

STORYsilience

RESILIENCE THROUGH STORYTELLING

Am I inclusive?

A self-reflective questionnaire from the lens of gender and intercultural sensitivity learning.

This is a self-reflective questionnaire of eight questions reflecting on inclusion from the lens of gender and intercultural sensitivity. This questionnaire is designed for anyone who would like to conduct a short self-reflection to explore inclusive and sensitive language regarding interculturalism and gender diversity.

The team of [Povod institute](#) developed this questionnaire as part of their contribution to the STORYsilience program, which is funded by Erasmus+, the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe.

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We recommend that you explore the learning guide and the STORYsilience Toolkit for Creative and Inclusive Learning, which you may find in the STORYsilience digital platform [here](#).

Instructions:

To use this tool most efficiently, you can start by reading the questions one by one. Try to identify any resonance for each question; afterwards, unpack this resonance on an external and personal document. List any thoughts, ideas or feelings regarding each question and the reasons behind them; At the end, click on the question, and you will find an explanation of the topic concerned from the lens of intercultural and gender sensitivity learning.

Hints:

- Take enough time for reflection before clicking on the question to find the explanation.
- Start by listing resonations or, thereof, the lack of them; if the questions do not resonate with you, then list the reasons why you believe that they do not.

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- ① How do you feel about the statement: "no one is inclusive?"
- ② Why asking someone, where they are originally from can be oppressive?
- ③ Why we sometimes ask people where they come from?
- ④ Why using gender-neutral pronouns in public speech is essential?
- ⑤ Why asking a male colleague if he has a girlfriend can be harmful?
- ⑥ Why the following statement is harmful: "women bring more empathy to academic research."
- ⑦ In which scenario referring to an adult woman as a "girl" is sexist?
- ⑧ Why telling someone that they look younger than their age is NOT a compliment? How does this connect to gender?

Important Notice: The following answers are not the ultimate truth but reflections of feelings and thoughts from Povod's team of intercultural trainers who spent a long time decolonising and unlearning enforced harmful social and binary profiling regarding culture and gender.

1

Inclusion is a continuous process of decolonising ourselves rather than a title to obtain; we cannot call ourselves inclusive, but we can remain committed to inclusion through an ongoing critical thinking process. We need to be open to unlearning all that we have learned through the neocolonial channels that enforced the establishment of ethnocentrism. From an ethnocentric approach, I may assume that I am inclusive, but if I announce myself as committed to inclusion rather than inclusive, I ensure my empathy for genuine and human-to-human communication.

2

We are still living the consequences of a racialised world; assuming and pretending that the world is gender and race-blind is beneficial to privileged people because of the existing discrimination. **In biological terms, race does not exist**, yet race is a socio-political construct that is connected to racism, and it exists in many harmful ways. For example, people with darker skin are often perceived as foreigners in Europe due to racialisation; some believe that a European cannot be dark. Asking someone where they originated from, can be harmful on many levels because it is often connected to otherness, ethnic profiling or racialisation.

3

Sometimes we want to socialize with new people and start asking them questions for various reasons. Asking someone we just met about where they come from can be connected with our need to stereotype them; it is neither an ideal nor a genuine form of communication to start knowing a person through existing stereotypes. This form of communication-based on ethnic stereotyping limits our chance to know the person as an individual rather than a collective package of stereotypes based on state-nation and nation-state as both tools and outcomes of colonization. Instead of asking a person where they come from to know what kind of food they like, just simply ask them directly about their favourite food.

4

Unfortunately, we often witness exclusionary language addressing people as either women or men. Gender is a social construct, and there are diverse gender identities and various forms of identification with the gender that goes beyond the enforced forms of binarism. Next time, ensure that you use gender-neutral pronouns or as diverse as possible of pronouns to assure that everyone is addressed and included in your speech; please remember that some people are gender fluid and do not use the same pronoun all the time. Some people prefer not to use any pronouns at all. [Read here for more.](#)

5

It is essential to realise that gender is different from sexual orientation. Many people with different sexual orientations, like asexual, pansexual, lesbians, gays, and many others, still face various forms of discrimination. **Assuming someone's sexual orientation based on their gender identity can be very harmful**, especially for people still suffering the consequences of sexual repression. Sexual orientation, like gender, can also change over time. Therefore, **we recommend using the term "partner" rather than gendered terminologies such as boyfriend or girlfriend.**

6

Gender stereotyping based on binarism creates limitations on people's uniqueness and individuality. **Compliments are also a form of violence; because a compliment is a form of judgment.** Why would you stereotype women as empaths? A woman can be anything or anyone, this form of profiling and stereotyping based on gender reinforces binary segregation, and it strips people from their uniqueness and individuality to be the woman they are rather than the stereotype you want to strengthen.

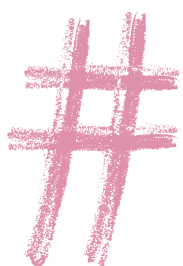
7

Patronising is when an adult refers to other adults or talks to them as children; Referring to women as girls is a form of patronising and a workplace glass ceiling that hinders women's professional opportunities.

8

Complimenting a person that they look younger than their actual age is a form of ageism. Ageism is prejudice or discrimination based on someone's age. Everyone, including women, is subjected to this harmful practice; there is pressure on especially celebrity women to look younger, which can be connected to the objectification of women, a form of sexism.

Get in touch!



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