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Barbershop Toolbox

**Tool #04**

March 2017

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# What Makes a Man – Staff Workshop

## Topic 2: Act Like a Man, Act Like a Woman

This workshop is based on Promundo’s Program H, as adapted by the Lebanon-based non-profit ABAAD in its publication Programme Ra. The version below has been slightly altered to suit a wider audience.

### Goal

After this workshop the participants should have a deeper understanding of the ways that gender norms impact the lives of men and women, and how these expectations can limit individuals from realizing their full potential.

### Required for this session

Facilitator, discussion leaders, space that allows for multiple groups working simultaneously, flipchart (board), and marker.

### Timeframe

1 hour





## Process

Start by giving a brief introduction to the goal of this session and use the terminology provided in **Getting Started** to explain the main terms, such as sex, gender and gender norms. For facts and inspiration, see **Resources** below. Explain that part of the discussion will take place in groups and that each table has a discussion leader who will ask the questions and manage time.

### A.

Ask the participants if someone has ever told them that they should “act like a man/woman”. Ask a few to share their stories with the group. Then ask: Why do you think this person said this to you? How did you feel afterwards? Tell the group that you will explore these two questions as they highlight the challenges to be male or female.

### B.

Write the phrase “act like a man” on the flipchart in big letters and ask the participants to explain what this sentence means to them. These are society’s expectations of what a man should be like and how he should behave, feel and react. Draw a box and write inside it the participants’ answers. Some possible answers could be “be strong” and “don’t cry”.

### C.

Write on the board in big letters the phrase “act like a woman”. Ask the participants to explain what this phrase means to them. These are society’s expectations of what a woman should be like and how she should behave, feel and react. Draw a box and write inside it the participants’ suggestions. Some possible answers could be “be caring” and “not aggressive”.

### D.

After the participants are done with their suggestions, divide them into groups based on gender and start the discussion using the questions listed below. Each group should have a discussion leader.



### Questions for discussion

*How does living and abiding by what's written in the box affect the wellbeing of men?*

*How does it affect the wellbeing of women?*

*How does living and abiding by what's written in the box limit and influence a man's life and relationships?*

*How does what's written in the box influence and limit a woman's life?*

*Are there examples of men in your community who do not fulfill expectations about how men should look and act? What kinds of challenges do these men face? How are they treated?*

*What about women who do not abide by gender norms?  
What do people say about them? How are they treated?*

*Do you think men face extra challenges or prejudices depending on their race, social class or religion?  
If yes, in what ways? What about women?*

*What can you do to help promote more open-mindedness and respect for the diversity of ways that women and men look and act?*



### Concluding remarks

Both women and men often face rigid expectations when it comes to how they should act and what their roles in relationships, families, communities and societies should be. These expectations can limit individuals from expressing their full interests or potential, including how they want to dress, whom they want to love, what career they choose to pursue, and the roles they want to assume in their intimate and family relationships. It is important to remember that, just as gender stereotypes are learned, they can also be challenged and unlearned. It is necessary to support each other and work together to build communities where women and men can move beyond the limits of what is socially defined as “feminine” or “masculine”.

### Becoming an agent of change

#### Make the commitment at HeForShe

Encourage participants to take the HeForShe and PwC’s interactive 35 minute online course **Building Gender IQ** on the benefits of gender equality and why it matters.

Organize follow-up meetings to discuss ways to implement the suggestions and recommendations that came up during the group work.

Organize a follow-up **workshop** with staff, utilizing another **workshop** session provided in this toolbox.

Encourage leadership to increase their commitment to gender equitable practices by organizing one of the sessions for **leadership** in this toolbox.

Start a working group dedicated to identifying and implementing more gender equitable practices.

Establish gender sensitization training initiatives and gender equality initiatives.

Speak up: Don’t be a silent bystander in the face of inequality. Challenge your peers when they speak disrespectfully of others.

Graft the theme of gender equality onto major corporate conferences, events and meetings

### Resources

**ABAAD and Promundo, Programme Ra**

**MenEngage in collaboration with UN Women, Men, Masculinities and Changing Power**

**Promundo, HMD: A Toolkit for Action**

**Promundo, Program H**

**White Ribbon and Dad Central, Involved Fathers and Gender Equity**

**White Ribbon, I’m a male model #fathers**

**White Ribbon, Men’s Attitudes and Behaviours Toward Violence Against Women**