



# CONGRATULATIONS, IT'S A...

*Let's start at the beginning.*



Before a baby takes their first breath, the process of gender socialization begins. This process can start as soon as the baby's chromosomes can be tested or the genitals can be seen.

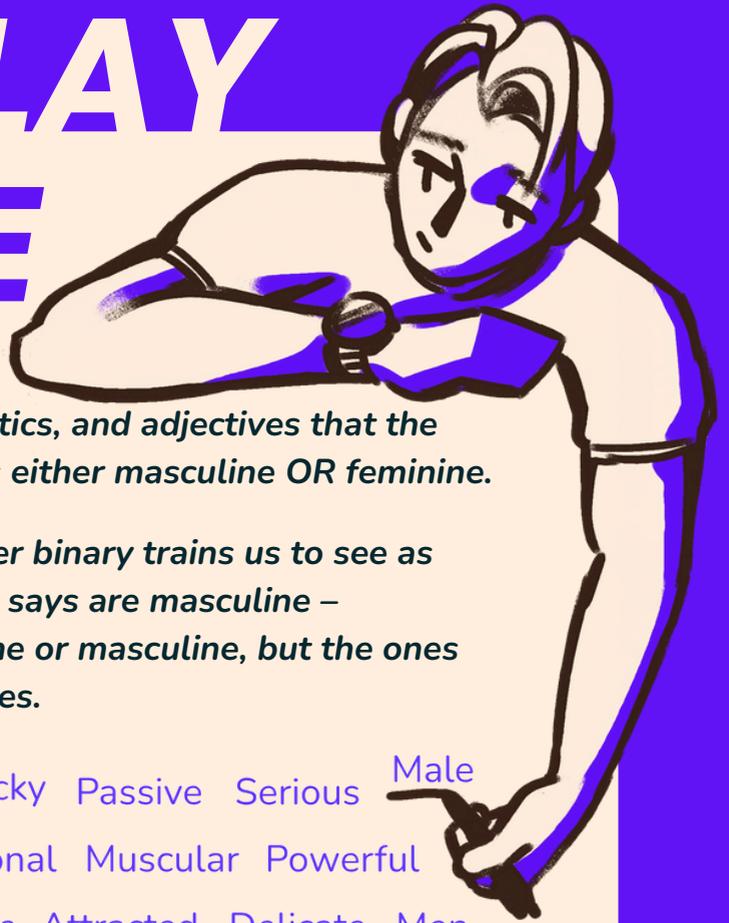
Based on the baby's sex chromosomes or genitals, society makes a lot of assumptions.

## ACTIVITY

***What have you noticed about how society trains us to prepare for a baby's arrival? What are the differences we notice when the newborn is expected to be a girl versus a boy?***



# LET'S PLAY A GAME



*Below is a list of traits, characteristics, and adjectives that the gender binary tends to separate as either masculine OR feminine.*

*Circle the ones you think the gender binary trains us to see as feminine, and underline the ones it says are masculine – not the ones YOU think are feminine or masculine, but the ones that society has put into those boxes.*

Inept Gossipy Leaders Panicky Passive Serious Male  
 Hierarchy Indecisive Irrational Muscular Powerful  
 Doting Articulate Assertive Attracted Delicate Men  
 Insecure Communal Competent Competitive Logical  
 Guarded Collaborative Independent Unathletic Weak  
 Soft Confident Attracted to men Authoritative Practical  
 High Vulnerable Emotional labour Aggressive Artistic  
 Body Submissive Attracted to women Enthusiastic Strong  
 Athletic Level-headed High maintenance Decisive Hard  
 Followers Temperamental Compassionate Excitable  
 Vanity Analytical Serving others Relationality Frivolous  
 Serving Impractical Hard skills Credible Dependent Subject  
 Object Emotional Dramatic Dominant Deceptive  
 Female Demure Soft skills Scattered Rational  
 Stoic Silly Mind Women

# LET'S PLAY DRESS UP

Let's consider an example. Children of all genders enjoy playing dress up: whether it's for Halloween, a theme party, or to re-enact a scene from their favourite movie or comic book.

Take a moment to consider how you might feel if your daughter or hypothetical daughter wanted to dress up like her favourite male comic book hero for Halloween - Batman! How would you react?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



Now let's consider the reverse: take a moment to consider how you might feel if your son or hypothetical son wanted to dress up like his favourite female comic book hero for Halloween - Wonder Woman or Sailor Moon! How would you react?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---





# ***FEMININE STEREOTYPES***

Stereotypes are all around us, but we don't always notice them. They are often described as ideas or beliefs about a group that are fixed (not easily moved or shifted), generally overly simple, and often false. Stereotypes are the negative and positive beliefs we hold (often passed down to us) about the traits, attitudes, and behaviours of people who belong to particular groups (like racial groups, ethnic groups, religious groups, and gender groups - women/men/nonbinary people).

**Stereotypes are pretty widespread and difficult to get away from, so they have a way of shaping people's relationships to femininity (and not necessarily in good ways!) (Hoskin & Whiley, 2024).**

## **ACTIVITY**

Everyone has a relationship to femininity. And, the myths and stereotypes about femininity affect us all, regardless of our own gender.

***How would you describe your relationship with femininity today, as an adult?***



# LOCATING OUR BELIEFS

Beliefs about femininity do not just “appear” out of nowhere. They often begin through the early gender socialization messages we receive as children and in families. These messages are powerful, enduring, and restrictive.

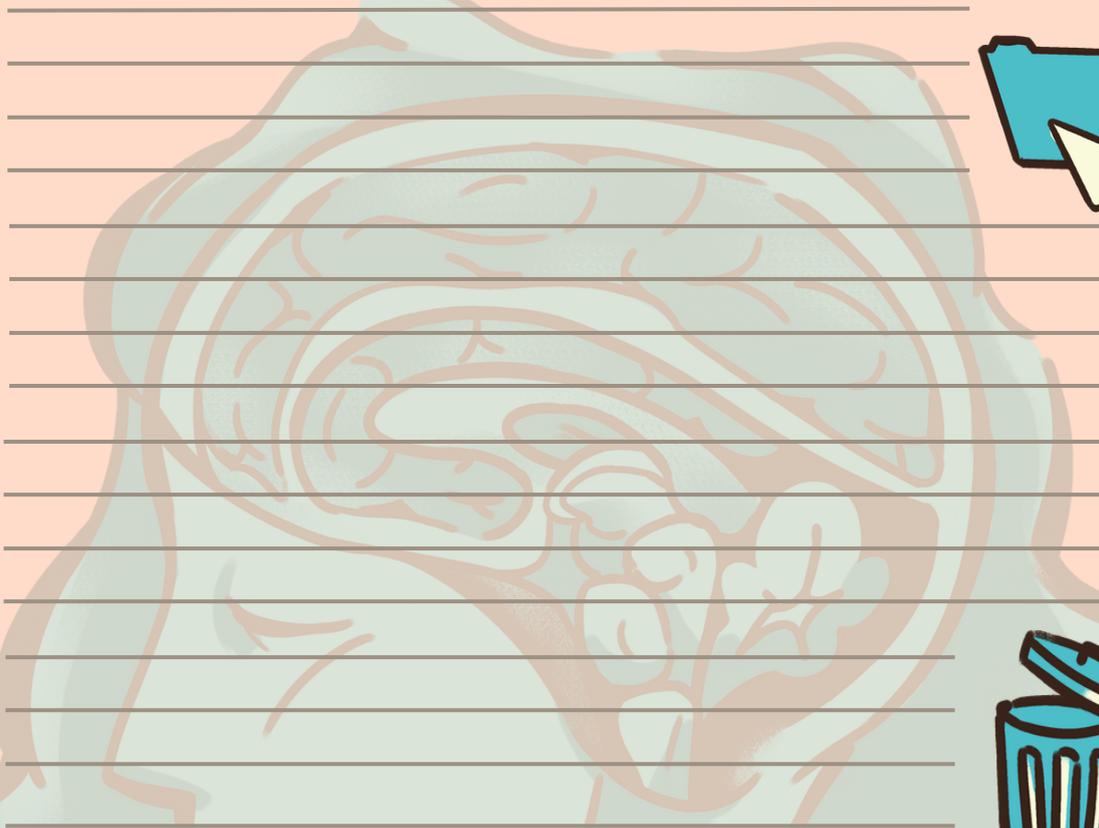
## ACTIVITY

Now that we’re thinking about femininity through this new lens of femmephobia, let’s explore some of the messages we’ve received about femininity.

**What messages did you receive as a child about femininity?**

Use arrows to show which messages you kept/dropped:

- Which of these messages did you hold onto? (-->SAVE folder)
- Which of these messages did you drop/reject? (-->TRASH bin)



A series of horizontal lines for writing, with a blue folder icon and a blue trash bin icon on the right side. Arrows point from the folder icon to the top line and from the trash bin icon to the bottom line.



**The “cool girl” stereotype and Barbie Maiming can be boiled down to the pressure girls and women experience to tone down their femininity – but everyone can experience the pressure to be less feminine and more masculine. This pressure can be communicated in subtle or overt ways by peers, movies and pop culture, family, and schools.**

## **ACTIVITY**

Think of a time when you felt pressure to be less feminine or more masculine. How old were you? Who was involved? How did you feel when it was happening? What did you do afterwards - did you change things to avoid future experiences like this one? Did you keep "doing you" regardless of this experience?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Now think of a time when your child was made to feel pressure to be less feminine or more masculine. What did you notice about how this experience impacted your child? How they felt? How they acted afterwards?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Unisex



# For Boys & Girls!

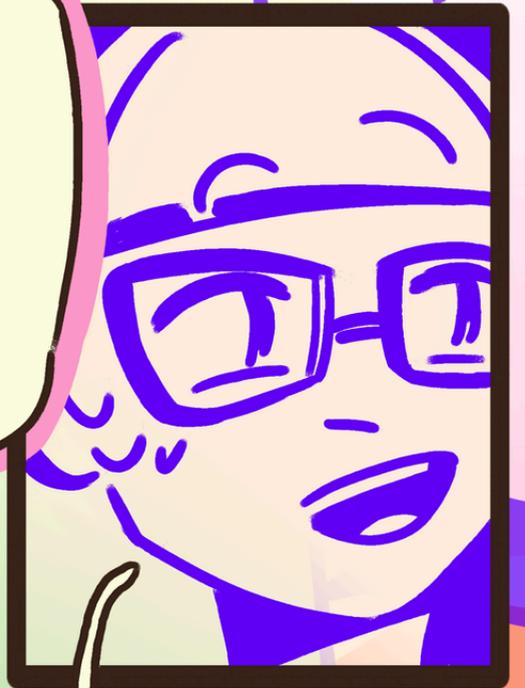


**WHEN BLUE IS  
"NEUTRAL" BUT  
PINK IS NOT...**

...lots of people dress girls in blue!



...but do they dress boys in pink?



... ARE WE JUST NEUTRALIZING FEMININITY?

haha ha...

# BABY NAMES!



*We can also see masculinity presented as gender-neutral when it comes to baby names.*

## ACTIVITY

Can you think of a few gender-neutral baby names?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



# INCORPORATING FEMME-CONSCIOUS PARENTING

## ACTIVITY

How can we incorporate femme-conscious parenting into our families and parenting circles? What are some specific ways that you could incorporate femme-consciousness into your parenting?

---

---

---

---

---

---

It's a big step to think about how our parenting approaches might unintentionally put restrictions on our kids' comfort, joy, and individuality, and putting this into action can certainly be difficult (old habits and ways of thinking can be hard to change). Taking this a step further, let's consider what is happening outside our own families. How can we support other parents in noticing femmephobia and unlearning it?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**As noted, making these changes is not always easy. What challenges to femme-conscious parenting do you imagine you will encounter?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Now that you've identified some of the challenges, let's think about solutions! What are some possible ways to deal with those challenges? Are there things you've tried that have worked in the past? How can you use the content in this workbook to help you come up with solutions that may work for you and your family?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# VALUING FEMININITY

Another great way to challenge femmephobia!

## ACTIVITY

What are some of your favourite parts of femininity?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

What value can femme-conscious parenting and valuing femininity bring to your parenting approach and the lives of the children in your life and community?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

