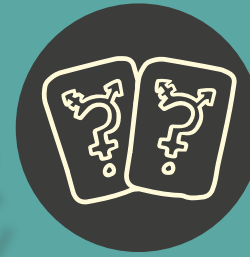


The ROTIFER Project

EDUCATING STAFF ABOUT GENDER DIVERSITY
THROUGH A GAME OF GENDER-SNAP PAIRS
AND A MUFFIN CHALLENGE.



**The aim of the Rotifer Project is to raise awareness of gender diversity.
We want to make our school a safer place for all young people and staff.**

GETTING BEYOND THE BINARY

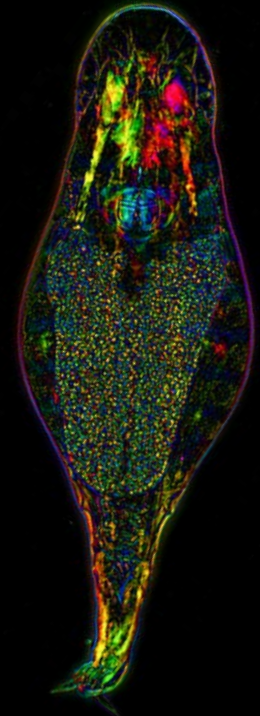
In our school some of us are expressing our gender in ways that challenge society's expectations of what a boy or girl might be or do. Some of us want to change our gender pronouns (e.g. from he to she). Some of us don't want to be identified as gendered at all (e.g. agender). Some of us are just fed up with how gender norms get under our skin and stop us doing things.

But it's hard when school rules and cultures reinforce gender norms everyday, by dividing us into 'boys' and 'girls' for class quizzes, sitting boys next to girls in tests, or have a gendered uniform policy and gender segregated toilets. We wanted to change this by showing how diverse gender already is and always has been and how damaging it can be for all young people and staff to put us into boxes that don't fit us.

"We wanted to let people know that in the animal AND human world sex is not just 'male' and 'female'. There are also many different genders and there is nothing natural about traditional gender roles"



Rotifer
bacteria that live in an all-female world and reproduce by themselves



REMEMBER REMEMBER
don't divide us by gender
please welcome all genders
that sex is not gender
don't assume our gender
and if we tell you our gender
REMEMBER REMEMBER

GENDER PLAY STAFF WORKSHOP

1 FACT FINDING: THE WONDERFUL NATURE OF GENDER

- We researched all the creatures on land and in water that were sex or gender-bending and sex or gender-switching. We also included species that challenged traditional gender roles, like the Seahorse and the Anglerfish.
- We then looked for cartoon and TV characters, celebrities and historical figures who are gender diverse in some way.
- Finding a fun way to tackle what is a serious issue was important, so we created two games to play with staff in our workshop:

2 MIXED-MUFFIN GENDER BERRY CHALLENGE

- We made some muffins with blueberries inside (to represent the stereotype of masculinity), some muffins with raspberries inside (to represent the stereotype of femininity) and some mixed muffins (to represent gender fluidity).
- Staff were asked to break open each muffin and stand by the coloured balloons that matched the inside of their muffin. There were only blue and pink balloons, placed in different corners of the room. There was no balloon or designated area of the room for the mixed muffin.
- After this activity we asked how they felt being categorized according to a muffin they did not choose, what it felt like to go to a gender-coded corner that they might not identify with, and what it felt like not to have a corner at all.
- This got us all talking about how we come into the world already coded through gender labels; how you can't assume someone's gender by how they look; what it feels like to be given a gender you might not choose; and not to have your gender represented at all.



3 GENDER-SNAP PAIRS

- We then played a game of GENDER-SNAP PAIRS with all the different images we had collected. As staff turned over each card, they got to learn a fact about each gender diverse creature, character or person.
- When we found a pair, and shouted SNAP, we felt we cracked open a little bit of those rigid gender binaries that constrain who we can be and what we can do.



4 POSTER & PLEDGE

At the end of the workshop we had a question and answer session. We invited staff to put up a poster on their classroom door. We also asked them to pledge to find different ways of dividing young people other than by their perceived sex or gender group (e.g. male/female, boy/girl) and to help raise awareness of gender diversity and inclusive, gender diverse relationships.

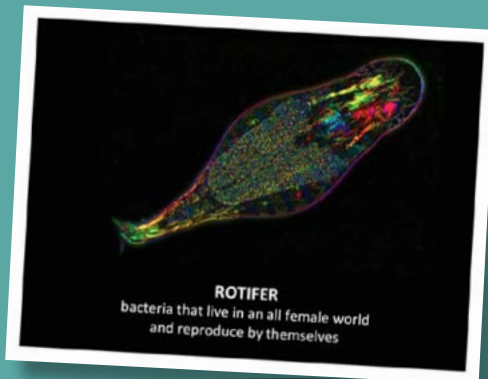
5 THANK YOU CARD TO 'REMEMBER REMEMBER'

Each staff member was given a thank you card for taking part, which included our **'Remember Remember'** poem.

DIY

GENDER-SNAP PAIRS

- 1 Decide which sex-switching or gender-bending worlds you want to explore (e.g. animal kingdom, cartoon characters; historical figures; celebrities; people in power; books; films; jobs etc.) and how many cards you want to make (e.g. 20).
- 2 Do some research using the web resources on this page or elsewhere in this guide. Select an image to go with the fact you want to share.
- 3 Insert the images and text into powerpoint and save as a jpeg. Print two copies of each (e.g. 40).
- 4 Design your own cover. Print enough so you can laminate each card, back to back with your design.
- 5 Lay them out, cover side up. You're ready to play gender-snap pairs!



Before you begin adapting this activity for the children and young people in your setting, read the section on **Safety and Support**.



Free to be me:
taking action against
transphobia – an online
cartoon booklet for
young people

Film by Trans*Form Cymru
featuring the stories of
transgender young people
in Wales

This TRANS*FORM toolkit,
created with young people,
has lots of information on
where to go for support and
advice in Wales including
how to be a trans* ally,
young trans* rights and the
importance
of privacy

Check out the GENDER
UNICORN to learn more
about sex and gender

Transgender through history

How the animal kingdom
challenges traditional gender
roles

Individual and Family support
for trans* teens

5 trans-activists in
the Islamic world

How To Understand
Your Gender

Take a look at MyGeneration
- an ongoing film project about
trans lives and experiences

WHAT DID STAFF THINK ABOUT OUR WORKSHOP?

"Wow. What a beautiful start to the day. A brilliant presentation, very professionally ran. The ideas that were brought forward were amazing and a lot of work will be done after this morning"

"Thought provoking excellent presentation. This is just the beginning of the journey of changing people's perceptions about gender"

"Highly enjoyable, informative and thought-provoking"

"Willingness of pupils to be candid provoked a very good discussion"

"An amazing presentation, presenting simply what most adults over complicate. Being told 'it just is' gives teaching staff free reign to relax around issues of gender. Coming from pupils the message is infinitely louder and stronger – INSPIRING!"

"Interesting presentation. Learnt a lot through the snap game"

**Transgender Day
of Remembrance** is on
the 20th of November
every year