



## “Men behave differently” – “Women do too”

<b>Target group(s):</b>	All employee groups
<b>Objective:</b>	To raise awareness for the different methods of communication and interaction together with the different ways in which men and women work (in their diversity)
<b>Method:</b>	Small groups  There will be various theses regarding group behaviour (stimuli on next page) in the room. Participants will be asked to select the thesis that speaks to them most, either because they agree with it or because they disagree with it. The participants should discuss their views in their small group.
<b>Task:</b>	Discuss theses regarding the communication patterns of men and women. Do these theses match your experiences or have you had different experiences? What conclusions can be drawn from this for training and counselling work?
<b>Evaluation:</b>	Questions for forum discussion:  <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Why did you choose this particular thesis?</li><li>2. What subjects did you discuss in your small group?</li><li>3. Are there situations in your own day-to-day working life where you can identify aspects of these theses?</li><li>4. What could the rules be in order to create a different way in which the genders work together? (in terms of gender dialogue)</li></ol> Comparison of experiences across the countries
<b>Duration:</b>	20 minutes in small groups, 30 minutes evaluation
<b>Materials:</b>	4-5 theses regarding communication on flip chart paper



## Exercises &gt; Gender Dialogue &gt; Men behave differently – Women do too

**Remark:**

Discussing such theses often creates controversial debate as they are interpreted partly as gender stereotypes from which male and female participants wish to distance themselves. These theses reflect outcomes and experiences from adult education and therefore make trend-based statements in respect of the behaviour of the genders in group situations. Neither the theses, nor the differences in group behaviour experienced or described by the participants should be reinforced as gender-specific in the biological sense, but, on the contrary, should be recognised as socially constructed. It needs to be explained that group behaviour should not be assessed along gender stereotypes, but in relation to the respective context and appropriate to the respective situation.<sup>1</sup>

**Tools:**

See following pages

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<sup>1</sup> We recommend Christa M. Heilmann: *Frauensprechen. Männersprechen. Geschlechtsspezifisches Sprechverhalten*. Munich 1999, as further reading



**Behaviour attributed to men in all-male groups:**

- ▶ Generalise, speak for others
- ▶ Leap about from topic to topic
- ▶ Task and fact-orientated
- ▶ Competition-orientated in group situations. Who is superior?
- ▶ Express their anger easily
- ▶ Display their strengths and conceal their weaknesses
- ▶ Find common ground by exchanging stories and making jokes
- ▶ Measure identity and status according to performance
- ▶ Do not admit to their feelings; feelings are denied or suppressed
- ▶ Like to pass blame onto others

**Behaviour attributed to women in all-female groups:**

- ▶ Give personal opinions, speak for themselves
- ▶ Broach the subject of feelings too; self-revelation
- ▶ Process-orientated
- ▶ Seek closeness through discussion and by talking about themselves and personal issues
- ▶ Mutually discerning – identity and status are based on relationships
- ▶ Discuss subjects for a long time
- ▶ Display cooperation; want to please others in the group; offer help
- ▶ Show weaknesses and vulnerability, hide or repress strengths
- ▶ Find it difficult to express anger
- ▶ Show their feelings
- ▶ Verbalise their feelings
- ▶ Take responsibility for mistakes



**Gender relations and balances of power in group situations:**

- ▶ Men take up more of the talking time
- ▶ Women are interrupted by men much more often
- ▶ Contributions by men and women are evaluated and assessed differently
- ▶ More notice is taken of suggestions made by male group members
- ▶ Less value is placed on contributions made by female group members
- ▶ Women provide more communicative support work
- ▶ Women often begin with verbal climb-downs. Men get to the point more quickly
- ▶ Volume and length of contributions to discussion vary: women are more quietly spoken and often express themselves more succinctly
- ▶ Gender-homogenous groups can be used to develop other behavioural possibilities and others methods of interaction.