

# CLOSING THE GENDER GAP IN THE MODERN WORKPLACE

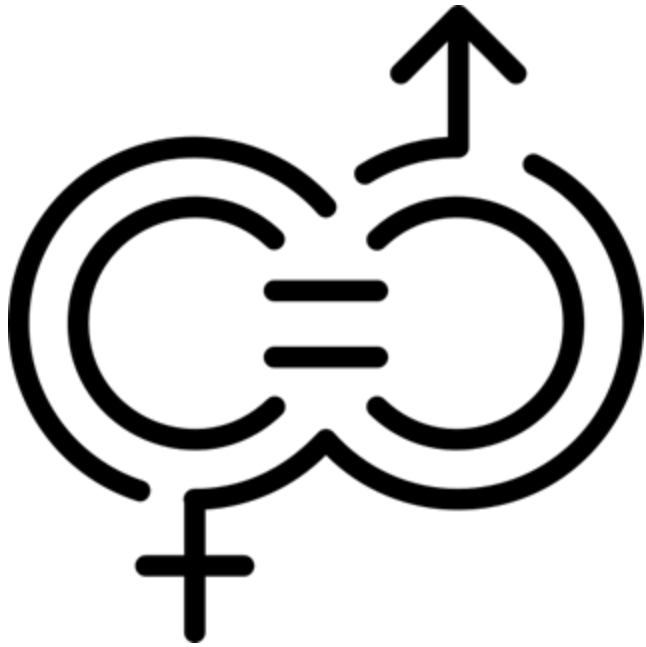


A Practical Guide  
Addressing  
Gender  
Inequality  
Conflict &  
Promoting  
Respectful  
Behavior



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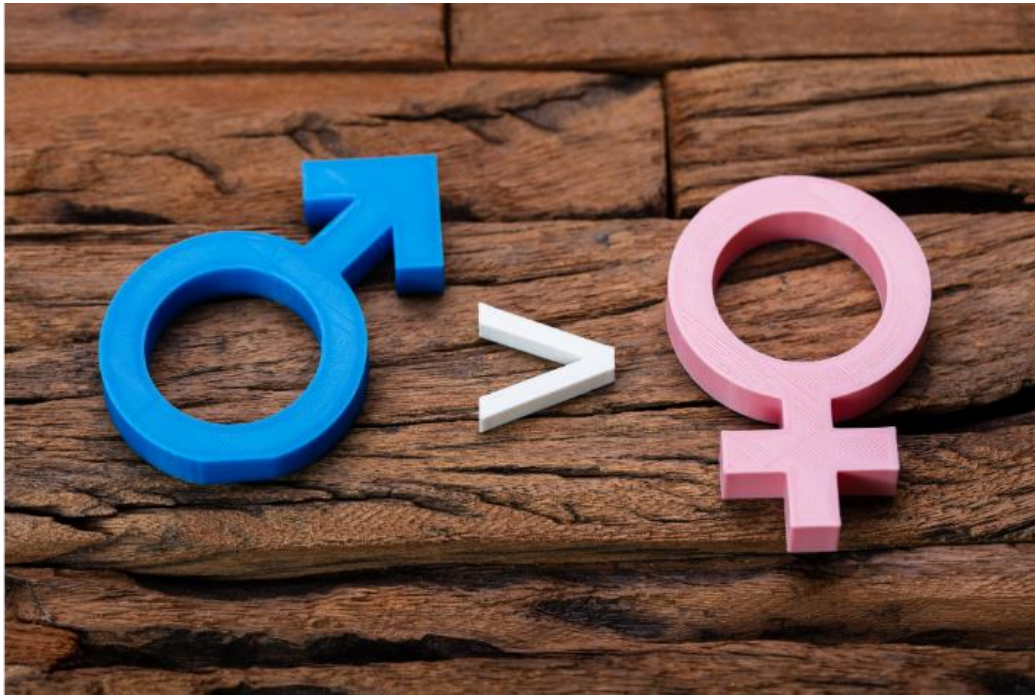
# EQUALISER PROJECT

# A Practical Guide Addressing Gender Inequality Conflict & Promoting Respectful Behavior

In this module, the aim is to help employers discuss the issues which arise from gender equality on the workplace. Research shows that employers do not always know where to begin or how to start the discussion, without forcing it too much on their employees. This module will provide building blocks so that employers know where to begin and how to have a conversation with employees which are not adhering equality.



# A Practical Guide Addressing Gender Inequality Conflict & Promoting Respectful Behavior



This module will:

- ✓ Teach you the tools to have a conversation with somebody when they do not respect company policies;
- ✓ Give you examples of how you can discuss the topic company wide;
- ✓ All while not giving the other person the feeling you are forcing your opinion.

# INTRODUCTION



Treat gender equality as a  
business issue, not a  
women's issue.



# A Practical Guide Addressing Gender Inequality Conflict & Promoting Respectful Behavior – TOPICS OUTLINE

- 01** Where to start?
- 02** What can the company do?
- 03** What if someone does not agree?
- 04** Activities
- 05** Conclusion of all Topics

# TOPIC 1: Where to start

When you want to introduce the topic into your workplace, it would benefit you if you, as the owner or manager, have some knowledge of the topic. So, a good starting point would be to do some research to begin with. If you started with module 1 of this course, you already have some basic knowledge. If you do not have the time or someone else has an interest in the topic, you could also let somebody else do the research and let them develop the topic further into your company.

Once you have done your research, you can decide what fits best in the company. If you want to make sure the company guidelines show the importance of gender equality, you could update the company guidelines.

Keep in mind, you have to start somewhere, not everything goes perfect in the beginning. Each company has a different culture, which can make a different strategy more suited.



# TOPIC 2: What can the company do?

Once you have done your research, you will have an idea on how you want to intertwine gender equality into your company.

There are several ways in which you can implement gender equality into your company. You can do all of them, or look for which one suits your company the best:

- Provide training to the employees.
  - There are a lot of trainings out there to make all employees more aware of gender equality and how to act. Depending on your country you can find a suitable match for your company. See activity one for an example training.
  - Training can be as focused on gender equality as you want. For example, the trainings can be combined with teambuilding trainings.

# TOPIC 2: What can the company do?



- Create discussion groups
  - Depending on the size of your company, there can be a need to discuss the issues that employees have faced.
  - Sometimes it can benefit to have these discussion groups same-sex. If you as a manager want to know what issues come to mind, you can ask an experienced employee to inform you of big issues which require a company wide approach.
  - In case you want to make sure the discussion groups are done professionally; you can also hire a coach to lead the discussion groups.

# TOPIC 2: What can the company do?

- Create a mentor program
  - If you notice that some people need more accompaniment in getting the points of gender equality, a mentor program can be a good solution.
  - This can also help if some people are more reserved towards the topic.
  - Take in mind that if you ask employees to mentor each other the mentor employees should have a good understanding of the topic (consistent with the company's view) and have good communication skills.



# TOPIC 2: What can the company do?

- Intertwine equality in the “house rules” and point it out if somebody does not adhere them. However, this works best for smaller companies. In bigger companies there is the chance you will miss issues and that there are differences between teams.



# TOPIC 3: What if an employee makes a remark?



In the current culture, there are different ways of viewing the topic of jokes and remarks regarding gender. Some find that jokes help make the situation more accessible, while others feel that there should be no jokes in relation to gender in the workplace.

Besides jokes, there could also be remarks in relations to gender. Both are always depending on interpretation. Some jokes and remarks can be received as hurtful, while another person or in a different company nobody notices. This depends a great deal on differences and knowledge, which means that there are several ways to proceed and several ways which will fit best with your company.

Module 3 can give you a more detailed explanation of stereotypes.

# TOPIC 3: What if an employee makes a remark?

There are some general considerations when an employee makes a remark:

- Does the remark not fit within your company? Does another employee take offence? If you can answer one of the questions with yes, it would be a good moment to have a conversation with the employee making the remark.
- If you are in a role of power (manager, owner etc.) it is not wise to make remarks regarding gender as they are almost always perceived as sexist.
- When you have the need to talk to somebody multiple times due to their behaviour they might not fit within the company.
- If you notice it is a company wide issue, you can give a training, as mentioned in the previous topic. This can also be a way to make everyone more aware of the effect it has on some colleagues.

# TOPIC 3: What if an employee makes a remark

If a short remark is made in public space, you can call the employee out for their remark in public. However, this might not always be effective, and this might not be your preferred way of managing.

Points when it would be better to have the conversation privately are:

- If the employee is misinformed;
- If the employee is immature but well-intended;
- When the employee is part of an older generation;
- When the employee has a different culture;
- When the employee's opinions are based on religion;
- If nobody was specially targeted or affected;

# TOPIC 3: What if an employee makes a remark

- What should you take in mind when having a conversation.
  - Make sure the setting is comfortable, start with small talk. How the person is doing etc.
  - Be clear about the reason for having the conversation;
  - Do not patronize them, as this has the opposite effect;
  - Explain why someone can be hurt by the remarks.
  - Make clear that the issue is not a women's issue but an issue for the whole company. As it influences personal safety, interpersonal and work relationships.
  - Once you have presented the issue let them explain themselves. Listen actively and ask questions if you do not understand;
  - Make a plan for how to proceed;
  - Take note of the plans made;
  - Check in with the colleague after a while.

In activity 2 you can find an activity to help you have the conversation.



# ACTIVITY 1 – It's classified

## Activity 1 – Name

This activity aims to help you provide a training activity to show the importance of gender equality. This training will also help to create trust within a team.



This activity will help you and your employees to get to know each other better, while also thinking about the stereotypes which connect each other. As it should be positive, it will help to enforce positive stereotypes.

# ACTIVITY 1 - Guidelines

## Activity Title: It's classified

Topics Covered: To get to know each other better, To think of other team members in ways that are different from how people usually classify others, To build trust within the team.

Skills Gained: Understanding of each other.

Duration: 20 minutes

Venue: the office or any other place you are doing a teambuilding activity.

Requirements: at least 4 colleagues.

# ACTIVITY 1 – Content

## It's Classified

Start with instructions ( 5 minutes)

People often stereotype others, which is often unfair and unhelpful. The task is to create balanced subgroups based on positive traits, with each containing a similar number of team members.

Form subgroups (5 minutes) you can also split the group in half to make it easier.

Discussion (10 minutes)

1. What did it take to find out and think about each other in different ways? 2. What makes a classification positive/helpful rather than negative/prejudicial? 3. How does this affect the interactions and contributions of team members? 4. How does this influence our ability to collaborate? 5. How can this experience help us in the workplace?

# ACTIVITY 2 - Role play

This activity aims to help you having a difficult conversation, without attacking, demeaning or patronizing the other.



During this activity you will act as if you are having a difficult conversation with an employee who has made an offensive remark to a colleague. So, you will need two people to have the conversation and 1 or two to access how the conversation went afterwards. You can also do this in a bigger group and make several sets of two have the conversation.

# ACTIVITY 2 - Role Play

## Activity 2 Guidelines

### Activity Title: Role play

Topics Covered: active listening, empathizing, having difficult conversations

Skills Gained: active listening, empathizing, being clear in conversations.

Duration: 30 to 45 minutes

Venue: Office space depending on the group size.

Requirements: a room to have the conversation in, at least 3 people.

# ACTIVITY 2 - Content

## Role play

Prepare for the activity (5 minutes)

read the conflict scenario. If you want, you can adapt the scenario to your own wishes.  
*Scenario: There is jokester at your office, who regularly makes jokes about women having to stay at home to clean. Several colleagues have mentioned that they are uncomfortable with it. So, you have planned a conversation with the jokester. How are you going to have this conversation?*

Play out the conversation (20 minutes)

Review the conversation (10 minutes)

How did the reviewers view the conversation. The reviewers should ask questions as:

Did anything make the situation worse? Why?

What else could the characters have tried?

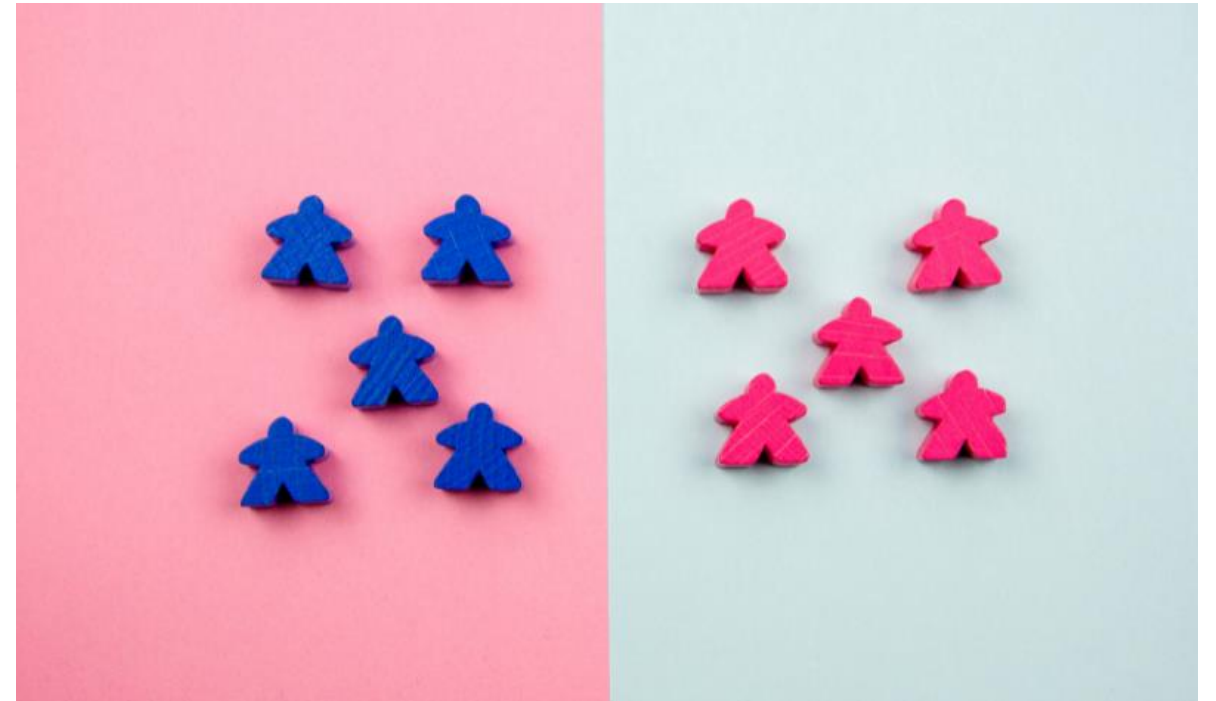
Do you know what the plan is for the future?

Do you think the conversation has helped?

# CONCLUSION

Addressing conflict can be hard, but it is important that you do it and not leave it on the background. As that will cause more issues.

There are different ways in which you can address conflict related to gender equality, most important is that it fits with your managing style and your company.



# SUMMARY

- As an employer it is good to do some research on what you want to do in your company
- Research on the topic will help you understand what will fit within your company
- This way you can organise activities which fit with you and your employees
- If there is conflict related to gender (in)equality keep true to yourself and your company, but be kind to the involved parties.



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PROJECT NUMBER 2022-1-ES01-KA220-ADU-000086221



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