

STEREOTYPE SMASHER

Awareness is the first step
Action is the game

THE GUIDE BOOK



Introduction – Why This Kit Matters

Gender stereotypes and unconscious bias are not just abstract ideas—they shape decisions, opportunities, and workplace culture every day. From hiring to promotions, from language to leadership, subtle patterns of inequality can have a profound impact on individuals and organizations alike.

This kit offers a set of playful, engaging, and thought-provoking tools to:

- Spark conversation and reflection
- Recognize and challenge bias
- Build strategies for equity and inclusion

Designed for HR professionals, managers, team leaders, and employees at all levels, these activities can be used in:

- Informal learning moments
- Training workshops
- Team-building sessions
- Leadership retreats

The kit is built on the principle that learning through play makes difficult conversations easier, safer, and more impactful—because when people are engaged, they are more open to change.

Game Overview

Game	Objective	Interaction Style	Players	Time
Match the Unmatched – Challenge bias. Flip the rules.	Match concepts with definitions to uncover and challenge gender stereotypes.	Competitive or collaborative	2–6	15–40 min
Break Through – Dismantle barriers. Build equity.	Identify and “break” workplace barriers (glass ceilings, walls, chains) by answering knowledge-based questions.	Strategic and competitive	2–4	20–50 min
The Booklets – Reflect. Reframe. Rethink.	Guided reflection on recruitment, communication, workplace roles, wellbeing, and future vision.	Reflective and discussion-based	Solo or group	Flexible (10–60 min)

Facilitator Tip

Each game includes built-in reflection points. Encourage participants to connect the concepts and data with their own workplace experiences—this transforms play into actionable insight.

Match the Unmatched

– Challenge bias. Flip the rules.

Game Objective

To uncover, recognize, and challenge gender stereotypes and discriminatory dynamics in the workplace... one card at a time!

The game encourages reflection, dialogue, and teamwork, promoting awareness and action.

How to Play

The classic memory game format:

Lay all the cards face down on the table. Each player takes turns flipping over two cards, trying to match a concept with its definition. If the match is correct, the player keeps the pair; if not, the cards are turned face down again. To check if the pair is correct, the symbols on both cards (concept and definition) must match. Players are therefore required to self-correct each turn.

-OR-

Open Play format (All Cards Face Up)

Lay all the cards face up on the table so that concepts and definitions are visible. Players take turns matching the correct pairs and are encouraged to briefly reflect on each term, share examples, or ask questions.

Levels of Difficulty

The game is divided into 4 progressive levels (9 pairs of cards per level) plus 1 bonus level (13 cards):

- Level 0 – Basic Definitions

Gender, sex, race, disability...

Recommended as a starting point to build familiarity and break the ice.

- Level 1 – Basic Concepts

Stereotypes, gender roles, diversity...

Recommended for refreshing the most important concepts.

- Level 2 – Biases and Discrimination

Mother wall bias, double standard, gender pay gap...


Designed to explore more specific workplace biases and inequalities.


- Level 3 – Structures and Policies

Gender mainstreaming, intersectionality, glass cliff...

Advanced level, to reflect on systemic and transformative solutions.

Alternative Game Modes

 Progressive Play – Start with Level 1 and move up as the group becomes more confident.

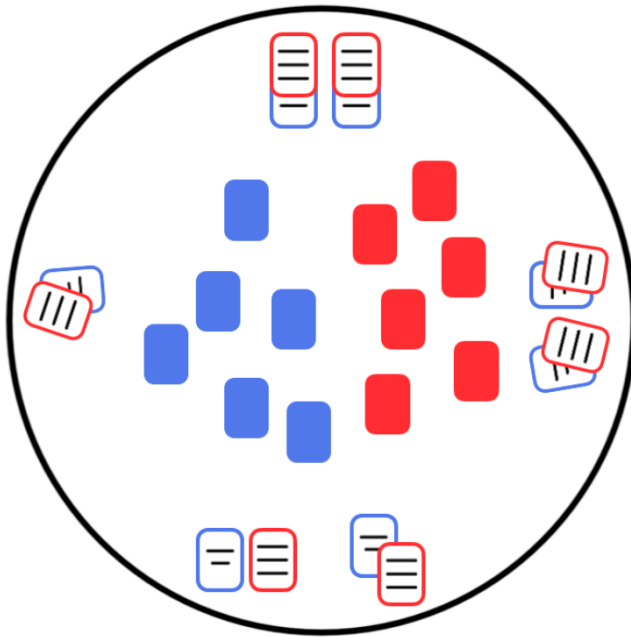
 Integrated Play – Mix all the cards together for a more challenging and collaborative experience. Ideal for workshops focused on dialogue, accessibility, or collaborative learning.

Optional Variants for Open Play:

- Timed Challenge – Compete in teams to find the most pairs in a limited time.
- Keyword Match – Before matching, players try to explain the concept in their own words.
- Storytelling – After a match, the group creates a short real-life or fictional scenario where the concept applies.

Important!

No smartphones during gameplay — except at the end, for fact-checking, exploring concepts and phenomena or updated data. (Hopefully, some of the data will improve over time!)



Glass Ceiling

An invisible barrier
preventing women from
reaching top leadership
positions

Break Through

– Dismantle barriers. Build equity.

Game Objective

To uncover and dismantle workplace barriers—like glass ceilings, invisible walls, and heavy chains—through knowledge, dialogue, and strategic thinking. Each “hit” represents a concrete step toward inclusion and equality, turning obstacles into opportunities for change.

Why “Break Through”?

This game reimagines the classic grid challenge format, replacing warships with symbolic barriers and transforming the goal into a collaborative mission for workplace equity.

How to Play

Setup

- Each player receives a sheet with two grids (A–I, 1–9):
 - Own Grid: contains their barriers, already placed in secret.
 - Opponent Grid: blank, used to record shots and breakthroughs against the opponent.
- Each player will have the following barriers on their own grid:
 - 1 barrier of length 3
 - 3 barriers of length 2
 - 1 barrier of length 1
- A shared deck of multiple-choice question cards is placed face down at the center of the table. The correct answer is in **bold**.


Turn Sequence


1. A player calls out a grid coordinate (e.g. “C4”).
2. The opponent checks their grid:


- If no barrier is present → the turn ends, and play passes to the opponent.
 - If a barrier is present → the opponent draws a card from the deck and reads the question aloud.
3. The active player answers:
- Correct answer → the barrier at that coordinate is “broken through.”
 - Incorrect answer → the card is placed under the deck, and the turn ends.

Players are free to decide how they wish to mark hits and misses on their grids.

Alternative Game Modes

 Chain Mode: If a player answers correctly, they may immediately call out another coordinate and continue until they miss.

 Cooperative Mode: Instead of competing, players work together to dismantle all barriers within a limited number of total turns.

 Reflection Mode – After breaking a barrier, discuss how that challenge shows up in your workplace and what real action could address it.

Important!

No smartphones during gameplay—except at the end, for fact-checking, exploring concepts, and checking for updated data. (Hopefully, the barriers will shrink in real life over time!)

YOUR TABLE

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									

OPPONENT'S TABLE

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									

Guess where your opponent's barriers are positioned. Remember they have a total of five barriers, just like you (1 barrier 3 squares long, 3 barriers 2 squares long and 1 barrier 1 square long). As soon as you smash a barrier, make a drawing on the "Opponent's table".

Booklet Series

– Reflect. Reframe. Rethink.

Objective

To support individual and collective reflection on how gender stereotypes and biases influence decision-making, communication, structures, and the future of work.

Each booklet invites players to pause, question, and grow.

How to Use the Booklets

Each booklet focuses on a specific theme and target group. They are not traditional games, but interactive tools for introspection, discussion, and transformation. Ideal for personal reading, team workshops, leadership retreats, or HR strategy sessions.

The Booklets

1. Team and Hiring – For HR and Recruiters

e.g.

Have I defined the selection criteria?

2. Communication and Language – For Everyone

e.g.

Do I encourage active listening training to improve meeting equity?

3. Roles and Opportunities – For Managers

e.g.

Do I ensure that promotion criteria are transparent and standardized?

4. Workplace and Wellbeing – For Everyone

e.g.

At work, do I join in when someone makes a joke that could put a colleague down, or do I choose not to laugh along?

5. Vision and the Future – For Managers

e.g.

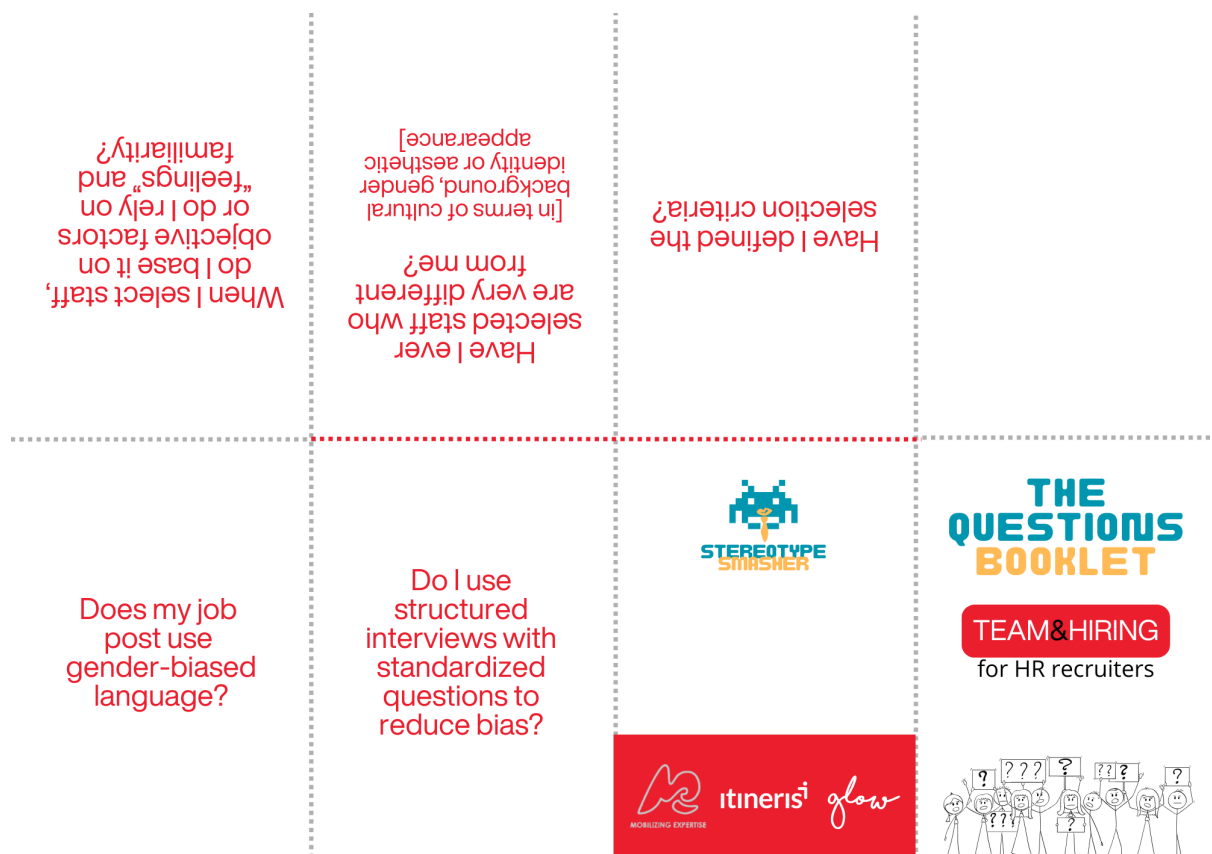
Have I involved people with different experiences and identities in shaping this project?

Optional Uses

- Workshop Circle – Each participant picks a question and shares a reflection.
- Writing Prompt – Use a question to inspire a journaling or creative response.
- Debrief Tool – Use after a game to deepen understanding and anchor learning.

Important!

These booklets are meant for open, honest reflection. No phones needed—just time, attention, and a willingness to look inward and outward.



Facilitator's Toolkit



Before the session

- Set a respectful and inclusive tone.
- Explain that the goal is learning, not testing knowledge.
- Prepare to handle sensitive topics with care.



During the session

- Ask open-ended questions: “How does this show up in your workplace?”
- Encourage multiple perspectives.
- Watch for dominant voices—invite quieter participants to share.



After the session

- Gather feedback.
- Share follow-up resources or reading.
- Encourage participants to commit to one action step.



Other uses of games

- Customize the games with other content. You can find blank templates as extra material.
- Feel free to use the materials for other activities, e.g., use the memory cards to play Pictionary or Taboo, or use the ‘Break Through’ question cards for a quiz.