

# Gender and Neurodiversity in Coaching

June 2024



# Introductions

## Kate Arms, JD, PCC (she/they)



Toronto, Canada via US and UK

Harvard Law School  
Theatre and Biopsychology

ND: Profoundly Gifted & ???

Mom of neurodivergent kids

Dancer

## Tracy Winter, Ph.D., PCC (she/her)



US: Austin via Chicago

PhD Human Development  
MA Human and Organization Systems

ND: Highly+ Gifted & ADHD

Aunt of neurodivergent kiddo

Dancer

# Designing our alliance: aka housekeeping

We commit to:

- Delivering as much value as we can during the time we have together
- Doing our best to answer your questions while prioritizing the whole group's learning

Can we get permission to:

- Lecture quite a lot – there will be a demo with group debrief and time for questions
- Ask for some people to come on mic and camera when it will serve the teaching
- Hold off on answering questions until we ask for questions

We ask that we all:

Give grace around language



# Today's Agenda

- Activity
- Gender as a Social Construct
- How Gender shows up in Coaching
- How Gender and Neurodiversity-Inclusion Intersect
- Three key coaching competencies for working wisely with gender and neurodiversity
- Activity
- Q&A



# Activity

1. Have gender issues shown up in your coaching practice?
2. Have you had clients bring coaching topics with challenges that intersect issues of neurodiversity and gender?

# Gender as a Social Construct

# Gender: A definition

Gender refers to the roles, behaviors, activities, expectations, and societal norms that a particular culture considers appropriate for individuals based on their perceived or assigned biological sex.

# Biological Sex: A definition

Biological sex refers to the physical characteristics, such as reproductive anatomy and chromosomes, that typically categorize individuals as male, female, or intersex.



# Gender Binary



# Gender Coordinates

<b>Masculine</b>	High	Masculine	Androgynous
	Low	Undifferentiated	Feminine
		Low	High

**Feminine**

Based on work by Sandra Bem

# Gender Essentialism

Gender essentialism is a non-evidence-based theory that posits that men and women are fundamentally different due to their biology.



Society's belief/learned categories  
about the traits of  
females and males



Influences on Self-Esteem  
(Acceptable Behaviors)

Gender  
Schema

Influences on  
Interpretation of  
Social Information



# How gender shows up in coaching

# Coach Matching



Women taught  
to out boy the  
boys to succeed

Men who don't  
"do emotions"

Men who don't  
have close friends

"Because I am a  
man, I always jump  
to problem-solving"

Gender-related  
Imposter  
Syndrome

Men who have been  
given the blame for  
relationship problems  
by therapists

"Feminine"  
Leadership

Women who  
won't hold  
boundaries

Glue work  
isn't  
promotable.

Boys used to  
be able to be  
angry

Mean Girls

I'm so tired of  
doing all the  
emotional labour

Girls used to  
be able to be  
sad

# Coaching schools have implicit assumptions







Coaches have  
embedded  
assumptions

# How Gender and Neurodiversity-Inclusive Coaching Intersect

A vintage green typewriter is shown from a slightly elevated, front-quarter perspective. A sheet of white paper is inserted into the carriage and is printed with the words "GENDER ROLES" in a bold, dark, sans-serif font. The typewriter's body is a dark green color with a textured surface. The keyboard is visible at the bottom, showing several keys with white characters. The background is dark, making the typewriter and the white paper stand out.

**GENDER ROLES**



A society's gender norms create acquired neurodiversity through neuroplasticity.

Gender essentialist beliefs create a self-fulfilling prophecy in which people continue to adhere to gender roles in ways that restrict the choices they make in their own lives

# Intersectionality

Gender-norm-induced trauma plus neurodiversity-related trauma is more complex than either alone.



# Gender norms affect understanding of neurodiversity and neurodivergence



# Quality of Evidence from Research







# Autism and Gender Non-Conformity

# Three Key Coaching Competencies for Working Wisely with Gender and Neurodiversity

# Trust and Safety

# Coaching Mindset

# Evoking Awareness

# Activity

# Key Takeaways

- Gender is a construct that limits people's access to their whole potential range.
- Neurodivergent individuals may have trauma from the intersection of neurodivergence and gender norms.
- Inclusive coaching requires the coach become self-aware and self-managing around gender norms and assumptions.

# Upcoming Master Classes

- **Asynchronous Development in Neurodiversity-Inclusive Coaching**

July 8 at 11:30 am ET

July 9 at 8:00 pm ET

- **Neuroscience of Neurodivergence for Coaches: August 2024**

[www.neurodiversitycoachingacademy.com](http://www.neurodiversitycoachingacademy.com)





What  
Questions  
do You  
Have?

