

ICSC Culture Diversity Module 09

ICSC09 _Section 1 Gender Diversity

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Video Lesson: 34:56

My name is Doctor Henry Pollard. I am coming to you today, to present a unit in the cultural diversity section of the ICSC program. Today's talk will be about gender issues in sports prior to. I would just like to acknowledge the content here has been sourced from multiple providers there and they are all listed for your information moving forward. Here is a little bit of background on me. I have been involved with FICS for the best part of 20 years. Primarily in the research area where I am the chair and also in the education section.

We are going to go over today, a general overview of gender issues in sports and look to try to understand common gender equality issues and gain some knowledge on how to use gender-neutral language and promote inclusiveness. I specifically will cover challenges in getting gender equality, biological differences in the genders, injury differences, performance differences, and how we might go about addressing some of these things in a workable fashion, not only within the sporting endeavor but also in the wider community.

It is all about is gender-affirming care, which is a supportive form of healthcare. It consists of an array of services that can include medical, surgical, mental health, and other non-medical services for transgender and nonbinary people. While some of this talk is about transgendered folk. Some of the issues just simply exist between what we will refer to in the future as the biological sexes. But as well here shortly, it goes much further than that. Research demonstrates that gender-affirming care improves the mental health and overall well-being of gender-diverse children, adolescents, and adults, which is why it's becoming a key feature now in health care generally and increasingly in school.

But as we will see shortly, with that comes a few little issues that are going to need to be addressed moving forward. What is gender neutrality? It is the idea that gender should play absolutely no part in social roles and structures, gender identity, official policies, language, and other social constructions or institutions. It aims to abolish the idea that genders can play only certain roles and it propagates the idea that instances of discrimination can be minimized if not utilized completely by forwarding the idea that gender has no place in the assignment of social roles. Now sport plays such a huge part in our social well-being and our social presence that, you know, it is just timely that these issues have been raised and are being addressed within the environment of sport and the way sport operates.

Sports Equity is about fairness in sport, equality of access, recognizing inequalities, and most importantly, taking steps to address them. Which is why we're having this talk today. It is about changing the culture and the structure of sport to ensure that it becomes equally accessible to everyone in society and that is probably the bottom line for this talk today.

You may be getting a little bit of a flair that there are some legal ramifications to all of this and there are making distinctions and or treating unfairly a specific group by definition discrimination. Giving one particular group opportunities which are not available to all groups is another discrimination that can be an opinion or an attitude or the way we display dislike towards a group or an individual and this can be on the basis of gender, skin color, race, ethnicity or other factors.

Then obviously acting upon prejudice is also a form of discrimination. This particular issue with gender ties nicely into the broader concept of cultural differences, which this unit in the ICSC represents. I am one of the heads of, where is this the head of the research for FICS and someone who has done a fair bit of research, I have just come across this recently that some of the biggest journals in the world now are now mandating a requirement for sex and gender reporting within research that is published in the

journals. This is another example of how these ideas and being enacted by various quite established groups to create change moving forward.

I think that was a good one there that just came across my desk recently, so, excuse me, there are legal and etiquette issues here. Let's start having a look at some of that, you know, when you were born, a doctor or clinician assigned you the male or female label based on essentially a look at your genitalia. Now, sex designation is just not that simple. Overwhelming evidence shows that sex is not binary. There isn't just the male and the female, and it does not capture complex biological, anatomical, and chromosomal variations that occur within the human body.

Because of these facts, there is a growing movement to remove sex designation from birth certificates, although that is meeting with different states of approval in various places around the world. Variations, just to provide a little bit of information now on the scope of these issues. Variations in genital anatomy happen more frequently than you might think. It's point 1 to point 2 of births annually, this is U.S data, but it is similar in Australia and probably other places as well.

Other sex traits don't necessarily help either. Doctors examining the reproductive organs find people with both a vagina and testes and those born without any gonads. Even karyotyping which is a lab procedure used since the 1950s to evaluate an individual number and type of chromosomes really doesn't help either. Just to mention a few Turner Syndrome is a person born with a single X chromosome. Klinefelter syndrome is a person born with a combination of XXY chromosomes, and there are many others as well, so once again, there is no simple answer for how we describe all of this.

When we are looking at human diversity, the concept of binary categories of "male" and "female" are essentially incomplete and inaccurate. Sex designation rather than a two-size fit all is actually on a spectrum. Up to 1.7 percent of the U.S population which is more than 5 million Americans have anatomy and physiology that present intersects traits. That came across as a very high number to me and certainly something which needs to be represented in the institutions of our society. Those with intersex traits who are assigned at birth to be female, or male can experience medical care that harms them both physically and psychologically. From that to bring it back to the perspective of sport, the International Olympic Committee uses cut-offs on hormone levels to determine who plays in women's sports.

As a result, some of these athletes have been banned from participation. Now, we are going to talk a little bit further about that because again it is not as simple when we get up to the top levels. Let us look at diversity. Governments around the world have begun to acknowledge this sex diversity. Medicine is also changing with this change. Society at large has been essentially slow to move beyond the use of binary categories and the evidence shows that using male and female as the only option on birth certificates is not consistent with scientific reality, so it is not an evidence-based concept.

Let us talk about a few key definitions now that link at the bottom there has an extensive list of terms that are used in this discussion, which you can refer to at a later time, but biological sex is the binary involvement that includes chromosomal, hormonal, and anatomical components. The gender or gender role refers to societal attitudes and behaviors associated with the two sexes, it is learned context-specific varies from one culture to another and I would also say religious as well and is dynamic and changeable.

Gender identity on the other hand refers to a person's understanding and experience of their own gender. Gender bias is the inclination or prejudice for against one group or person which may be unconscious. Intersexed individuals have ambiguous genital anatomy, think the spectrum again. People with intersex variation may or may not identify as male or female identify as both or between, or neither genders and at different times. Transsexuals are raised as one sex while emotionally identifying with the other sex. Transgendered describes an identity adopted by those who are uncomfortable with the gender of their birth.

There are a lot of definitions here that are used commonly in the discussion of gender issues and maybe it will be worth looking some of those up. All of that leads to stereotypes and stereotyping which are typically based on gender roles and societal norms. Gender roles and norms are never neutral or static they evolve. They are usually negative, contribute to gender-based discrimination, determine expectations for women and men in fairly narrow categories, and predetermine control over resources, and allocation which is where a lot of the discrimination actually lies.

What are the causes of gender problems? Poverty, illiteracy, patriarchal societal values, social customs, beliefs and practices, and a lack of awareness among women. That little picture there is I think a good example here where Dad pushing a child on a swing gets the scripter, he is a cool dad he is out spending time but if the female or the mother is doing the same thing, that are not quite get the same positive, they just being a mom, that is what moms do. There is an unfair stereotype being applied there.

Now some of the challenges that arise because of inequality that come from the stereotyping include inferior access to education, employment, and remuneration. There is job segregation, there are legal protections, bodily autonomy, poor medical care, religious freedom, and outdated societal customs, beliefs, and practices. That is a fairly all-encompassing description of limitations that come about from inequality and the acts thereof.

We are talking about human rights here. Every human is entitled to live with dignity and without fear, it is essential for development, poverty, reduction, and human progress in the broadest sense. Whilst that may not be something that is top of mind when it comes to First World Nations, it certainly is in others, in sports crosses all of these boundaries and thus we need to be aware of those. Yeah, gender equality is a concept, which is an important one and essentially it is equal ease of access to resources and opportunity. Equal access to economic outcomes, decision-making, and remuneration. The inclusion into societal political, administrative, legal, economic, sporting, and other structures and functions of society.

Now, I presented an example here, which was one I recalled when I was asked to do this talk, so, I went and found out a little bit about her, about the South African athlete Caster Semenya. This was published by Miss Peale in the globe, a couple of years back and the bait in sports over the definition of womanhood is paternalistic and hypocritical. Just to give you a bit of a background of this athlete. Agenda test revealed she had a y chromosome, which normally makes a person mighty. She also had complete androgen insensitivity syndrome or CAIS, which prevented her body from responding properly to testosterone and caused her to develop as a woman. The Spanish athletic Federation got her test results in 96, just before a major competition that would have set her up for a run at the Olympics.

Though she won the 60-meter hurdles, the Federation declared her ineligible for the 1988 summer games and soul. The international Olympic Committee has struggled with cases like this variously using her patterns of chromosomes, individual genes, and other factors in their long-running attempt to distinguish men from women. All these tests have been discarded, so, that was a very high-profile example of the Angst that this individual went through, and basically her removal from what she did. Now the key point here in another tool in an organization Intersex International Australia was that these athletes are not doping, they haven't cheated and they simply wish to compete as they were born and raised and I think that is a key point here, that it is not their fault what is happening, and so, we are going to move further down this discussion now to talk about what are the actual differences.

From the perspective of the female, we are all aware of the increase in estrogen relaxants and reduce testosterone. Probably the main issue there in the physiological effects is the increased potential ligamentous, laxity that occurs there which has been associated with the increased injury rate. From the sort of cardiopulmonary system, you know essentially males have it better, in that regard, there is reduced stroke volume, cut out the output you know, etc. VO₂max for the female when compared to

the male. Then when we go through to the musculoskeletal system, there are big differences, females are not as strong. They don't have a greater speed of contraction, they have increased resistance to fatigue, which is the plus side I suppose, they have reduced bone strength, and they have improved through my wreck. All these factors here may or may not relate to injury difference.

Most of this is essentially just due to body structure and most of the differences are sport specific rather than sex specific with the exception of probably ligamentous laxity and some biomechanical factors such as a wider pelvis in a female which changes angles and biomechanical factors that are occurring in the lower limb. They are probably associated with injury but otherwise we are looking at just simply that one human, maybe a larger human than another human, so we will talk about that.

The body mass differences and here I went to the world rugby, they have a paper on transgender issues, and it was about the mass differences. In Rugby, the international level men's players are 40 percent heavier than typical female players. That is a huge amount, amongst the four, the heaviest one percent of women players are smaller than the typical forward. The heaviest one percent of women's backs are smaller than the typical men's backs and the lightest one percent of men's forwards are approximately equal in mass to the heaviest ten percent of women's forwards.

We are dealing with much bigger and larger humans here. This is got real implications for injury because if we are now going to put forward an individual who is transitioning from say a male identity to a female. This person is a larger person than the others that they're likely to encounter, and that has implications for injury because the masses are the largest the accelerations are the largest. Then, for example, the potential for concussion and head injury is greater because the forces are greater on a smaller rival. It is not as simple as men playing men, and females playing females, it is much broader.

Looking at the performance differences which I found quite interesting through a number of different sports, as you review the functional differences there and when we are talking about strength, it is above 50 percent for most of it, punching power is 160 percent different. When we start looking at performance differences for various swimming, and rowing, okay, their lower level is around ten or so. Then tennis, golf, and cricket in a twenty-odd percent. Then when we start talking about the big Power Sports like baseball pitching, powerlifting, rugby scrum forces the differences can be quite substantial. This is raising an issue that the categorization is not the only factor here and how that occurs.

If we look at sex-based differences in sports. On the left there we have got swimming speed skating, cycling, running, Ironman Triathlon, and jumping sports. You can see anywhere from five to almost 20 percent differences in sex-based differences. For those that are transitioning from one category to another regardless of direction, what we not dealing with here is a Level Playing Field and that is where the problems lied.

This is as I said this is where this all gets started to get interesting. This slide here presents information on transgendered women who have undergone at least 12 months of suppression of testosterone, and then they have been retested to assess their retained advantage over females. As you can see there, those retained advantages are substantial. We are talking anywhere from 10 to 40 percent improvements or not. They would make improvements, but 10 to 40 percent differences in strength and other variables, so, it comes back down now to the concept of fairness and that is a legal doctrine, law, justice, and fairness.

Whilst it may be possible to place people in different categories, it then becomes an issue. Is it fair for everyone to do so? This is really the big issue I think that is facing the OIC and other international groups at the moment because of the potential for injury and lawsuits that come thereafter and all of these

types of things. This is by no means a simple solution, but I introduced this concept to you here simply to make the point that I think that this will evolve in the next 10 to 20 years and categories will probably evolve for persons in different categories in between the two binary ones. But this is very much what is this space scenario.

Let us have a look at something that now becomes a little bit more, what can we do about all of this? In 2007 International Olympic Committee consensus statement on sexual harassment and abuse in sport described sexual harassment and abuse as a range of behaviors that might include sexually suggestive conversation, jokes innuendo, and similar acts that are offensive degrading, or unwanted such acts actions may not always set specifically into a legal context but can form sexual harassment and bullying.

Then we move on to homophobic abuse, another form of harassment. Homophobic comments and slurs range of negative attitudes and feelings towards homosexuality or people or being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, it can be expressed as antipathy, contempt, prejudice, aversion or hatred may be based on irrational fears, and usually is, and is sometimes related to religious or cultural beliefs. Either way, it is still abuse.

Then there is an even probably trickier area, which is then probably beyond the scope of this talk. But I throw it in there for completion and this is the hormonal treatment of young people. Social gender transitioning is a highly specialized area for medical practitioners and it is not something that probably a thorough party should enter into other than to be supportive of the individual. Prescription of puberty blockers and other things, gender reassignment surgery is probably not a treatment option for most based on the currently available evidence. I am not going to go into that too much other than the say it is an issue and particularly in children.

We then bring up other issues and this is the term punishment which may have legal ramifications. The use of punishment particularly in children's sports may have sexual abuse implications, physical tasks, and/or abusive language used as punishment in a sporting environment may in some cases be interpreted as abuse or harassment. No one would sanction a coach for striking an athlete, there is some uncertainty about what constitutes psychological punishment. This is another target territory essentially in the legal area. I hope that we are forming the opinion that this is not quite as black and white as what a lot of us felt, it maybe is and that there are a lot of subtleties to this discussion that requires some informed opinion as opposed to just an opinion.

Let's look at some common issues from a practical perspective. Are there adequate toilets, and change rooms? The uniform and dress standards, what about it? Records, logins, and emails now should address name changes that are legal or otherwise medical status, sick leave, and co-worker reactions. Most people are not well-versed in these concepts and often speak out of turn, develop standard responses, and encourage staff to raise concerns privately.

As an organization, FICS introduced this talk to basically provide understanding and recognition of the problem and this is an important sort of moving forward. The concept of confidentiality is key with transgendered athletes or really anyone for that matter and speaking out of turn about any aspect of this is strongly discouraged and maybe illegal and likely it is something to note moving forward. Moving a person to a different position in an organization where not requested may be seen as unfavourable treatment.

Requiring a person to use a toilet or change room that does not match their gender is gender identity discrimination by definition. Refusing time off for medical appointments could be impairment or gender identity discrimination. Refusing to organize a name change as the person's request on personal files,

emails, IDs, patient files, etcetera could be indirect discrimination. I hope you are getting the feeling here that whilst from a societal point of view and our sports point of view, we should be doing the right thing but increasingly now doing the wrong thing is starting to attract legal attention and which if for no other reason is probably a good reason why you should not be doing that sort of thing.

It was an interesting paper I found that suggested, this was a study on perpetrators of gender-based and sexual harassment in Canadian orthopedic surgeons. Now, when you look down the list there are highlighted two points. The two biggest areas of harassment were from peers and were from patients. This is a big problem right across the spectrum of medicine and it comes from patients other Allied Health Care, peers, supervisors, underlings, and the whole lot. This is a societal problem, which is basically being manifest in medicine and so we as part of that group need to take affirmative action to address some of those issues.

Hints the talk, and that starts with language, language is important, changing gender-insensitive language can be modified to be more sensitive. A policeman is a police officer. A businessman is a business person or manager or executive. A cameraman is a camera crew. Chairman is a chairperson. A cleaning lady is a cleaner or a housekeeper and so many of these gender-insensitive terms have a real stigma associated with them, and whilst they may have become habit through just repetitive use over time. It is something that we should think about and look to change in our language.

What can we do about all of this? Recognition is one thing, but action where we begin to incorporate these positive approaches and then begin to take steps to remove negative ones. Overtly not just covertly is important and then ultimately, we hope to get some transformation in the way we all behave and interact.

How can we help? Develop a shared vision and consensus on gender equality objectives. Involve all relevant stakeholders in dialogue on objectives and activities. Make long-term commitments to stakeholders and related activities, assess and strengthen stakeholder capacity for gender responsive and participatory analysis, planning and implementation.

For example, FICS fosters diversity, inclusion, and respect in the workplace. We recognize, appreciate, and utilize the unique insights, perspectives, and backgrounds of each staff, practitioner, and student member including gender-diverse employees, participants, and volunteers. That is an example of how we want to make a positive statement about this that will be reflected within the organization of FICS moving forward.

How can we be a bit more equitable with all of this? We need visible inclusion policies, in the previous slide. Then we need to on our forms. We need to describe nonbinary terms and that should be an option moving forward. Job interviews and other participation should be open to all persons. Managing workplace transitions to affirmation, appoint a case manager to assist. You may also require a support person. What questions to ask and what options to discuss, right?

Pronouns are important, so this is the language itself and you will notice at the start of my talk here that I have listed my pronoun as his him. The act of making assumptions even if correct sends a potentially harmful message, it can be offensive or harassing to guess someone's pronouns and refer to them using these pronouns, if that is not how they want to be known. If you don't know just simply ask politely if you get it wrong, so, I'm sorry, and then just ask how would you like to be known. It is a common courtesy more than anything that we may need to make this a little more systematic and then make your own pronouns known to emphasize someone that is making theirs known. There is more information on the use of pronouns at that link. All those links there for you to view.

Information for colleagues, names, and pronouns ask if you're wrong apologize and get it right next time. What about the past, asked how they would like to be described, names and pronouns don't assume. Now, what is not a cool question to ask, right? You do not ask about personal anatomy in any way, shape, or form. You would not do that anyway and should not do it for this particular group, whether the person has or intends to have surgery, whether the person is on hormone treatment or not, the person's sexuality, none of which, it is all personal information and if the individual wishes to share it, they will. Otherwise do not ask about it, do not make jokes, and do not gossip.

A lot of this is just common sense that a person received the same treatment when transitioning, it is business as usual, if they want to change something for a particular reason, they will tell you and that is okay. I think it is just treating everyone like an equal and being respectful and in which case, I think everybody gets along famously.

I will just finish up the talk by saying that change takes time and work. And we do have to get out of our own old habits, which may initially be perceived as being not particularly welcome in some circles, but that is okay. We need to persist with that and begin to change our IDs, and then slowly move towards integrating the new IDs into the establishment IDs, and once that actually begins to happen, we will actually arrive at a new status, which will be more inclusive and more helpful for all involved.

At this time, I would just like to thank you for your attention and good luck with the future.

[END]