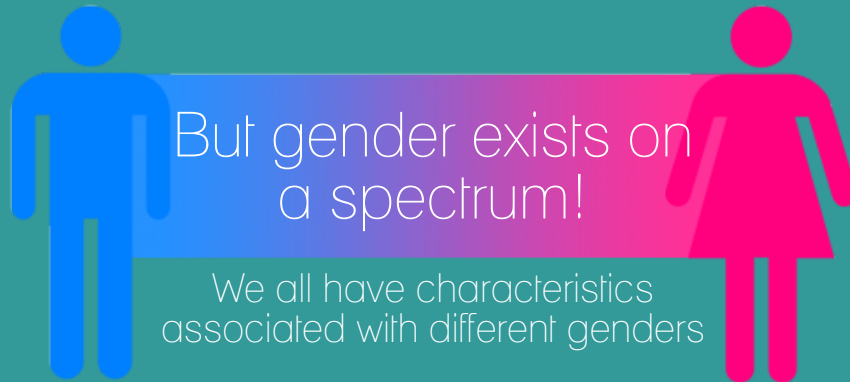# Gender Roles

The expectation to behave, speak, dress, and groom in certain ways based upon our perceived gender

Ideas of gender roles can cause us to stereotype different genders

Aggressive	Not aggressive
Independent	Dependent
Strong	Weak
Dominant	Submissive
Active	Passive
Not nurturing	Nurturing
Worldly	Home-oriented
Decisive	Indecisive
Unemotional	Emotional
Always think about sex	Never think about sex
Intelligent	Ditzy

But gender exists on a spectrum!

We all have characteristics associated with different genders

Toxic Masculinity
Some characteristics associated with men at a societal level can be harmful to men and others

Men and boys shouldn't cry

Difficulty understanding and processing emotions in a healthy way

Men are 3.57x more likely to die by suicide
(AFSP, 2016)

Men and boys are aggressive and sexual

"Boys will be boys"

93-98% of rapists are men
(NISVS, 2010)

How can gender stereotypes affect the workplace?

Beliefs in gender stereotypes can affect our workplace in both obvious and subtle ways

Interrupting

Men are socialized to have a dominant conversation style, whereas women are socialized to have a participatory conversation style. This can lead to men interrupting women often and women feeling like their voices are not heard.

"Mansplaining"

When a man explains something to a woman, who is already familiar with or an expert on the subject. This comes from gender stereotypes of men as intelligent and women as ditzy.

Devaluing women leaders

Gender roles teach us that men, not women, should be leaders. Women leaders often have to fight against gender stereotypes to be taken seriously and respected. An example of this devaluation is referring to men by their titles and women by their first names (such as Senator Ryan vs. Elizabeth [Warren])

Sexual harassment

Women face higher rates of sexual harassment than men. Gender stereotypes assume men always want sex and thus excuse male harassers. This idea can also devalue male victims.

No one in my office has ever mentioned this. Is it a problem for me?

Oftentimes, women and LGBTQ+ folks do not say anything or simply "put up with" these behaviors. They might worry about upsetting their coworker or boss if they call them out for interrupting or devaluing their work. They may even fear termination. They may smile and nod when being sexually harassed, so as not to "rock the boat" or "cause drama."

Women in the workplace have to work against gender stereotypes on a daily basis. Women leaders may have to be more polite than male leaders when giving the same assignments to their employees, so as not to seem too aggressive. Women may also have to work harder to prove their expertise.

We may not always recognize the way gender stereotypes affect us and our work.