

Beauty and Gender: A toolkit

The @Work Toolkit is a collection of additional resources and tips that might be useful when discussing the topic with your team.

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Definitions

Feminine beauty ideal: A socially constructed notion that a woman's most important asset is her physical attractiveness, and something that needs to be

maintained. The concept of a Western beauty standard is another related term — the ideal of a person being tall, thin, fair-skinned, and able-bodied. This standard is known to pose societal pressure and expectations on women and girls — as well as men and gender non-binary and genderqueer people — and can contribute to depression, anxiety and body image issues.

Gender-neutral: Can refer to language (including pronouns and salutations/titles) spaces (like bathrooms), or other aspects of society (like colors or occupations). Gender-neutral is not a term to describe people.

Sources: PFLAG; Gender and Society

Did You Know

“More than three-fifths (63%) of Americans say they are inspired by beauty brands that show diversity in advertising, with the majority of those who would like to see diversity in beauty/grooming advertising saying they feel this way because it ‘reflects real life’ (68%) and ‘shows that there are different ways to be beautiful’ (56%). What’s more, almost half (47%) of beauty consumers say they have looked for/bought from brands with diversity or inclusivity in the last year and a quarter (24%) have shopped with beauty brands that are minority owned.”

Source: Mintel

How to talk about gender and the body

Be mindful of language. The language around gender is constantly evolving. Language is a powerful social tool: It gives people the power to name, clarify, and assert authority. It can also be essentializing, and language can flatten our complex, highly idiosyncratic ways of being in the world. Aim for a precise use of gender-based vocabularies. It is critical to continue to self-educate on the terms that people along the gender spectrum use to talk about themselves. In other words: Become gender literate. Terms can be a powerful place to begin a conversation about gender. Take words like “genderqueer” or “transition.” Read the definitions from a reliable source like genderspectrum.org. Have an initial conversation about what you think these terms mean; then read a definition together. Discuss what new understandings emerge for you.