

## Card 13: Gender norms

### Introduction

In everyday life, ideas about what is male and female are constantly created – they are conveyed through family, friends, work, institutions, media and culture. That's why it might be interesting to think about norms and how they affect you and those around you.

Norms can be a source of safety, something one is used to. But at the same time, they create certain frames, limit us and affect people around us. Gender norms are also inherited and affects how you children view themselves and society around them.

That's why norms are important to consider as a parent as well. The norms how one is expected to behave as a father is something that has changed immensely during a relatively short time period.

**Gender norm:** Social unwritten rules about gender or expectations surrounding gender and its place in society. For instance, masculinity norm: what is seen as manly or male in society in general, how it is connected to what is seen as female, unmanly, power, strength, vulnerability, weakness etc. When you break a norm people around you tend to react (for instance if a man wears a skirt or uses make-up).

**Gender and sex:** One way of looking at things is to make a distinction between gender and sex. Sex then refers to the biological sex while gender is the socially and culturally constructed sex, the societal notion of male, female or other.

### Aim with the meetup

To reflect on gender norms and how they affect yourself and your family.

### Re-connect to last meetup

What did you bring with you from last meetup?

Is there something you would like to discuss further?

### Warm up – End the sentence with the first thing that springs to mind

- To me, being a man means...
- To me, being a woman means...
- To me, being human means...
- I think one problematic expectation of fathers is...
- I think one problematic expectation of mothers is...

## Discuss in the group or with your partner

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### Discussion 1:

What gender norms do you notice related to parenting in society?

For instance, in media, literature, school, work.

### Possible follow-up:

- *Do you think gender norms should be changed? In that case, in what way?*
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### Discussion 2:

What does it mean to be a man, woman or have another gender identity today? In what way do gender norm work to your benefit, in what way does it limit you?

### Possible follow-up:

- *Do gender norms affect your parenting in any way?*
  - *Is there something you would like to do but don't dare to due to gender norms?*
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### Discussion 3:

In what way are you treated in society due to your gender? Does it differ from how your partner is treated?

### Possible follow-up:

- *How do you convey gender norms to your child? Consciously and unconsciously?*
- *Do you notice different treatment in kindergarten, family counselling or other places due to gender?*

### Homework:

Make gender norms visible to yourself. Reflect on media and culture you encounter during the week:

- What expectations do you notice for fathers and men?
- What expectations do you notice for mothers and women?
- What norms do you notice in children's books?
  - Are the norms different from the things you grew up with?