



# Gender and sexuality in case management services

EMILY BLAKESLEE, BA & EMILY MANN, BA

RESOURCES FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT RHD FASST/CONNECTIONS



Gender and  
sexuality are  
considered  
“constructs.”



SO WHAT EXACTLY IS  
A CONSTRUCT?

# Constructs

Social constructs are shared cultural assumptions about a given topic

# What is a social “construct?”

Because societies share these assumptions, it affects how they behave.

Constructs can be layered with biology and material reality.

For example...



Breakfast!



Breakfasts around the world....

# Gender and sexuality as constructs

- Sex
  - Primary characteristics – Chromosomes, gonads, hormones, genitalia
  - Secondary characteristics – Breasts, figure, stature, distribution of body hair
- Gender
  - Shared cultural assumptions about masculinity and femininity

# Gender and Sexuality (constructs)

## Sexes

- ▶ Male
- ▶ Female
- ▶ Intersex

## Gender

- ▶ Men
- ▶ Women
- ▶ Fluid
- ▶ Nonbinary
- ▶ Questioning

## ... Also

- ▶ Transgender
- ▶ Cisgender

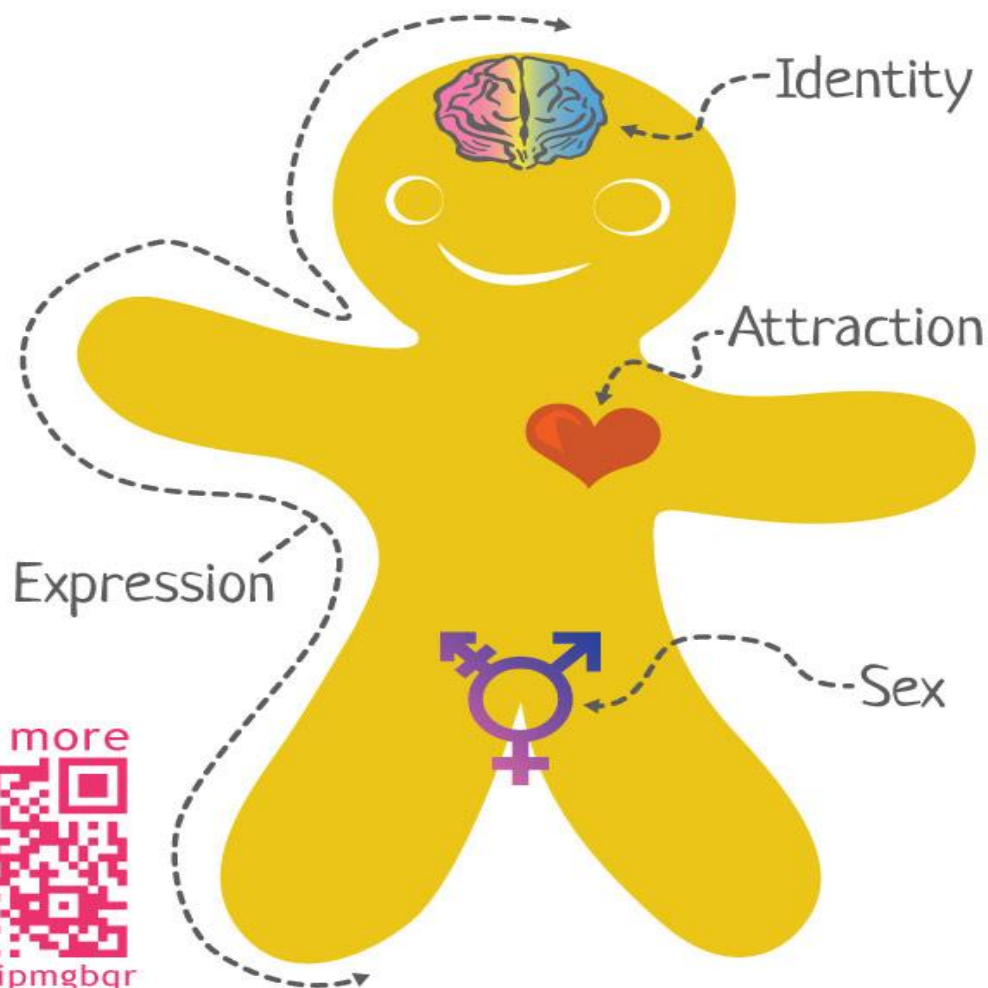
# Gender

- ▶ Stereotypes
  - ▶ What we assume based on someone's gender expression, or another component of their being that we believe is telling of their character
  - ▶ Which person is the manager? Who is paying for dinner?
- ▶ Identity
  - ▶ How YOU identify/understand yourself
- ▶ Expression
  - ▶ Classic GENDERbread person
  - ▶ Masculine and feminine qualities

# The Genderbread Person v2.0

by its pronounced **METROsexual**.com

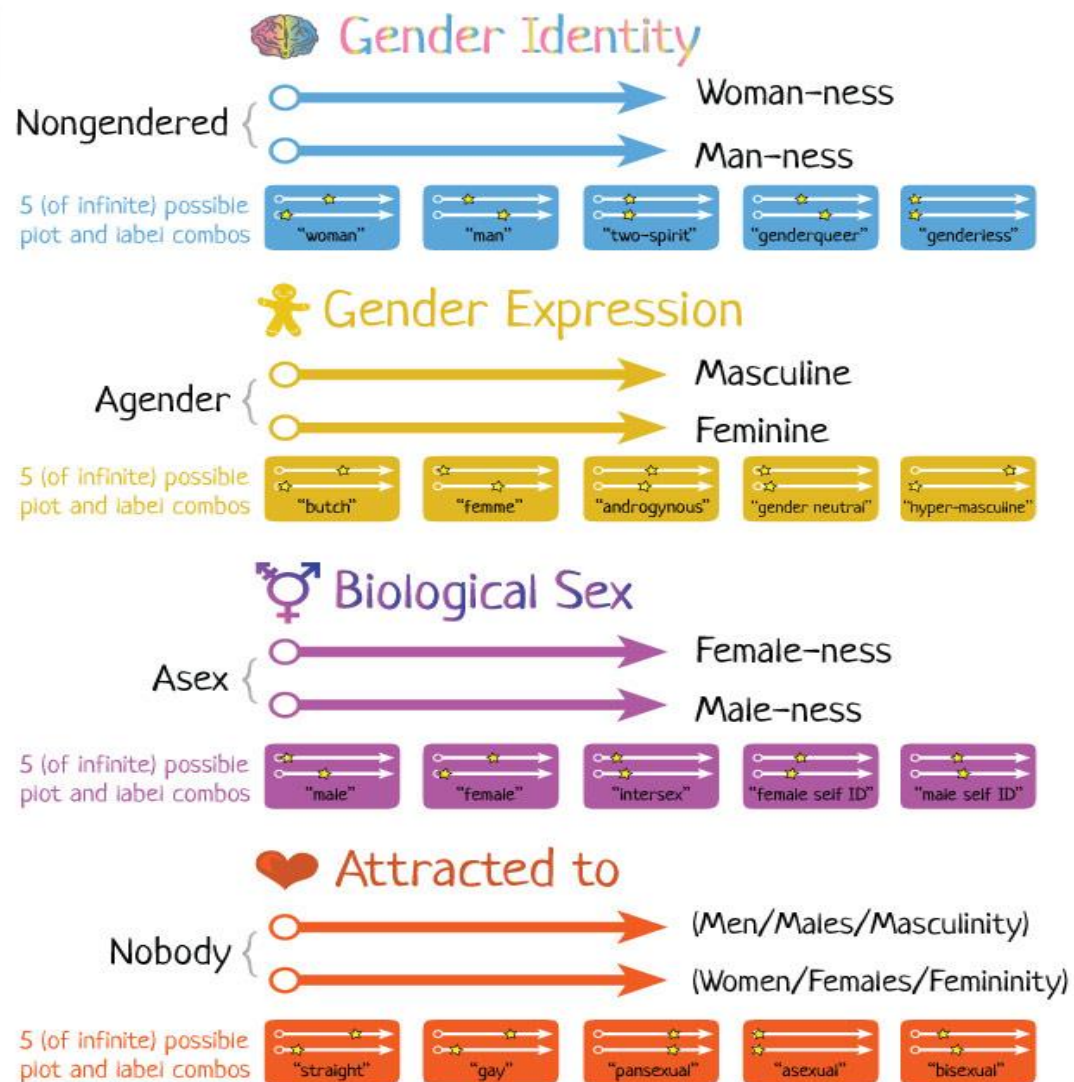
Gender is one of those things everyone thinks they understand, but most people don't. Like *Inception*. Gender isn't binary. It's not either/or. In many cases it's both/and. A bit of this, a dash of that. This tasty little guide is meant to be an appetizer for understanding. It's okay if you're hungry for more.



read more



[bit.ly/ipmgbqr](https://bit.ly/ipmgbqr)



# Sexuality – The XYZs

- ▶ Lesbian
- ▶ Gay
- ▶ Bisexual
- ▶ Transgender (not sexuality)
- ▶ Q – The controversy

# Privilege and Oppression

- ▶ **Privilege:** Societal advantages granted to social groups due to assumptions about that social group
- ▶ **Oppression:** Societal disadvantages experienced by a social group due to assumptions made about that social group

# Privilege and oppression: The legal system

- ▶ White women could not vote until 1919; Black men and women frequently denied the right to vote until Voting Rights Act of 1965
- ▶ Pregnancy discrimination act of 1978
- ▶ Equal credit opportunity act of 1974
- ▶ Marital rape not fully criminalized until 1993
- ▶ Only 13 states protect LGBT people from credit discrimination; 20 states protect LGBT people from discrimination in housing and employment
- ▶ The civil rights act ONLY protects on the basis of sex, not gender identity or sexual orientation

# Privilege and oppression: Sex offenses

- ▶ 1 in 6 women will experience an attempted or completed rape
- ▶ 30% of women rape survivors experience symptoms of PTSD 6 months after the assault
- ▶ People who are sexually assaulted are more likely to use drugs and alcohol
- ▶ Bisexual women and men are much more likely to experience rape or sexual assault, compared to their heterosexual and homosexual counterparts
- ▶ 40 % of gay men and 47% of bisexual men have experienced sexual violence, compared to 21% of heterosexual counterparts

Statistics from RAINN.org and HRC.org

# Privilege and oppression: Microaggressions

- ▶ “Who is the man and who is the woman in this relationship?”
- ▶ “You guys look just like each other!”
- ▶ “You’re pretty smart for a girl.”
- ▶ “You’re so bossy!”
- ▶ “Don’t be a pussy!”
- ▶ “You’re the secretary right?”
- ▶ “You must be a nurse!”
- ▶ “Is it your time of the month?”



# Why does all of this matter?

- ▶ Engagement relies on unconditional positive regard, regardless of personal beliefs and politics

# Why does this matter?

## ▶ Person-centered services

- ▶ Clients direct their own services and identify their own goals
- ▶ Their goals may or may not include treatment for trauma, or gender/sexual orientation specific programs



# Why does all of this matter?

- ▶ Case managers should be able to recognize culturally competent and trauma-informed resources

# For example, some Philly resources:

- ▶ Joseph J. Peters Institute
- ▶ TAP Program- Treatment for the offender + Accountability for behavior = Protection for the community
- ▶ Mazzoni Center
- ▶ William Way LGBT Community Center
- ▶ Planned Parenthood
- ▶ Philadelphia Women's Center
- ▶ Galaei
- ▶ WOAR
- ▶ Therapy Center of Philadelphia
- ▶ Philly FIGHT
- ▶ Women Against Abuse



So....

- ▶ Don't make assumptions!
- ▶ Participants and case managers work together to find best-fit resources

# What do our clients have to say about all this - Flower

- ▶ Flower is a 42 year old at a family shelter. She has one son with her and two adult sons. She reports that her father was very abusive and womanizing, and that she learned how to fool around with girls from him
- ▶ She continued this behavior in jail, but then had a religious conversion and has a heterosexual, religiously observant marriage
- ▶ **Lesson: Meet clients where they are at**

# Client Stories – Sahir

- ▶ Sahir is a single father of two daughters at a family shelter
- ▶ He reports having anxiety and depression, and frequently appears jittery and anxious. He also frequently misses appointments
- ▶ Sahir has a criminal record from his teenage years. When asked about what led to his record, Sahir stated that he was sick of being bullied for being the “gay friend” and that he wanted to be one of the guys, so he got involved with the wrong crowd
- ▶ When answering our standard demographic questions, Sahir asked that his sexuality be listed as “other”
- ▶ **Lesson: Gendered social pressure can affect behavior**

# Client Stories – Selena

- ▶ Selena is a 34 y/o mother of four at a Family Shelter
- ▶ She will be attending a trial during the summer time for her alleged rapist
- ▶ Selena was referred to outpatient survivor services, and a case manager accompanied her to her intake
- ▶ However Selena did not attend her therapy sessions and ultimately admitted she was not interested in therapy
- ▶ **Lesson: Services should be person-centered; don't make any assumptions about gendered trauma**

# Client Stories – Wally

- ▶ Wally is a 58 year old single male guest at a men's shelter
- ▶ Wally attends treatment for sex offenders mandated by his PO
- ▶ Wally reports that in his treatment group, many offenders retell the stories of their offense in a way that is disturbing, almost like they are reliving the event
- ▶ Wally states that he feels his treatment group is ineffective due to the way in which other attendees act
- ▶ **Lesson: regardless of offense or victimization, clients deserve competent mental health treatment**

# Client Stories - Wanda

- ▶ Wanda is a young black trans women who frequents a drop-in center for homeless LGBT youth
- ▶ Wanda has a CNA certificate and ultimately would like to become an RN
- ▶ Wanda chooses to be a sex worker over a CNA due to harassment she faced by staff at multiple jobs
- ▶ Wanda stated she chose clients that had respect for her, her appearance and her gender identity
- ▶ **Lesson: Discrimination affects how individuals plan out their lives; case managers must meet participants where they are at**

# Some Considerations

- ▶ Clients may not want to disclose information about their sexuality or gender identities due to previous bad experiences with providers, friends or family
- ▶ Some highly value their gender roles and sexual identities while others make no mention of it - service plans should be centered on the individual's needs and values
- ▶ Even if clients highly value their identities, they may not want identity-oriented services

# Applying this knowledge

Listen.

Ask.

Educate yourself.

Advocate.



# Thank you!

## Emily Blakeslee

RHD FaSST/Connections  
Resource Coordinator  
emily.blakeslee@rhd.org  
(215) 307-5691

## Emily Mann

RHD FaSST/Connections  
Resource Coordinator  
emily.mann@rhd.org  
(215) 255-5153