

March 2024 Webinar Series

# GENDER EXPRESSION THROUGH THE LENS OF CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

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# Louis Yako

Dr. Yako is a cultural anthropologist and writer. He has extensive work experience in various roles and capacities in the higher education, INGOs, and the healthcare sectors.

## EDUCATION

- Doctor of Philosophy in Cultural Anthropology, Duke University
- Master of Arts in Cultural Anthropology, Duke University
- Master of Arts in English, Lehigh University



# Ground Rules

- 01 Be present
- 02 Be actively engaged and participate
- 03 Don't panic if there are technical difficulties
- 04 Set your intentions to expand your "worldview"
- 05 Learn and have fun



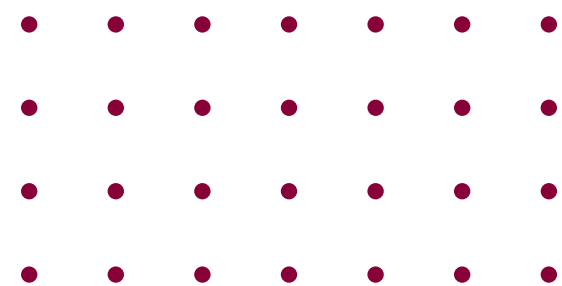
**Rules**




THIS IS A SAFE SPACE

# Overview

- Ice breaker activity
- How should we approach DEI discussions and challenges?
- Why do power and power relations matter?
- Understanding the concept of “social construct”
- The difference between gender identity and gender expression
- Key gender identity terms
- Questions and Feedback
- Further readings







# ICE BREAKER ACTIVITY: ROSE, BUD, THORN



# ROSE, BUD, THORN

Introduce the company's main competitors.



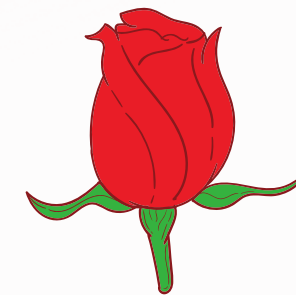
**Rose**

Something that you're  
GRATEFUL/THANKFUL  
for.....



**Thorn**

Something that you're  
CHALLENGED about.....



**Bud**

Something that you're  
HOPEFUL about.....





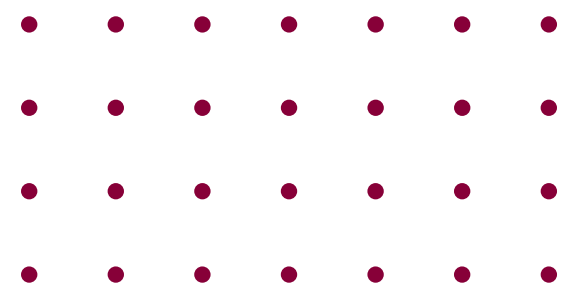
# HOW SHOULD WE APPROACH DEI DISCUSSIONS & CHALLENGES?

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# Key Points For Consideration

- The simple definitions of diversity equity & inclusion
- Fact vs choice
- Focusing on “doing good” not just “looking good”
- The difference between “showing the process” and “having a process” – not just doing work to show or document the process, but focus efforts on “doing the doing”



# Why Do Power & Power Relations Matter?

“The fundamental concept in social science is Power, in the same sense in which Energy is the fundamental concept in physics.”

— Bertrand Russell





# Power is at the Core of Any Question Social Scientists Study

- Any questions we study, we are really studying power/power relations
- Power is often about how “others” are defined, and who gets to do the “defining”
- In cases of gender, it is crucial to understand what does it mean to govern/discipline bodies based on gender & sexuality



# Social Construct or The Theory of Social Constructionism

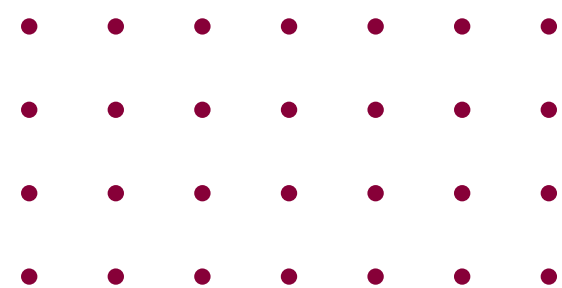
- Social constructionism is a term used in many fields of study. The term serves different functions in each field; however, the foundation of this theoretical framework suggests various facets of social reality—such as concepts, beliefs, norms, and values—are formed through continuous interactions and negotiations among society's members, rather than empirical observation of physical reality (Berger, 2011)
- The theory of social constructionism posits that much of what individuals perceive as “reality” is actually the outcome of a dynamic process of construction influenced by social conventions and structures. (Boghossian, 2001)





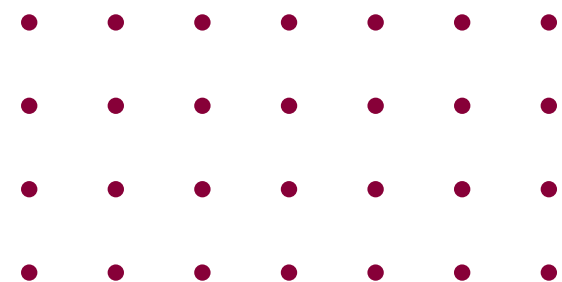
# Social Construct or The Theory of Social Constructionism (cont.)

- Unlike phenomena that are innately determined or biologically predetermined, these social constructs are collectively formulated, sustained, and shaped by the social contexts in which they exist.
- These constructs significantly impact both the behavior and perceptions of individuals, often being internalized based on cultural narratives, whether or not these are empirically verifiable.
- These constructs are flexible entities not universal truths. They can vary dramatically across different cultures and societies. They arise from collaborative consensus and are shaped and maintained through collective human interactions, cultural practices, and shared beliefs. (Study Journal, 2018)



# Common Examples of Social Constructs

- Assigned value of money
- Conceptions of self/self-identity
- Beauty standards
- Gender
- Language
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Social class
- Social hierarchy
- Nationality
- Religion
- Social norms
- Marriage
- Stereotypes, femininity and masculinity, social institutions, and even the idea of "social construct" itself





# This is Why Cultural Intelligence Matters

- The need to learn that things don't have to apply to us to be valid
- Cultural intelligence is the ability to hold multiple – often competing – perspectives/truths at once
- It is about embracing curiosity, openness, and lifelong learning as a way of life to avoid “othering”, demonizing, and stigmatizing difference and diversity in all their shapes and forms.



# All Human Beings Want to Be:

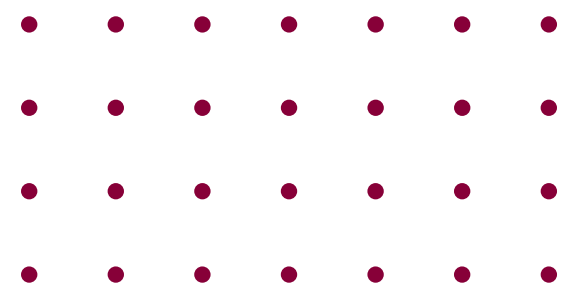
- Seen
- Heard
- Valued
- Appreciated
- Connected
- Understood
- Protected and Safeguarded





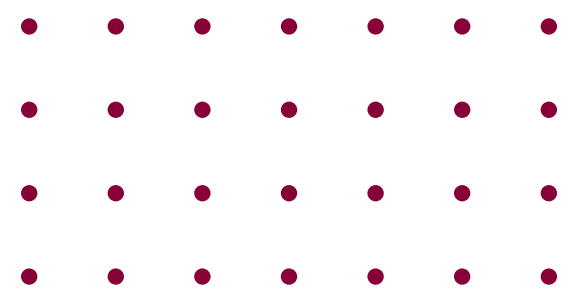
# Gender Identity

- According to Human Rights Watch, gender identity is defined as:  
“One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.”
- According to Ontario Human Rights Commission ([OHRC](#)): “Gender identity is fundamentally different from a person's sexual orientation,” which is defined as an “inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people.” ([HRW](#))



# Gender Expression

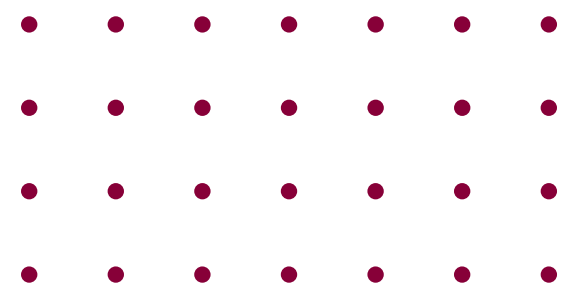
- Gender expression, on the other hand, is defined as “External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, body characteristics or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.” ([HRW](#))
- The key difference between gender identity and gender expression, then, is: “Gender identity refers to a person's internal sense of being male, female or something else; gender expression refers to the way a person communicates gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, voice or body characteristics.” ([American Psychological Association](#))





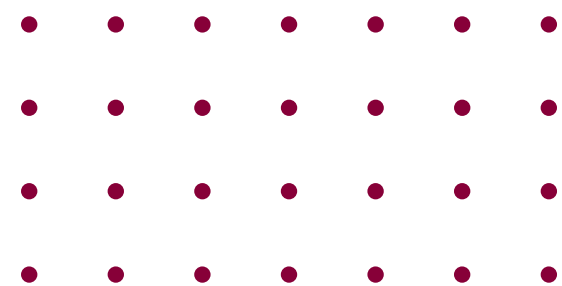
# Examples of Gender Identity Terms

- Sex refers to a person's biological status and is typically assigned at birth, usually on the basis of external anatomy. Sex is typically categorized as male, female or intersex.
- Gender is often defined as a social construct of norms, behaviors and roles that varies between societies and over time. Gender is often categorized as male, female or nonbinary.
- Cisgender, or simply cis, is an adjective that describes a person whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth.
- Transgender, or simply trans, is an adjective used to describe someone whose gender identity differs from the sex assigned at birth.
- Gender transition, the process of aligning a person's gender identity with their gender expression. This can be through names, pronouns, dress, or other outward appearance or through medical interventions to modify their body.



# Examples of Gender Identity Terms (cont.)

- Nonbinary is a term that can be used by people who do not describe themselves or their genders as fitting into the categories of man or woman.
- Intersex is an umbrella term used to describe people with differences in reproductive anatomy, chromosomes or hormones that don't fit typical definitions of male and female.
- Gender dysphoria refers to psychological distress that results from an incongruence between one's sex assigned at birth and one's gender identity.
- Agender is an adjective that can describe a person who does not identify as any gender.
- Gender-expansive is an adjective that can describe someone with a more flexible gender identity than might be associated with a typical gender binary.
- Queer While queer has been (and sometimes still is) used as a slur, it has been reclaimed by many in the community as a catch all term for anyone who identifies as anything other than straight and cisgender.



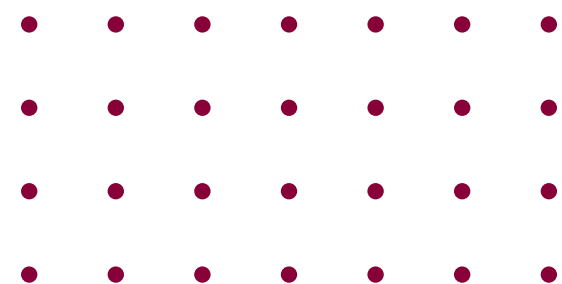


# READING LIST



# Further Readings

- [The Guardian's top 10 books about Gender Identity, published on Jan. 28, 2016.](#)
- [Abrams and Ferguson, "68 Terms that Describe Gender Identity & Expression," Healthline, January 26, 2024](#)
- [The 10 Best Books about Gender Identity](#) published by Queer in the World, December 3, 2023.
- Penguin Random House's [Must-Read Books by Transgender, Non-Binary, and Gender Non-Conforming Authors.](#)





The background is a solid dark red color. It features several overlapping, slightly tilted rectangular cards, each with a large, light red question mark. Additionally, there are numerous horizontal lines of varying lengths and shades of red, some appearing as if they are floating or layered over the other elements.

QUESTIONS

The background of the image features a group of hands giving thumbs up, overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter. The hands are positioned in a way that they appear to be reaching towards the center. On the left and right sides of the image, there are decorative elements consisting of several parallel, slanted lines in a darker shade of red, creating a sense of movement or a modern design aesthetic.

THANK YOU