

A TASTE OF EQUALITY

Workshop

Topic/issues covered	Exploring the concept of gender Gender stereotypes and gender equality
Target group	15 – 30 years old
Time needed	2-3 hours It's possible to do the activity in one session or in 2 different sessions
Aims of the activity	All the participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ are familiar with the idea of gender; ➤ are able to recognize and acknowledge gender stereotypes and how they can affect us; ➤ are aware of the influence of their action in deconstructing gender stereotypes.
Brief summary of active and participatory methodologies used	The methodologies used include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Self-reflection ➤ Participative discussion/plenary discussion ➤ Group work ➤ Non-formal education
Any specific materials and equipment needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Blank notes/sticky notes (+ facilitators notes) - A1 ➤ Bowl - A1 ➤ Genderbread with backpack or cotton candies/clouds poster - A1 ➤ "Woman" poster / "Man" poster - A2 ➤ Post-its in two different colours (one colour for man and one for women) - A2 ➤ Stone factor poster - A3 ➤ Duct tape, markers - A1 - A2 - A3

Session 1

Understanding Gender

Duration: 1 hour

This session **introduces participants to the topic of gender**, helping them explore its complexity in a clear and interactive way. The session encourages participants to share their thoughts, clarify misunderstandings, and build empathy, regardless of their prior familiarity with the topic. By creating a safe and inclusive space for discussion, the workshop **aims to deepen understanding, challenge assumptions, and promote awareness of societal expectations and perceptions related to gender**.

Introduction (5 minutes)

The facilitators start by introducing themselves, the organisation, and the goals of the activity.

As a facilitator, explain to participants that exploring the topic of gender is important because it **helps us better understand the complexity of society and develop critical thinking**.

Even if participants are already familiar with the topic, this workshop will offer a chance to deepen their understanding.

For those less interested, highlight that the discussion can still be valuable as it builds empathy and **awareness about the world we live in**.

Tip: Before starting, try to find out the group's familiarity with the topic of gender. If the group has little knowledge, focus on introducing the basic concepts. If the group already knows the basics, you can move to deeper discussions and reflections.

Safe space (10 min)

The facilitator and the groups should co-create a safe space to establish shared agreements and guidelines that will help participants feel comfortable, respected, and safe to engage fully in the workshop.



Instructions for facilitators:

- Begin by explaining **why** creating a safe space **is important**. For example:
"In this workshop, we want everyone to feel comfortable to share their ideas, ask questions, and express themselves without fear of judgment. To do that, we need to agree on how we treat each other and how we work together. So let's co-create our group agreements for today."

- Ask the group: *“What do we need as a group to feel safe, respected, and supported during this workshop?”*
- Invite participants to share their ideas openly. You can prompt them with questions if needed:

How do we want to speak and listen to each other?

What should we do if we feel uncomfortable or unsure about something?

How can we make sure everyone feels included and heard?

Tip: Write participants' suggestions on a flip chart, whiteboard, or large sheet of paper where everyone can see them.

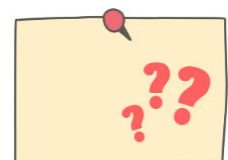
Examples of common ground rules:

- *Respect everyone’s opinions and experiences.*
- *One person speaks at a time.*
- *Confidentiality: What’s shared in the room stays in the room.*
- *Listen actively without interrupting.*
- *Use “I” statements” (speak from your own perspective).*
- *It’s okay to pass (you don’t have to share if you don’t feel comfortable).*
- *No judgment or mocking of anyone’s contributions.*
- *Be open to learning and hearing different perspectives.*



- Read through the list and ask participants: *“Is there anything you’d like to add or clarify?”*, *“Does everyone agree to follow these guidelines?”*
- Ensure everyone gives a verbal or non-verbal agreement (e.g., thumbs up).
- Acknowledge that everyone’s input is important and that you’ll all work together to uphold the agreements.
- Keep the list of ground rules visible for the duration of the workshop as a reminder for everyone.

First Main Activity: Gender Salad (40 minutes)



Part 1: What’s Gender? (10 minutes)

Start by asking participants to think about the concept of gender. You can choose one of the following questions depending on their level of awareness:

- *“What is gender?”* – for young people who may not be very familiar with the topic
- *“What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word gender?”* – for participants who already have some knowledge and understanding of the concept

Participants write their thoughts on 1-2 sticky notes. These can be anonymous or not, depending on their preference. Once everyone has written their notes, they place them in a bowl, and the facilitator mixes them up.

Part 2: Genderbread (20 minutes)

**Alternative models for this part of activity can be found below.*



Note: This activity works best with two facilitators.

1. Facilitator 1 quickly reviews the notes and filters out any offensive, discriminatory, or inappropriate content.
2. Facilitator 2 asks participants to take turns reading the notes or key words aloud. After each one is read:
 - o Ensure everyone understands the meaning.
 - o Ask participants to clarify or share their thoughts if needed.
3. Once the meaning is clear, participants place the notes on a visual representation of the Genderbread (see Annex 1) or alternative model of Cotton Candies/Clouds (see below*).

Here's how the model works:

- **Head (Identity):** Words related to who I feel I am (gender identity).
- **Heart (Attraction):** Phrases about who I'm attracted to (sexual orientation).
- **Gender Symbol (Biological Sex):** Words linked to biological characteristics.
- **Expression:** Phrases and words connected with how we express ourselves.
- **Backpack (Society):** Notes related to societal expectations or any other.

Tip: If certain themes are missing, facilitators can add pre-prepared notes to ensure important ideas (e.g., biological sex: man, woman, intersex, identity: transgender, cisgender, non-binary) are covered.

At the end, facilitators can summarize the main points on large notes for clarity. Use simple explanations to define key terms, like the ones you find below (if you prefer, feel free to use other definitions or explanations):

- **Biological Sex:** Physical characteristics that determine if a person is female, male, or intersex.
- **Gender Identity:** A person's internal sense of who they are. It may align with or differ from their biological sex.
- **Sexual Orientation:** Who someone is attracted to or wants relationships with.
- **Gender Expression:** How someone expresses their gender outwardly, like through clothing, behaviour, or gestures.

Part 3. Closing Discussion (10 minutes)

Wrap up the activity with a group discussion:

- What stood out to you during this activity?
- How did you feel sharing or hearing these ideas?
- Is there anything you're still curious about or unsure of?



Key Message: Explain that gender is a complex and broad topic. This session wasn't about giving fixed definitions but about exploring our own ideas and experiences to better understand the concept of gender.

For advanced participants: Emphasize that this workshop aimed to create a space for open discussion and reflection to deepen understanding of the concept of gender and the society we live in.

*Alternative Models (for Genderbread)

1. **Cotton Candies/Clouds:** Use 4 cloud-shaped visuals instead of the genderbread:
 - o Cloud 1: Identity
 - o Cloud 2: Attraction
 - o Cloud 3: Biological Sex
 - o Cloud 4: Expression and Social Expectations
2. **Grouping as We Go:** Instead of pre-labeled visuals, read each note aloud and ask participants to help categorize them into themes (like identity, attraction, sex, and expression).



End of Session (5 minutes)

If this workshop is divided into multiple sessions, you can stop here. Before closing, ask participants:

- How did it go?
- How did you feel during the whole session?
- Do you have any questions or things you'd like to explore further?

Please remind participants that gender is a broad and evolving topic. Creating space for open discussion and reflection is essential to fostering gender equality.

Session 2

Exploring Gender Stereotypes

Duration: 1–2 hours (depending on group size)

This session is designed to help young people **reflect on and discuss gender stereotypes** in an interactive way. Through games, discussions, and group activities, participants will uncover **how stereotypes impact our perceptions** of gender and try to find out ways to challenge these ideas.

Second Main Activity: Shaking Words (30–40 minutes)

This activity aims to start a conversation about how society views gender roles and stereotypes in an engaging and collaborative way.



- **Warm-Up Round (3–4 minutes)**

Everyone stands in a circle. As a facilitator, explain the rules of the game:

- You will introduce yourselves by shaking hands and exchanging names. You can move freely around the room.
- The fun part? After meeting someone, you take their name and use it as your own to introduce yourself to the next person. (For example, if Harry meets Emily, Emily then uses Harry’s name when introducing herself to Sophia.)
- We’ll do a trial round first to make sure everyone understands the rules!

- **The Real Activity: Exploring Gender (3–4 minutes per round)**

- Now, instead of exchanging names, you’ll share words or short sentences in response to specific questions.
 - **Round 1 Question:** *“What do people think of when they think of a WOMAN?”*
 - **Round 2 Question:** *“What do people think of when they think of a MAN?”*
- After each round of handshaking and exchanging ideas, participants write down the **most interesting or memorable words/phrases on post-it notes** (one word or phrase per post-it).

Tip: You can give each person max 4 post-its before the rounds or place them on a few tables so the participants can freely choose the number of post-its. Everyone should write down at least one word/phrase for “WOMAN” and one for “MAN.”

- **Collecting Words/Phrases**

Explain to the participants:

- o You will stick your post-its on two posters: one for “WOMAN” and one for “MAN” (for poster see Annex 2).
- o Together, we’ll look at the words and phrases collected. You’ll have a chance to reflect:
 - Do any of these words surprise you?
 - Does anything come to mind when reading these phrases/words, and can you identify what topic we are addressing?
 - And finally can you spot any gender stereotypes?

Some stereotypes will emerge, some will be more obvious, others less, but it will be important to guide the participants towards **the identification of the stereotypes**.

Tip: If necessary, clarify the difference between stereotypes and prejudices to the participants.

Stereotype: A generalized belief about a group of people. Stereotypes can be either positive (e.g., “women are nurturing”) or negative (e.g., “men are aggressive”) or neutral (e.g., “Italian people always eat pasta”) and are often based on oversimplified or exaggerated characteristics.

Example: “All teenagers are rebellious.”

Prejudice: A preconceived opinion or attitude towards a group or individual, usually negative and not based on reason or actual experience. Prejudice often leads to discrimination.

Example: “I don’t trust teenagers because they’re always up to no good.”

Understanding these terms helps facilitate discussions and address any misconceptions participants might have during the activity.

EXAMPLES OF GENDER STEREOTYPES



Stereotypes about Men:

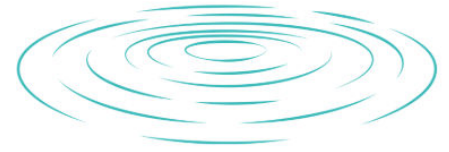
- Men are strong and assertive.
- Men are less emotional and more rational.
- Men are natural leaders and decision-makers.
- Men are better at technical or physical jobs.

Stereotypes about Women:

- Women are caring and nurturing.
- Women are more emotional and less rational.
- Women are better at multitasking and household tasks.
- Women are naturally inclined to be teachers or nurses.

Third Main Activity: Stone Factor (30–50 minutes)

The goal of this activity is to dive deeper into the impact of gender stereotypes and explore their consequences. The activity is connected with the previous one.



Divide participants into groups of 4–5 people and explain:

1. Group Challenge:

- In small groups (4–5 people), pick one of the stereotypes identified earlier.
- Your group will write this stereotype at the centre of a "Stone Factor poster" (see Annex 3).

Tip: The Stone Factor poster should be at least A3 size. Therefore, instead of printing Annex 3, it is best to hand-draw the circles radiating outwards on a larger sheet of paper.

2. Consequences – work in groups* (20 minutes):

- Think of the effects this stereotype can have at different levels.
- Remember to write and report the consequences not only related to the gender mentioned in the stereotype but also to other genders.
- Note the consequences of the stereotype in the circles. The inner circle is the personal level, the outer circle – societal level.
- Discuss if there are any connections.

EXAMPLE: Stereotype: "Older people are bad with technology."

Consequences:

- **Exclusion from opportunities:** Older individuals may be overlooked for jobs or roles that require technological skills, limiting their career growth and access to new opportunities.
- **Missed learning potential:** The stereotype may discourage companies or educational institutions from providing the proper training or support to older individuals, limiting their ability to learn new skills and adapt.
- **Frustration and self-doubt:** Older people who encounter this stereotype may feel frustrated or inadequate when trying to engage with new technologies, leading to a lack of confidence.
- **Generational divide:** This stereotype can contribute to a divide between younger and older generations, fostering misunderstanding and limiting collaboration in both social and professional settings.

3. Sharing and Reflecting:

- Each group shares their findings. Give each one of them max 5 min.

Debriefing Questions:

- How did you feel during this activity?
- Did anything surprise you?

- Can you identify similar patterns? (For example, are most stereotypes negative?)
- How can we challenge these stereotypes and their effects? What can we do?

Individual Reflection: Think about whether any of these stereotypes affect you personally - either as someone experiencing them or unintentionally reinforcing them.

If at the end of the activity the young people feel a bit overwhelmed - that's a sign they've begun to grasp how gender stereotypes fuel inequalities. **Congratulate them** on taking this crucial first step - they're now ready to focus on finding solutions and driving change!



*Alternative model (for identifying consequences - work in groups)

If time allows, you can use a fun **"World Café" format**, where groups rotate and build on each other's ideas.

In this format the number of groups must be min. 2. Set up as many tables as there are groups.

- In the first round, each group will work on a different stereotype, and after 10 minutes, the groups will rotate tables in a clockwise direction.
- Each group arriving in a new table can read the notes of the previous group and either add new consequences or further explore the consequences already written by the previous group.
- Depending on the available time, several rounds can be done.

Wrap-Up and Feedback (5-10 minutes)



We'll end the workshop with a group discussion to share final thoughts and reflections.

Questions: How did the activities feel (the whole session)? What stood out to you?

Before everyone leaves, ask the participants to fill out a short evaluation form to help us improve the session. They can fill it out online

[\[https://forms.gle/NQ1kwmabbgZQdHXS6\]](https://forms.gle/NQ1kwmabbgZQdHXS6) or, if needed, on paper.

The preference will be to use the online questionnaire to reduce the use of paper.

This workshop is designed to be interactive, thought-provoking, and a safe space to explore how gender stereotypes shape our lives. It's about listening, learning, and sharing ideas to challenge unfair beliefs and create more equality for everyone.

Additional Activity

Integrating Intersectionality into the Workshop - Identity Onion

What is Intersectionality?

- Intersectionality is the idea that our identities are made up of many interconnected parts that influence how we experience the world. These parts include things like gender, race, age, class, nationality and abilities.
- Intersectionality helps us understand that these identity layers don't exist separately - they interact and shape each other. For example, a woman who is also from a marginalized racial group may face different challenges than a woman from a majority racial group.
- It is important to note that intersectionality is a complex concept, and not everything connects to it directly. If you are working with younger participants, it's okay to simplify the topic. The goal is to introduce the idea without expecting to address it fully or exhaustively.

The Identity Onion Activity

The Onion Activity is a simple and visual way to explore identity, using an onion as a metaphor. Just like an onion has many layers, our identities are made up of different layers too.

This activity helps participants reflect on these layers while focusing on **gender** as the main theme of the workshop.

You can do the Onion Activity at different points in the workshop depending on your goals:

- **At the Beginning** to introduce the idea of identity.
- **At the End** to wrap up the session and reflect on the day's discussion.

Option 1: Identity Onion Activity at the Beginning

1. **Distribute the Onion Template**
 - Provide participants with a visual of an onion that shows multiple layers (see Annex 4).
2. **Explain the Task**
 - Ask participants to fill in each layer of the onion with different characteristics that make up a person's identity. For example:
 - Gender identity: cisman/ciswoman/transgender
 - Sexual orientation: heterosexual/homosexual/bisexual/pansexual
 - Socioeconomic status: rich/poor

- Race: white/black
 - Nationality
 - Migration background/without migration background
 - Age: young/old
 - Abilities: with/without disabilities
 - To keep the space safe, participants should use an imaginary identity rather than their own.
- 3. Connect to the Gender Focus**
- Once participants complete the onion, explain:

“Our identity is made up of many layers, just like this onion. Today, we are going to focus specifically on gender. However, we all carry other characteristics that influence our experiences in the world and can make our backpack heavier.”

- 4. Link to the Next Activity**
- Use the onion layers to transition into the next activity, such as the Gender Salad Activity. Emphasize that while gender is a key part of our identity, it intersects with other layers like race, age, or ability.
- 5. Optional Note During the Genderbread Activity**
- Later in the workshop, when discussing stereotypes, refer back to the onion. Explain how identity layers add to the “backpack” of expectations placed on people because of stereotypes.

Option 2: Identity Onion Activity at the End

- 1. Introduce the Onion Template**
- Give participants the onion visual and explain that it represents the different layers of a person’s identity.
- 2. Reflect on the Day’s Focus**
- Say something like:

“Today, we focused on gender and how it shapes our experiences and stereotypes. But gender is just one part of who we are. Like an onion, our identities have many layers.”

- 3. Ask for Reflection**
- Invite participants to think about their own identities and fill in the layers of the onion with characteristics like:
 - Gender identity
 - Sexual orientation
 - Socioeconomic status
 - Race
 - Nationality
 - Migration background/without migration background
 - Age
 - Abilities: with/without disabilities
 - Remind participants that this is a personal reflection. They don’t have to share what they write.

4. Wrap-Up

- Close the activity by encouraging participants to reflect on how these layers interact. For example:

“Our gender is just one layer of who we are. Other parts of our identity, like age, race, or ability, can also shape how we experience the world, our opportunities and how others see us.”

Key Points for Facilitators

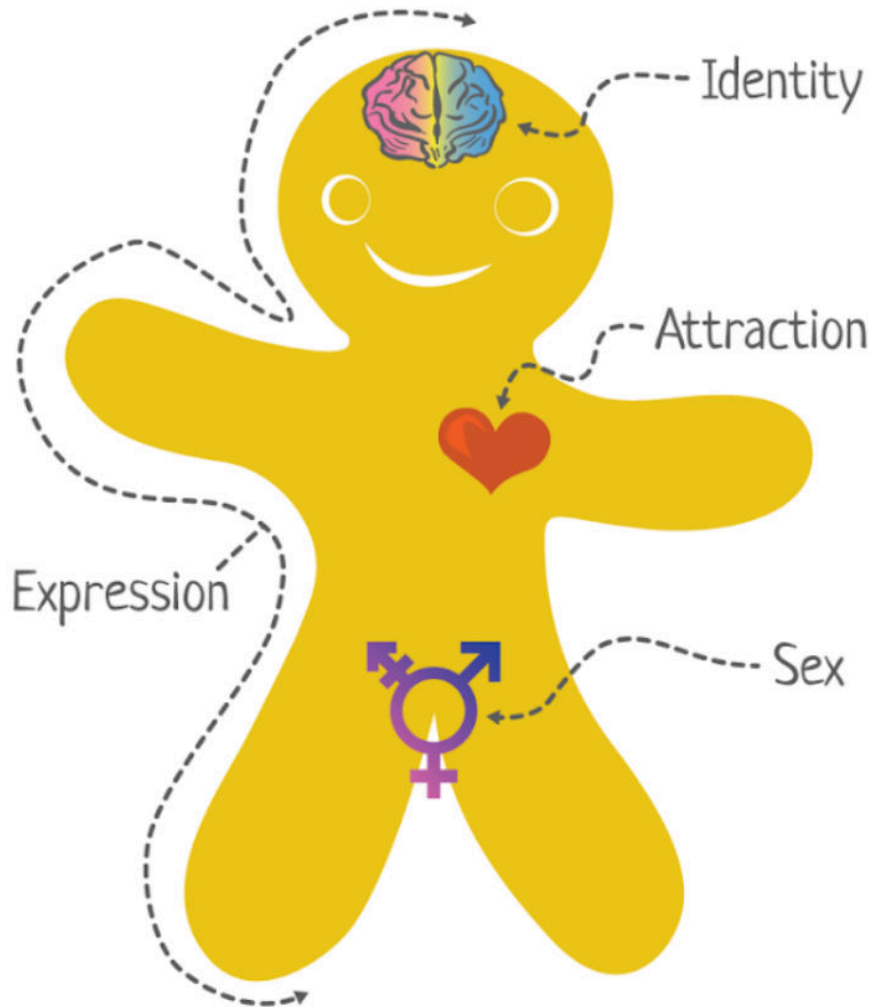
- Keep the space safe. If necessary, encourage the use of imaginary identities to avoid discomfort.
- Emphasize that while the workshop focuses on **gender**, intersectionality reminds us that our identities are made up of many interconnected layers.

Why the Onion Activity Matters

The Onion Activity allows participants to reflect on the complexity of identity in an accessible and engaging way. It highlights that while gender is an important layer, other aspects of identity – like race, class, or abilities – can add depth to our experiences. By introducing intersectionality in this way, participants can better understand how different identity layers influence stereotypes, expectations, and opportunities in the world.



Annex 1: Genderbread



Annex 2: Woman/Man poster

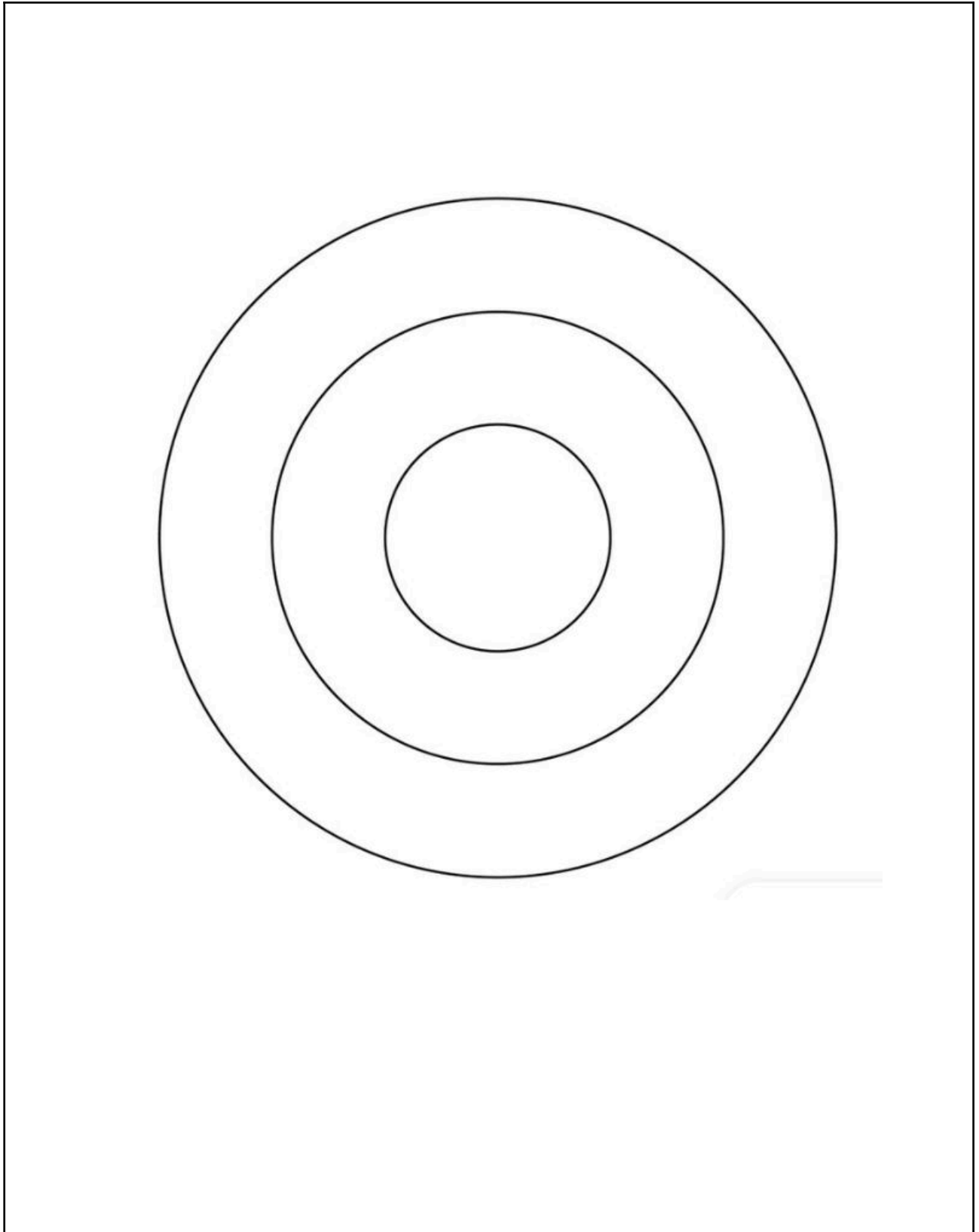
WOMAN

A3

MAN

A3

Annex 3: Stone factor poster



Annex 4: Onion

