

2024-1-ES02-KA210-YOU-000253858, Erasmus+

# The patriarchal system and gender equality



## Theory and definition

To thoroughly grasp the concept of gender equality, it is essential to begin by defining what we mean by gender. Gender is understood as a social construct that assigns specific characteristics and behaviors to men and women, thereby establishing norms for how they are expected to express and act based on their biological sex. This construct is dynamic and intrinsically linked to particular historical, social, and cultural contexts, meaning it is neither static nor universal. Although gender has traditionally been associated in a binary manner (men and women), it is fundamental to recognize that there are diverse other gender identities that transcend this model, demonstrating that gender is not an immutable biological phenomenon, but rather a characteristic that evolves and varies across different communities and over time.

**Gender equality** is defined as the objective of ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their gender

identity or expression, enjoy the same rights, opportunities, and equitable treatment. Its central purpose is to dismantle all forms of inequality and prevent one gender from being privileged or placed in a position of power over another.

**The patriarchal system** is the framework that generates and perpetuates these power dynamics, granting men an advantageous position over women and other gender identities. It is referred to as a "system" because it is an amalgamation of social standards, legal norms, and cultural guidelines that impose, restrict, and regulate the behaviors and positions individuals can occupy in society.

Gender, in this context, is a key manifestation of patriarchy, as it is through gender that characteristics and expectations considered "feminine" and "masculine" are defined and assigned.

This system manifests in daily life in multiple ways, among which stand out:

- The persistence of expectations that relegate women to the sphere of household care and domestic tasks.
- The salary differences between men and women, even when performing work of equal value, known as the gender pay gap.
- The disproportionate representation of men in leadership roles in politics and the business world.
- The minimization and normalization of gender-based violence in various social contexts.

## **Theoretical foundations of the concepts of patriarchy and gender equality**

The understanding of patriarchy is based on theories developed by the feminist movement and gender studies. These currents analyze how the social system has configured differentiated and inequitable roles, rights, and responsibilities for men and women. Patriarchy, from this perspective, is a system where cisgender (a person whose gender assigned at birth is the same as their current gender identity) men have historically maintained a position of superiority, exercising greater power and control over women and other gender identities. Consequently, the patriarchal system is the cause of inequalities in diverse spheres such as employment, politics, economics, culture, and social interactions.

Various feminist theorists have delved into the study of patriarchy. For example, Kate Millet, in her influential work "Sexual Politics," exposes how patriarchy operates not only in the political and economic spheres but extends to culture and sexual interactions, revealing the deep root of gender inequality in personal and family relationships. On the other hand, Silvia Federici, in "Caliban and the Witch," examines the intricate connection between patriarchy and the global economy, emphasizing how the sexual segregation of labor and the subordination of women have been crucial elements for the capitalist structure.

The concept of **gender equality** is based on the premise that all individuals must possess the same rights and opportunities.

This implies ensuring that every individual, regardless of their sex or gender identity, has equitable access to personal development, employment, and full participation in the community. A concept intrinsically linked to gender equality is intersectionality, proposed by Kimberlé Crenshaw. Intersectionality posits that the understanding of equality cannot be limited to the gender perspective but must integrate its connection with other dimensions such as race, social class, and sexual orientation, as these categories interact to create unique experiences of privilege or discrimination. Similarly, Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity suggests that gender is not an immutable notion but a social construct that manifests and is reinforced through our daily actions and behaviors.



# How to contribute to the promotion of gender equality in communities

Youth workers play a fundamental role in fostering and disseminating gender equality. Their closeness to young people in community, recreational, and educational contexts allows them to be effective agents of change. Actions to promote equality can be approached from a personal perspective, in interaction with young people, and at the community level:

## At a personal level:

- **Continuous training in gender equality:** Acquiring knowledge and skills in this area is essential. This implies not only seeking formal training but also staying informed and maintaining an open mind by reading about feminism and equality issues.
- **Analysis and reflection on personal biases:** It is crucial to engage in self-awareness to identify and understand one's own biases. By doing so, one can recognize how, in one way or another, the norms and laws of the patriarchal system have been internalized and adopted.

## When interacting with young people:

Integrate a gender perspective into activities:

- **Design and implement debates, games, and dynamics** that challenge traditional gender norms and expectations, promoting a broader and more flexible vision.
- **Foster open and safe dialogue:** Create environments where young people feel comfortable and confident sharing their experiences, concerns, and questions about gender, without fear of judgment or stigmatization.
- **Use diverse and inclusive materials:** Select and use books, films, music, and educational resources that offer varied representations of gender diversity and actively question traditional roles.
- **Visualize diversity:** Ensure that all activities acknowledge, validate, and celebrate the diversity of gender identities, explicitly including LGBTIQ+ individuals.

### At the community level:

- **Active community participation:** Organize and lead workshops and informational talks to raise community awareness about the importance of gender equality and to promote upbringing models free from stereotypes.



- **Prevention and addressing gender-based violence:** Actively work on the promotion and implementation of response protocols for situations of discrimination or gender-based violence, offering support and resources to victims.
- **Be a proactive agent of change:** Actively engage and participate in campaigns, projects, and initiatives that seek to promote gender equality within the community, contributing to real and sustainable transformations

## Key subtopics related to the Patriarchal System and Gender Equality

The patriarchy exerts a direct and profound influence on gender equality, impacting practically every aspect of life. To better understand how this sociopolitical system affects individuals, it is essential to analyze its manifestation and influence in various key spheres of society. Below, four fundamental areas and their relationship with the patriarchal system and gender equality are detailed:

## EDUCATION

**Relationship with patriarchy:** From childhood, the patriarchal system establishes and reinforces gender stereotypes that dictate what is expected of girls and boys. This is evident in how girls are discouraged from pursuing studies in traditionally masculinized fields, such as science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM), while boys are discouraged from participating in activities related to care, arts, or expressing their emotions. This imposition of defined roles from an early age is a patriarchal strategy to maintain differences in access to educational opportunities.

**Impact on gender equality:** By restricting personal and professional growth alternatives based on gender, education under a patriarchal system perpetuates unequal trajectories between men and women. This limits the potential of each individual and reduces diversity in professional and leadership fields, affecting overall social and economic development.



### Key Subtopic

## WORK

**Relationship with patriarchy:** In the workplace, women face structural discrimination rooted in the patriarchal system. This discrimination manifests in the persistence of the gender pay gap and the existence of a "glass ceiling" that prevents them from ascending to positions of power and leadership, despite their skills and qualifications. Furthermore, patriarchy normalizes the responsibility for domestic and care work falling predominantly on women, even when they have paid jobs, which underscores the idea that care work is a female obligation.

**Impact on gender equality:** The imposition of a "double burden" on women (paid work and unpaid care work) limits their economic autonomy and significantly restricts their professional development opportunities. This inequality in the distribution of care work perpetuates economic dependence and the social undervaluation of women's work.

## CULTURE

**Relationship with patriarchy:** The patriarchal system uses culture as a fundamental vehicle to establish and perpetuate rules that assign defined roles to men and women, limiting their freedom of expression and emotional management. Through culture, attitudes of violence (such as harassment) or the devaluation of what is considered "feminine" are normalized. Culture, in its various forms (media, religion, language, traditions), is one of the most powerful channels for the reproduction of patriarchal ideas.

**Impact on gender equality:** By promoting stereotypes, discourses, and behaviors that hinder equality, culture under patriarchal influence not only perpetuates inequality but also supports and normalizes various forms of gender-based violence, making a critical analysis of cultural narratives essential.



### Key Subtopic

## POLITICS AND REPRESENTATION

**Relationship with patriarchy:** Women and LGBTIQ+ individuals face significant barriers to accessing political spaces and decision-making roles. This systematic marginalization prevents their perspectives, opinions, and needs from being properly considered and included in the design and implementation of public policies. The concentration of power in the hands of cisgender men, characteristic of patriarchy, results in the exclusion of other gender identities from spheres of power and decision.

**Impact on gender equality:** The lack of diversity in political representation has direct consequences for gender equality. Political decisions, by failing to incorporate the demands and needs of all people, perpetuate existing inequalities and hinder the creation of a more just and inclusive society.

## Contributions of each area to the understanding of gender equality:

Each of these areas offers an essential perspective for understanding the complexity of the patriarchal system and the importance of gender equality:

The educational aspect allows us to understand how gender roles are internalized from an early age. It reveals how stereotypes are perpetuated in schools, through textbooks, toys, and activities, and how these elements determine the different opportunities available to boys and girls, demonstrating the impact of the patriarchal system on life choices from the earliest years.

The work context illustrates concretely how patriarchy operates in the public sphere. Wage inequality, the existence of the glass ceiling, and the unequal distribution of domestic and care responsibilities are clear examples of how the system maintains economic inequality between genders, while also demonstrating how women's work continues to be socially undervalued.

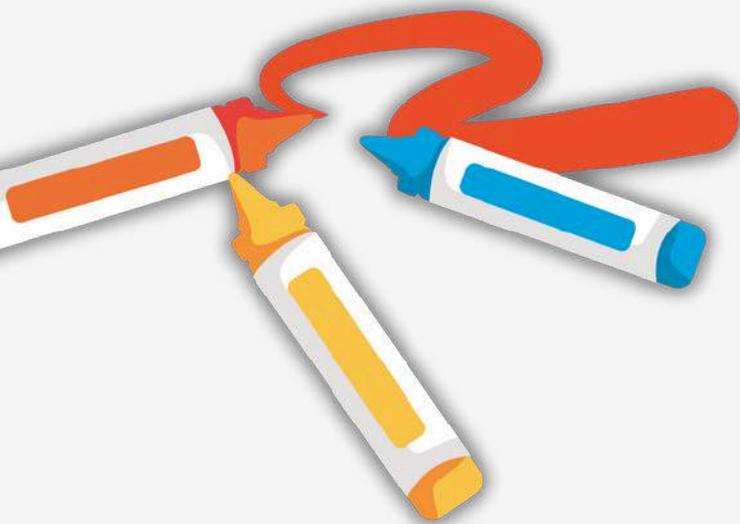
### Contribution

Politics and representation highlight the limited diversity in decision-making spaces, where women and LGBTIQ+ individuals are underrepresented or completely absent. This makes visible how power is unequally distributed and how this distribution directly affects the formulation of policies that could promote gender equality.

The analysis of culture from this perspective helps us identify and understand how social norms perpetuate and reproduce patriarchal ideas. Culture, by determining how gender roles are perceived and by normalizing violence or inequality in various media (communication, religion, language, traditions), becomes a crucial field for intervention in the struggle for equality.

# NON-FORMAL EDUCATION (NFE) ACTIVITIES

Here are several non-formal education activities designed for youth workers to explore the concepts of the patriarchal system and gender equality with young people in a participatory and reflective way. Each activity is detailed to facilitate its implementation.



**Activity: "The line of patriarchy"**

**Duration: Between 40 and 60 minutes.**

**ACTIVITY 1**

**\* Objectives:**

Visualize how patriarchy creates a difference in life opportunities.

Encourage reflection on gender inequalities, including the perspective of those who have had more advantages.

**\* Materials and resources:**

A large space where participants can move in a straight line.

A list of statements (provided in the activity development).

Music to indicate the beginning and end of the activity, creating a suitable atmosphere.



### Number of participants:

Between 10 and 30 people. If the group exceeds 30 participants, it is recommended to divide it into two subgroups for better management and participation.

1

**Introduction (5 min):** All participants are asked to form a straight line, shoulder to shoulder, at one end of the available space.

2

**Explanation of the dynamic (5 min):** The facilitator or youth worker explains that a series of statements will be read. The instruction is simple: if the situation described in the statement has been experienced by the person (i.e., applies to them), they should take a step forward. If, on the contrary, they have never experienced that situation, they should remain in place. Emphasis is placed on the importance of honesty and personal reflection before each movement.

# 3

**Reading statements (20-30 min):** The facilitator reads the statements one by one, allowing a brief time after each for individuals to reflect and decide whether to move forward. Some suggested statements are:

- "Take a step forward if you have never had your way of dressing questioned in relation to your gender."
- "Take a step forward if you have never felt afraid walking alone at night."
- "Take a step forward if as a child you had access to toys and activities without being limited by being a 'girl' or 'boy'."
- "Take a step forward if you have never been interrupted or ignored in an important conversation due to your gender."
- "Take a step forward if household chores have always been shared equally in your home."
- "Take a step forward if you have never felt uncomfortable on the street due to comments about your appearance."
- "Take a step forward if you have never felt that your gender influences how seriously you are taken in academic or work settings."
- "Take a step forward if you grew up watching movies, series, or books with protagonists of your same gender playing diverse and powerful roles."
- "Take a step forward if you have never felt social pressure to get married or have children at a certain point in your life."

- "Take a step forward if in school you were taught about female scientists, artists, and leaders with the same importance as men."
- "Take a step forward if you have never felt that you are expected to act in a certain way because of your gender."
- "Take a step forward if you have never received a negative comment or joke about your gender in a professional or educational setting."
- "Take a step forward if you have always felt you can freely express your emotions without being judged for your gender."
- "Take a step forward if you have never been excluded or minimized in sports activities due to your gender."
- "Take a step forward if you have never been asked questions about your personal or family life in a job interview based on gender stereotypes (e.g., if you are a woman: 'Do you plan to have children soon?')."

4

**Observation and group reflection (10-15 min):** Once all statements have been read, a moment of silence is given for participants to observe their final position in the line relative to others. Subsequently, the facilitator initiates a discussion with questions such as:

"How did you feel seeing your position in the line?"

"Were you surprised by your place in the line? Why?"

"How do you think these privileges (or lack thereof) influence daily life?"

"What can we do, individually and collectively, to build a more equitable society where everyone can advance equally?"

5

**Closing (5 min):** The facilitator summarizes the main reflections and thanks for the participation, reinforcing the importance of empathy and action in building equality.

### **Activity variation (for groups with participants with reduced mobility or who prefer anonymity):**

If there are participants who cannot move physically, or if greater anonymity is desired, the activity can be adapted. Small slips of paper are given to each participant. Instead of taking a step, they mark on each slip how many statements apply to them. Then, the results are shared in an aggregated form (e.g., "X people marked 10 statements, Y people marked 3"), without identifying anyone, allowing for group reflection on differences in opportunities without revealing specific personal information.

**"Feminist memes:  
humor for equality"**

**Duration: 50-70  
minutes.**

**ACTIVITY 2**

**\* Objectives:**

Reflect on patriarchy and sexism through humor and satire.

Experiment with creativity in creating messages that promote gender equality.

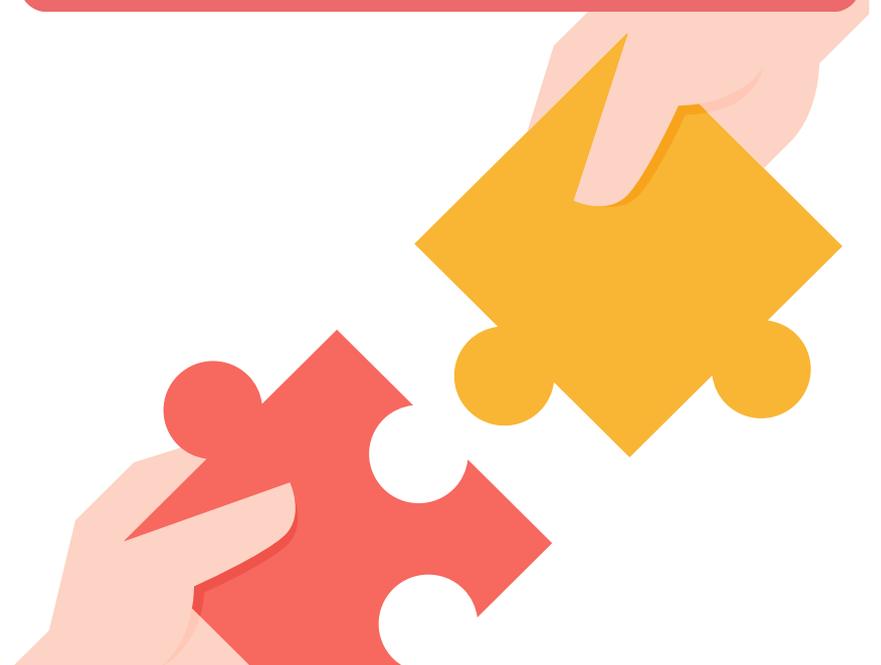
Analyze the impact that memes and viral content have on our perception and dissemination of ideas in daily life.

**\* Materials and resources:**

Examples of memes (printed or digital format) that represent sexism and feminism/equality.

Key phrases or concepts related to sexism and gender equality to inspire creation.

Ambient music to encourage creativity during the activity.





### Number of participants:

Small groups (less than 6 people): Each participant can create their own meme individually.

Large groups (more than 10 people): It is recommended to divide participants into subgroups of no more than 5 people to encourage collaboration and discussion.

- **If the activity is conducted digitally:**

- Electronic devices (computers, tablets, smartphones) with internet access.
- Screen or projector to display examples of memes and creations.
- Online meme creation tools (e.g., Imgflip, Canva, Kapwing) or image editing applications.
- 

- **If the activity is conducted manually:**

- Paper or cardstock for each participant/group.
- Markers, felt-tip pens, colored pencils.
- Magazines or flyers for cutting out images and words (optional, for collage technique).
- Scissors and glue.

# 1

## **Explanation and introduction to memes (15 min):**

- The facilitator introduces the concept of memes as a form of viral cultural communication and their ability to transmit messages quickly and massively.
- Examples of memes are shown, both those that perpetuate stereotypes and sexism and those that promote feminist or equality messages

# 2

## **Trigger questions for initial debate are posed:**

- "Why do some memes perpetuate sexism and patriarchy?"
- "What effect do you think these memes have on our society and on how we think about gender?"
- "How can we use humor and the meme format to spread messages of equality and social awareness?"

# 3

## **Meme creation (25 min):**

The task of creating 1 or 2 memes per group (or individually, depending on group size) that promote gender equality or ingeniously criticize sexism/patriarchy is assigned.

Participants can choose a digital or manual format, using the available materials.

It is encouraged that memes be based on personal experiences, common situations, or ideas that arose during the initial debate. Creativity and originality are key.

# 4

## **Presentation and voting (20 min):**

Each group (or individual participant) presents their memes, explaining the message they wish to convey and why they chose that image or phrase.

An informal vote can be held in various categories, such as "funniest meme," "most original," "most impactful," "best conveying the message of equality," etc.

If the group deems it appropriate and agrees, the created memes can be shared on social media, thus encouraging the dissemination of positive messages about equality.

# 5

## **Closing and final reflection (10 min):**

A space is opened for collective reflection on the activity. Guiding questions can be:

"What did you learn by creating your own meme with a message of equality?"

"What other creative ways can we think of to promote gender equality in our community?"

"Do you think humor is an effective tool for spreading messages of equality and challenging patriarchal ideas? Why or why not?"

**The facilitator closes the activity by thanking participants for their involvement and highlighting the power of creativity and humor as tools for social change.**

**"Gendered worlds:  
gender equality and  
human rights"**

**Duration: 60  
minutes.**

**ACTIVITY 3**

**\* Objectives:**

To promote critical reflection on the interconnection between human rights and gender equality, visualizing an equitable future.

**\* Materials and resources:**

Markers, large sheet of paper (one per group).

**Number of participants:**

No limit (the activity adapts well to large groups by dividing them into subgroups).

**Source:** Adapted from SCICAT Gender Toolkit (<https://www.scicat.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Gender-Toolkit.pdf>)



# 1

## **Introduction and group formation (5 min):**

- The facilitator divides participants into small groups.
- A brief introduction is given to contextualize the relationship between human rights and gender equality, emphasizing that human rights are universal and inalienable, and that gender equality is fundamental for their full realization.

# 2

## **Brainstorming: part one (15 min):**

- Each group receives a large sheet of paper, a marker, and a specific sub-topic title related to daily life and human rights in a gender context (examples: economic rights, reproductive rights, access to education, labor rights, gender stereotypes, civic participation, safety, mental health, etc.).
- Each group is asked to imagine and discuss what that specific area would look like in 30 years if there were no gender inequality or discrimination. They should visualize the ideal situation, without restrictions.
- Groups should write down all ideas that emerge on their large sheet of paper, without censorship or limitations.

# 3

## Brainstorming: part two (10 min):

- Once they have imagined the ideal situation, groups should think about concrete proposals, suggestions, best practices, or even existing positive measures that individuals, communities, or political decision-makers could adopt to ensure that this situation of equality and non-discrimination becomes a reality.
- Proposals should be unlimited and can be as creative and "unimaginable" as they wish, encouraging disruptive thinking.

# 4

## Plenary sharing and discussion (20 min):

- Each group presents its sub-topic, its vision of their "world without inequality" in that area, and the strategies they propose to achieve it.
- After each presentation, a space is opened for other groups to discuss the ideas presented, ask questions, or contribute new perspectives.

# 5

## Closing and final reflection (10 min):

- The facilitator can add additional ideas or present examples of existing initiatives at local, national, or international levels that are working to achieve these visions of equality.
- A final space is opened for participants to share their feelings and learnings about the activity, and to reaffirm their commitment to promoting gender equality in their own lives and communities.



## Resources

The resources presented here are in English to ensure global accessibility and offer valuable perspectives for training and practice.

## Books

### **"Girls Resist!: a guide to activism, leadership, and starting a revolution" by Kaelyn Rich.**

This activism handbook is designed specifically for teenagers and young people seeking to get involved in the fight for social change, justice, and equality. It offers detailed guides on how to choose a cause, plan a protest, raise funds, organize effective meetings, promote awareness on social media, and be an effective ally. Rich, an experienced feminist organizer, shares her vast knowledge and inspires through interviews with other young activists who have brought about change in their communities. An invaluable resource for empowering young women to challenge inequality and make an impact.



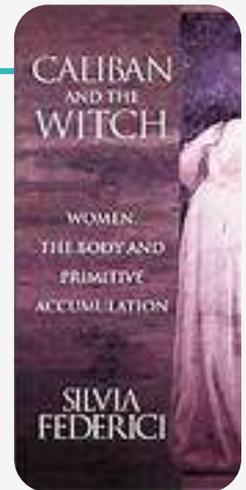
### **"The will to change: men, masculinity, and love" by Bell Hooks.**

In this work, Bell Hooks addresses the universal need for love and affection, and how patriarchal culture often prevents men from connecting with their feelings and their capacity to love. With her characteristic frankness and intelligence, Hooks explores common male concerns, such as the fear of intimacy and the loss of their patriarchal position in society. She argues that men can achieve spiritual unity by reconnecting with their emotionally open side, thus reclaiming rich and gratifying inner lives that have historically been associated exclusively with women. It is a brave work that seeks to help men reclaim their best selves.



### "Caliban and the witch" by Silvia Federici.

This book traces a thread from emancipation from serfdom to subversive heresies in the history of the transition from feudalism to capitalism. Federici argues that the imposition of state powers and the birth of capitalism were achieved through extreme violence. Primitive accumulation, according to her analysis, required the defeat of urban and peasant movements that promoted communism and the distribution of wealth. Their annihilation paved the way for the formation of the modern state, the expropriation of communal lands, the colonization of America and large-scale slave trade, and a war against popular forms of life and culture that primarily targeted women. By analyzing the burning of witches, Federici unravels not only a crucial episode of modern history but also a powerful dynamic of social expropriation directed at women's bodies, knowledge, and reproductive capacity. The work also rescues unexpected voices (those of the subalterns: Caliban and the witch) that resonate strongly in contemporary struggles against the renewal of original violence.



## Videos

### "The urgency of intersectionality" by Kimberlé Crenshaw (TED Talk)

This seminal talk by Kimberlé Crenshaw underscores the critical importance of squarely examining the reality of racial and gender bias, and how both can combine to create even greater harm. Crenshaw coined the term "intersectionality" to describe this phenomenon, explaining that if a person stands at the intersection of multiple forms of exclusion, they are likely to be hit by all of them. In this powerful presentation, she invites the audience to recognize this reality and to speak up on behalf of victims of discrimination. Available at: [https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle\\_crenshaw\\_the\\_urgency\\_of\\_intersectionality?subtitle=es](https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality?subtitle=es)

**"He named me Malala" (Documentary) directed by Davis Guggenheim.**

This documentary offers an intimate portrait of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai, who was targeted by the Taliban and severely wounded by a gunshot while returning home on her school bus in Pakistan's Swat Valley. Malala, then 15, was attacked along with her father for advocating for girls' education, and the attack sparked a global outpouring of support. She miraculously survived and is now a leading advocate for female education worldwide, as co-founder of the Malala Fund. Acclaimed filmmaker Davis Guggenheim ("An Inconvenient Truth," "Waiting for Superman") showcases the commitment of Malala, her father Zia, and their family in the fight for the education of all girls globally, offering deep insight into the life of this extraordinary young woman.

**"Feminists: what were they thinking?" (Netflix).**

This American political documentary, directed by Johanna Demetrakas, features figures such as Laurie Anderson, Phyllis Chesler, and Judy Chicago, among others. Released on Netflix in October 2018, the film features interviews with women of different ages and backgrounds, who share their perspectives and experiences on feminism. It is an accessible and diverse exploration of the different facets of the feminist movement.

## Articles

**"The invisible workload of motherhood is killing me" (Scary Mommy).**

This article addresses the disproportionate mental and physical burden that many mothers shoulder in the domestic and family sphere, even when they have paid jobs. It examines how this "invisible workload" affects women's mental health, well-being, and autonomy, and how it is a direct manifestation of patriarchal expectations regarding the female role. Available at:

<https://www.scarymommy.com/parenting/motherhood-invisible-workload>

**"Female genital mutilation in Mali: the fight to end a deadly tradition" (UN Women).**

This UN Women article highlights the struggle in Mali to eradicate female genital mutilation (FGM), a practice deeply rooted in cultural traditions but which constitutes a grave violation of women's and girls' human rights and health. The text explores the challenges and efforts of activists and communities to end this harmful practice, underscoring how cultural traditions can perpetuate extreme forms of gender-based violence under patriarchal systems. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/feature-story/2025/02/female-genital-mutilation-in-mali-the-fight-to-end-a-deadly-tradition>

## Key Organizations



**UN Women:**

It is the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women globally. It actively works on formulating public policies, promoting women's political participation, eradicating gender-based violence, and defending women's rights in all spheres.

**Website:** <https://www.unwomen.org/en/>



**Amnesty International:**

A global human rights organization that addresses a wide range of issues, including gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive rights, and discrimination against women and LGBTIQ+ people. They conduct campaigns, research, and reports to denounce rights violations and promote justice.

**Website:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/>



**AWID – Association for Women’s Rights in Development:**

An international feminist network that supports organizations and activists fighting for gender justice. Their work focuses on challenging patriarchy, promoting economic justice, and advocating for human rights-based development.

**Website:** <https://www.awid.org/>



**EIGE – European Institute for Gender Equality:**

An official agency of the European Union that provides data, research, and tools on gender equality to inform policymaking. It promotes best practices and monitors progress on the issue in EU member states.

**Website:** <https://eige.europa.eu/>



**WIDE+ – Women In Development Europe+:**

A European feminist network working on gender justice in development, trade, and migration policies. It advocates for inclusive, rights-based, and feminist approaches in Europe and beyond.

**Website:** <https://wideplus.org/>

## Glossary of key terms:

**For clear understanding and common language, the essential terms of this module are presented:**

- **Androcentrism:** A worldview or perspective that places men and masculinity at the center and as the measure of all things, leading to the invisibilization, devaluation, or subordination of women and other gender identities.
- **Cisgender:** Refers to a person whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth. For example, a person born with a vulva, identified as a girl in childhood, and who currently feels like a woman, is a cisgender woman. Similarly, a person born with a penis, identified as a boy, and who today feels like a man, is a cisgender man.
- **Double burden:** An expression used to describe the disproportionate workload that many women take on by having to devote time to both paid work (in the formal or informal market) and unpaid domestic and care tasks (raising children, caring for dependents).
- **Feminism:** A multifaceted political and social movement that seeks to establish equal rights and opportunities for all people, regardless of their gender, challenging patriarchal power structures and gender inequalities.
- **Gender:** A social, cultural, and psychological construct that divides our societies into categories (traditionally men and women), assigning them specific characteristics, roles, and expectations. These categories are often presented as opposing and hierarchical, valuing masculinity more. For example, while cooking at home may not be valued, male chefs in the public sphere are celebrated and rewarded.
- **Glass ceiling:** A metaphor describing the invisible but difficult-to-overcome barriers that limit women's professional advancement. These barriers prevent them from accessing senior management and leadership positions, despite possessing the necessary skills and qualifications.



- **Intersectionality:** An analytical methodology proposed by Kimberlé Crenshaw that examines how different social factors – such as gender, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, disability, among others – interrelate and overlap. This interaction creates unique experiences of discrimination or privilege for each person, which cannot be understood by isolating one category from another.
- **Misogyny:** Deeply rooted hatred, aversion, contempt, or fear towards women, which can manifest in attitudes, behaviors, discourses, or systems that devalue or assault them.
- **Patriarchy:** A historical political and social system that establishes power relations in which men are positioned as the universal subject and women are defined as an "otherness" or subordinates. Under patriarchy, the power to name and define what is "feminine" and what is "masculine" is exercised, thus configuring gender as one of its fundamental expressions.
- **Sexism:** A system of beliefs and practices that promotes the idea that one sex (usually male) is superior to the other, which justifies discrimination and unequal treatment based on sex.
- **Sorority:** Derived from the word "sisterhood," it refers to a relationship of solidarity, support, and sisterhood among women, especially in the shared struggle for empowerment and equality. It is a manifestation of mutual support and alliance among women to confront patriarchy.

no  
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**THANK  
YOU!**

This document was drafted with the participation of :



2024-1-ES02-KA210-YOU-000253858, Erasmus+

# Gender & Roles stereotypes

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## Theory and definition

For a deep understanding of gender dynamics in society, it is crucial to distinguish and define **gender roles** and **gender stereotypes**. Both concepts, though interconnected, describe different facets of how societal expectations influence individuals' perceptions and behaviors.

**Gender roles** refer to the behaviors, tasks, and responsibilities that a specific society expects individuals to assume or perform based on their gender. For example, traditionally, men have been expected to be the main providers and protectors of the household, while women have been assigned the role of caregivers and domestic task managers. It is important to recognize that these roles are not static; they evolve significantly over time and vary across different cultures and social contexts, adapting to changes in modern society.

On the other hand, **gender stereotypes** are simplified and preconceived ideas, or overgeneralizations, about the attributes, characteristics, behaviors,

that women and men are believed to possess or should possess and perform. They constitute rigid assumptions about an entire group of people based solely on their gender. These stereotypes are created and reinforced by dominant gender norms and can lead to biased judgments and discrimination against individuals who do not conform to these pre-established expectations. Although some stereotypes may seem "positive," they all tend to fit into inflexible ideas about what it means to be "masculine" or "feminine," limiting individual expression and potential. For example, the stereotype that "men are strong and unemotional" or that "women are naturally caring and sensitive" restricts people's freedom to express themselves authentically.

Both gender roles and stereotypes can be detrimental, as they curtail individuals' freedom to choose their own paths in life, based on their personal interests, talents, and aspirations, rather than being limited

by outdated or imposed expectations. Over time, many societies have undertaken significant efforts to challenge and dismantle these stereotypes, in order to foster greater equality and freedom for all gender identities.

## Theoretical foundations of gender roles and stereotypes

The understanding of gender roles is deeply linked to the concept of **heteronormativity**.

Heteronormativity describes a hegemonic social norm that justifies the existence of a binary gender (only male and female) as biological, assigning gender based on physical characteristics at birth. Within this ideology, heterosexuality (exclusive sexual attraction between men and women) is defined as the natural and expected orientation.

While gender roles may still be relevant or informative in many lives, they can also have a detrimental impact on other individuals, especially those who do not fit binary expectations. Challenging and dismantling these roles is a crucial step towards improving the ability of **LGBTIQA+** individuals (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Asexual individuals, as well as other gender identities and sexual

minorities) to navigate the world with freedom and safety, and to move towards a more progressive and inclusive future.

The heteronormative ideology is based on the belief that there are two distinct and mutually exclusive genders, and that attraction between them is the only "natural" or "correct" one. This leads to the invisibilization and marginalization of any gender identity or sexual orientation that does not conform to this norm. By challenging gender roles and stereotypes, this binary view is directly questioned, and spaces are opened for the recognition and celebration of human diversity in all its forms.

Women, girls, and LGBTIQA+ identities suffer the majority of the negative impacts of rigid and traditional gender norms, roles, and stereotypes.

They are more likely to experience restrictions on their freedom and mobility, and epidemic levels of violence and harassment, meaning they have fewer opportunities to choose how to live their lives.

The gender stereotypes we hold towards boys and men also influence this.

Stereotypical ideas and negative masculinities about what it means to be a "man" can encourage boys and men to perpetuate this cycle of discrimination and inequality.

## How gender roles affect society

Gender roles affect society in profound and complex ways. While they can provide a sense of structure and order, they also limit individual potential, reinforce inequality, and perpetuate discriminatory practices. Over time, challenging and redefining these roles can help foster a more equitable society where individuals are free to express themselves and pursue opportunities without being limited by traditional gender expectations.

Gender roles significantly impact society by creating and reinforcing stereotypes that can limit people's potential and opportunities based on their gender. For example:

- **Influence on career choices:** Guiding men and women towards certain professions, which often results in gender pay gaps and occupational segregation.
- **Affecting mental Health:** Contributing to mental health issues when people feel pressured to conform to restrictive roles that do not align with their personal identity.
- **Shaping social interactions:** Dictating the dynamics of personal relationships, often leading to power imbalances and inequality.

It is also important to mention the concept of **stereotype internalization**, which means the psychological process by which individuals come to accept and incorporate negative stereotypes about their own social group into their self-concept or identity. This means they begin to believe, consciously or unconsciously, that the negative things society says about their group (based on race, gender, age, disability, etc.)

are true about themselves. For example: a girl who repeatedly hears the stereotype that "girls are not good at math" might start to believe that she is inherently bad at math, even if she is capable. This reinforces social inequality by limiting individuals' sense of possibility.

## Key subtopics related to gender roles and stereotypes

To understand the omnipresence of gender roles and stereotypes, it is essential to analyze their manifestation in various spheres of life. Each of these areas contributes to a comprehensive view of how these social constructs are formed, perpetuated, and affect individuals.



### Gender Roles in Childhood:

**Relationship:** From an early age, boys and girls are socialized with specific expectations based on their gender. This is observed in the toys they are offered (trucks and sports for boys, dolls and care activities for girls) and in the behaviors they are encouraged or discouraged from. These initial messages, transmitted by family, school, and media, shape their future interests and behaviors, often limiting their full development.

**Contribution:** This subtopic highlights the early socialization process and how gender stereotypes are introduced and reinforced from childhood. It emphasizes the long-term effects of these early experiences on individuals' self-concept and future choices.



## Key Subtopic

### Gender stereotypes in the workplace:

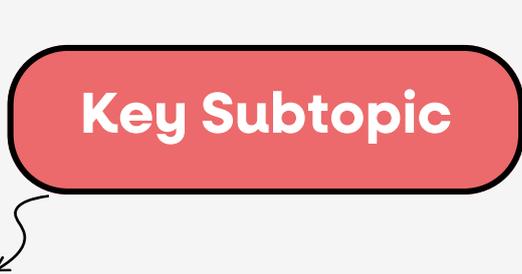
**Relationship:** Stereotypes persist in most industries, dictating which jobs are "appropriate" for men and women. This is manifested in the orientation of women towards care or administrative roles, and men towards leadership or technical positions. This creates barriers to professional advancement, wagegaps, and limits diversity in management positions.

**Contribution:** This subtopic directly connects to how gender stereotypes manifest in professional settings. It demonstrates how societal expectations around gender influence career choices, wage disparity, leadership opportunities, and the perpetuation of gender-based work roles. By focusing on the workplace, it shows the real impact of gender stereotypes on financial and professional outcomes.

### Media representation and gender stereotypes:

**Relationship:** Films, television shows, advertisements, and other media often reinforce traditional gender roles. Women may be portrayed as caregivers or dependents, while men are shown as strong, decisive, or heroic. These representations shape public perception of how men and women "should be," influencing their behaviors and how they are treated in real life.

**Contribution:** Media plays a powerful role in perpetuating or challenging gender stereotypes. Exploring how media reinforces traditional ideas of masculinity and femininity, influencing social expectations and individual behavior, shows how media representations shape gender perceptions and impact real-life behaviors and attitudes.



### Key Subtopic

### Impact of gender stereotypes on mental health:

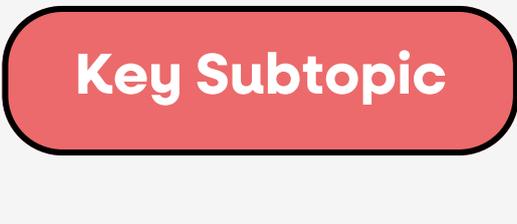
**Relationship:** Pressure to conform to rigid gender expectations can affect mental health. Men may feel the need to be impassive and avoid showing emotions, which can lead to problems like depression or anxiety. Women, on the other hand, may feel the burden of trying to balance career and caregiving roles, leading to stress or burnout. These stereotypes can hinder emotional expression and overall well-being.

**Contribution:** This subtopic directly links gender stereotypes to emotional and psychological well-being. It contributes to the main topic by showing how pressure to conform to gender roles can lead to mental health struggles, such as anxiety, depression, and stress. It emphasizes the damaging effects of rigid gender norms on individuals' self-esteem and overall mental health.

### Gender stereotypes in education:

**Relationship:** Gender biases in education often influence how teachers and peers treat boys and girls. Boys may be praised for being assertive, while girls may be encouraged to be quiet or nurturing. Stereotypes can also affect subject choices, with boys more likely to be encouraged to pursue math and science, while girls are often pushed towards arts or humanities.

**Contribution:** Education is a primary institution where gender stereotypes are formed and perpetuated. This subtopic highlights how gender biases in schools influence academic performance, career aspirations, and subject choices. It contributes by illustrating how early academic experiences can reinforce gender expectations, affecting long-term opportunities and personal development.



### Key Subtopic

### Intersectionality and gender roles:

**Relationship:** This concept highlights how gender intersects with other social categories such as race, social class, and sexuality. For example, a Black woman may experience racial and gender stereotypes that affect her opportunities and experiences in different ways than a white woman. Intersectionality emphasizes that gender roles are not universal and can aggravate discrimination based on other identities.

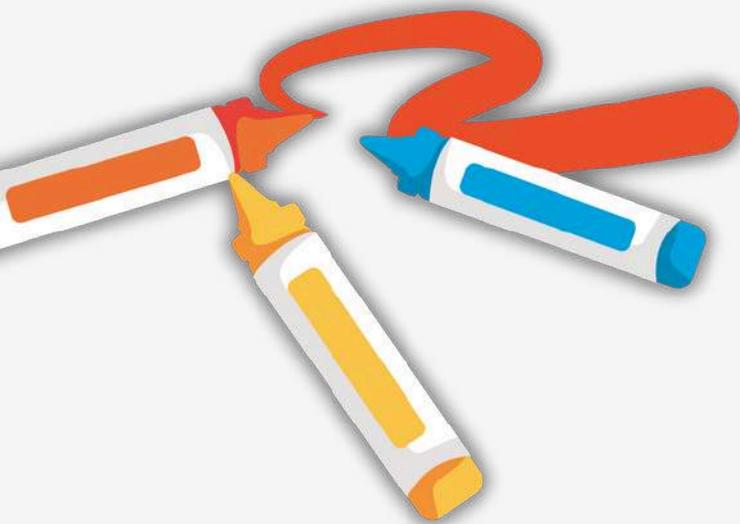
**Contribution:** Intersectionality adds depth to the conversation by showing that gender roles are experienced differently based on a person's race, class, and other identities. It contributes by emphasizing that gender stereotypes are not monolithic and must be understood in a more nuanced way, considering the multiple factors that shape an individual's gender experience.

In summary, all these subtopics contribute to the broader discussion on gender roles and stereotypes by focusing on different angles: how they are formed, perpetuated, and resisted across cultures, professions, media, education, and personal lives. They help illustrate the pervasive and multifaceted nature of gender expectations, the impacts on people's development, and the need for systemic change to address these harmful stereotypes. Each subtopic brings its own insights into how gender norms shape opportunities, behaviors, and identities in complex ways.



# NON-FORMAL EDUCATION (NFE) ACTIVITIES

Here are several non-formal education activities designed for youth workers to explore the concepts of the gender roles with young people in a participatory and reflective way. Each activity is detailed to facilitate its implementation.



## Ways to challenge gender stereotypes

**Duration: 60-90 minutes.**

## ACTIVITY 1

### \* Objectives:

Identify concrete actions to challenge gender stereotypes in daily life.

Understand how stereotypes are harmful to the LGBTIQ+ community.

Encourage critique and rejection of rigid gender roles, promoting personal identities not limited by stereotypes.

\* **Materials and resources:** Paper, pens.

**Number of participants:**  
15 to 30 participants.



# 1

**Introduction (5 minutes):** The facilitator introduces the topic of gender stereotypes and their impact. It can start with a general question like: "What gender stereotypes are you aware of?" or "How do you think gender stereotypes affect our lives?".

# 2

### **Main activity (45-75 minutes):**

Guiding questions: The following questions are posed to the participants:

- "What actions can you, individually, take to challenge gender stereotypes in your daily life?"
- "What actions can we take as citizens to challenge gender stereotypes in our community?"
- "What actions could local authorities or governments take to challenge gender stereotypes at a systemic level?"

**Small group work:** Participants are divided into small groups (4 to 6 people). Each group discusses the posed questions and develops a proposal of actions for each context (individual, citizen, institutional). They are encouraged to think creatively and consider the impact of stereotypes on the LGBTIQ+ community.

**Plenary sharing and group discussion:** After sufficient time, groups gather in the plenary. Each group presents its proposed actions. The facilitator moderates a debate, encouraging discussion about the feasibility, impact, and importance of each action. Deeper discussion can be had on how stereotypes affect the LGBTIQ+ community and how the proposed actions can help mitigate those impacts.

# 3

**Conclusion (5 minutes):** The facilitator summarizes the main ideas and actions discussed, emphasizing the importance of individual and collective action to dismantle gender stereotypes and foster a more equitable society. Thanks are extended to the young people for their participation and commitment.

## Gender lessons in fairy tales

**Duration: 60-90  
minutes.**

## ACTIVITY 2

### \* Objectives:

Raise awareness about gender stereotypes present in fairy tales and children's narratives.

Reflect on how these stereotypes influence young people's development and their view of themselves and society.

\* **Materials and resources:** Flipcharts, pens, white sheets of paper.

**Number of participants:** 10 to 30 participants.



# 1

**Introduction (5 minutes):** The facilitator explains that the activity will explore the fairy tales participants grew up with. A brainstorm is initiated to collect a list of popular fairy tales on a flipchart. Then, participants are divided into groups of 4-5 people. Each group chooses a fairy tale to work with (ensuring no more than one group works with the same tale).

# 2

**Main activity (50-80 minutes):**

**Part 1 - Analysis (30-45 minutes):** Groups return to their spaces and, on a flipchart, create three columns:

- Characteristics/adjectives to describe the male characters in the story.
- Characteristics/adjectives to describe the female characters in the story.
- Characteristics/adjectives to describe the characters in the story who are non-binary or whose gender is not clearly assigned (if any). After approximately 20 minutes, groups return to the plenary. Each group presents its conclusions, and a discussion is opened about how these stereotypes influence children and young people in their development and in their views of themselves and the society around them.

# 2

## Part 2 - Rewriting stereotypes (20-35 minutes):

Groups return to their spaces and, using a simple white sheet of paper, are tasked with rewriting the same story, but this time with stereotypes inverted or completely broken. They are encouraged to be creative and imagine what the story would be like if the characters defied traditional gender expectations. After about 15 minutes, groups gather again in the plenary to read their new versions of the tales.

# 3

**Conclusion (5 minutes):** The facilitator thanks the participants for their stories and reflections. The power of narratives in shaping ideas is highlighted, and how rewriting can be a tool for social change and breaking stereotypes.

## Gender self-reflection

**Duration: 60-75 minutes.**

## ACTIVITY 3

### \* Objectives:

Promote reflection on personal experience in relation to gender, gender roles, and "doing gender" in daily life and in youth activities.

Generate awareness of different gender-related experiences.

Reflect on how gender roles are handled and how one acts in group activities in relation to "gendered" tasks.

### \* Materials and resources:

Printed self-reflection questionnaires (see below), enough space for each pair to have privacy.

**Number of participants:** Open (the activity adapts to any group size by working in pairs).

**Important considerations:** It is recommended that the group knows each other somewhat and that each participant feels comfortable sharing personal stories with at least one person. The methodology may lead to some people "coming out" to their conversation partner. This activity can bring sensitive memories to the surface, so there should be space and time for people to have a moment to themselves shortly afterwards.

# 1

**Introduction (5 minutes):** The facilitator introduces the concept of self-reflection. Explains that participants will pair up with someone they feel comfortable with. It is mentioned that gender diversity in pairs can be very interesting for discussion. It is crucial to emphasize that participants should keep what their partner tells them private. Then, the facilitator distributes the self-reflection questionnaires (see 1. Gender and I, 2. Doing gender in daily life, 3. Doing gender in youth projects).

# 2

**Main activity (40-60 minutes):** Participants can go anywhere they wish to reflect on the questions and share their answers with their partner. They are given a set time to return. The facilitator can choose to use all or only some questions from the three questionnaires.

# 3

**Plenary sharing and reflection (10 minutes):** The group gathers again in the plenary. The facilitator asks participants how the self-reflection was for them and how they feel afterward. It is important to ensure that participants do not overshare details of their private conversations and that no one feels pressured to share if they do not wish to.

# 4

**Closing (5 minutes):** The facilitator concludes the activity, assuring participants that they will be available for some time in case anyone wishes to share anything additional or needs support.



You will find the  
questionnaires  
on the next page!

## Self-reflection questionnaires:

### Gender and i (20 min)

Take a few minutes to answer the following questions individually. Then, take some time to talk about your answers. You decide how much you want to share with the other person.

What does it mean for you to be a man\*, woman\*, non-binary\*, ...?

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What image of being a woman or being a man accompanies you in your daily life?

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What advantages or disadvantages do you have due to your assigned gender?

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Do you feel you have to act a certain way because of your gender?

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What happens when you don't act that way?

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What bothers you about others' behavior regarding gender?

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## Self-reflection questionnaires:

### Doing gender in daily life (20 min)

The goal is not to answer all or many questions. Choose 2 to 4 questions you would like to talk about. Take a few minutes to think about each question individually and then share in the small group.

How do you talk about men\* / women\*?

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To what extent do you judge them by their appearance, their success, their strength, their sexual partners, their intelligence...?

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What topics do you talk about with friends of the same gender? What topics with friends of other genders?

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Have you ever told a person of another gender that you should or could do a task instead of them? What was the task? How did you / the other person react?

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What tasks do you consider important at home?

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Which ones are rather unimportant? Which ones do you usually take on? For which tasks do you make others aware that you have done them?

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Do you think about whether you can sleep with different partners and what others think about it? Have you ever heard people judge such a situation? What was the "problem"?

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Do you sometimes feel judged by your clothes? In what situations do you think beforehand what to wear? Why?

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### **Doing gender in youth projects (20 min)**

The goal is not to answer all or many questions. Choose 2 to 4 questions you would like to talk about. Take a few minutes to think about each question individually and then share in a small group.

What tasks do you perform when you are part of a seminar? Moderating discussions, designing flipcharts, writing minutes, washing dishes, moving tables...?

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How much do you speak in group discussions? Can you always speak when you want to?

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## Resources

The resources presented here are in English to ensure global accessibility and offer valuable perspectives for training and practice.

## Books

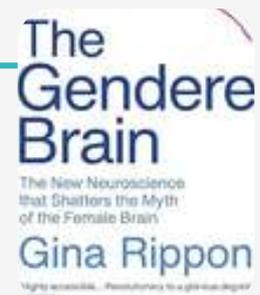
### "Americanah" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

This powerful novel explores themes of identity, race, and immigration through the story of Ifemelu, a young Nigerian woman who moves to America for university. As she navigates life in America, Ifemelu confronts the complexities of being a Black woman in a foreign country and starts a popular blog about race and culture. The novel travels between Nigeria, the US, and the UK, culminating with Ifemelu's return to Nigeria, where she must reconcile her past and present. While not exclusively focused on gender, its exploration of identity and societal expectations offers relevant insights.



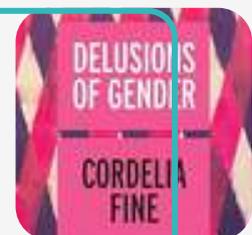
### "The gendered brain" by Gina Rippon.

In this book, cognitive neuroscientist Gina Rippon debunks the myth of a "male" and "female" brain. She uses scientific evidence to show how social conditioning—not biology—shapes gender-related behavior and cognitive differences. It challenges deeply ingrained stereotypes and presents a compelling argument against biological determinism in gender roles.



### "Delusions of gender" by Cordelia Fine.

In this work, Cordelia Fine examines how cultural beliefs and flawed science reinforce gender stereotypes, particularly around intelligence, emotions, and behavior. It's a witty, accessible, and evidence-based book, perfect for readers who want to dismantle the pseudoscience behind gender norms.



## Videos

### **"Miss representation" (2011) – Documentary by Jennifer Siebel Newsom.**

This documentary examines how mainstream media contributes to the underrepresentation of women in positions of power and influence in the United States. It highlights the impact of media gender stereotypes on both women and men, criticizing societal expectations and media portrayals that shape gender roles from an early age.

### **"The mask you live in" (2015) – Documentary by Jennifer Siebel Newsom.**

Considered a complementary piece to "Miss Representation," this film explores how boys are socialized to conform to narrow definitions of masculinity and how this affects their emotional development and relationships. It delves into male gender roles and how stereotypes can lead to emotional repression and harmful behaviors.

## Articles

### **"AI has a stereotypical view of what men around the world look like – and the US depiction is shameful" (New York Post).**

This recent article examines how artificial intelligence generates stereotypical representations of men from different countries, raising a debate about the accuracy and fairness of these stereotypes. It highlights how cultural generalizations and inaccuracies can be problematic, illustrating both the potential and pitfalls of AI in representing global identities. Available at: [https://nypost.com/2025/05/05/tech/heres-what-ai-thinks-american-men-look-like-its-embarrassing/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://nypost.com/2025/05/05/tech/heres-what-ai-thinks-american-men-look-like-its-embarrassing/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

## Podcast

### "Brown don't frown".

This podcast was born out of a personal journey with womanhood. As a British Bangladeshi woman, navigating mainstream feminism often felt exclusionary because it didn't seem to value the experiences or viewpoints that shaped her grandmother's, aunts', mother's, or friends' lives. Through this podcast, the aim is to build a more inclusive discourse, one that breaks down assumptions about different cultures and shines a positive light on the stories of underrepresented women.

### "Call me mother".

Author and journalist Shon Faye talks to leading LGBTIQ+ figures who have something important, interesting, or illuminating to say about what it means to be queer in the world today. Through these conversations, "Call Me Mother" aims to deepen our understanding of queer experiences through the life stories of the elders who have lived them before us, and to show that everyone, queer or not, belongs to a much broader history.

## Key Organizations

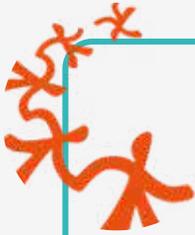
These global organizations are fundamental for promoting gender equality and deconstructing roles and stereotypes, offering valuable resources and support:



### UN Women:

It is the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women globally. It actively works on formulating public policies, promoting women's political participation, eradicating gender-based violence, and defending women's rights in all spheres.

**Website:** <https://www.unwomen.org/en>



**Promundo:**

A global organization that works to promote positive masculinity and redefine traditional male gender roles. It focuses on engaging men and boys in the fight for gender equality.

**Website:** <https://www.promundo.org.br/en>

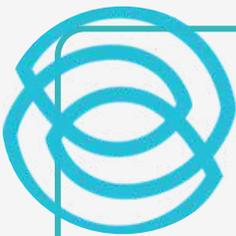


LEAN IN

**Lean in:**

Founded by Sheryl Sandberg, this organization supports women in leadership positions and challenges gender biases in the professional sphere. It provides resources and networks to empower women in the workplace.

**Website:** <https://leanin.org/>



**The representation project:**

This organization uses film and media to challenge stereotypes related to gender, race, and sexuality in mainstream media. Its work seeks to make visible and question harmful media representations that perpetuate gender roles.

**Website:** <https://therepproject.org/>

## Glossary of key terms:

**For clear understanding and common language, the essential terms of this module are presented:**

**Heteronormativity:** The belief or assumption that heterosexuality (sexual attraction between people of the opposite sex) is the only natural, normal, or preferred sexual orientation. It often also assumes traditional gender roles, where people are expected to conform to binary categories of male and female and engage in relationships that fit a male-female dynamic.

**Gender roles:** Societal and cultural expectations about how people should behave, dress, and present themselves based on their perceived or assigned gender (e.g., women as caregivers, men as providers).

**Gender stereotypes:** Generalized beliefs about traits, behaviors, or roles that society attributes to people based on their gender (e.g., "women are emotional," "men don't cry").

**Masculinity:** The set of attributes, behaviors, and roles typically associated with boys and men. These can be socially constructed and vary across cultures and over time.

**Gender expectations:** Presumptions about how people should act, feel, or think based on their gender, often shaping career choices, hobbies, or emotional expression.

**Gender bias:** Preferential treatment or discrimination against individuals based on their gender, often favoring one gender over others in the workplace, media, or education.

**Gender policing:** The act of enforcing traditional gender norms and punishing or shaming those who deviate from them (e.g., criticizing a boy for wearing makeup)



**Gender socialization:** The process by which individuals learn cultural norms and expected behaviors for their gender from early childhood, through family, education, media, and peers.

**Gender binary:** The classification of gender into two distinct and opposing categories (male and female), often ignoring or invalidating non-binary or gender-diverse identities.

**Gender pay gap:** The average difference in earnings between women and men, often due to systemic discrimination, occupational segregation, and unequal care responsibilities.

**Media representation:** How people or groups are portrayed in media, which can influence public perceptions. In the context of gender, it includes visibility, accuracy, and diversity of gender identities and roles.

**Non-binary erasure:** The tendency to ignore, dismiss, or invalidate non-binary identities in culture, language, policy, and media, reinforcing the gender binary.

**Sexual double standard:** The practice of applying different moral judgments to the same sexual behavior depending on a person's gender (e.g., men praised for promiscuity, women shamed for the same).

**Glass ceiling:** An invisible yet difficult-to-overcome barrier that prevents women and marginalized genders from ascending to higher positions of power or leadership, despite their qualifications or achievements.

**Intersectionality:** A framework that recognizes how different aspects of identity (such as gender, race, social class, sexuality) intersect to shape experiences of oppression and privilege.

no  
gender  
gap

**THANK  
YOU!**

This document was drafted with the participation of :



2024-1-ES02-KA210-YOU-000253858, Erasmus+

# Gender based Violence

## Theory and Definition

### What is Gender-Based Violence (GBV)?

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) refers to any situation where someone experiences harm or abuse because of their gender identity, gender expression, or how others perceive their gender. It can happen to anyone, but girls, women, gender minorities, and people whose gender expression doesn't fit societal norms are especially vulnerable. Gender-Based Violence is a serious violation of human rights and can harm both the body and the mind.

Gender-Based Violence encompasses a wide range of violence, occurring in many different contexts and environments and taking various forms. It can be:

- **Sexual:** sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, rape, etc.
- **Physical:** hitting, biting, blows, etc.
- **Psychological:** humiliation, verbal violence, hate speech, sexual harassment, threats, stalking, manipulation, social exclusion, etc.
- **Administrative:** confiscation or destruction of administrative documents (residence permit or

passport, health insurance card, family record book, etc.), preventing the person from carrying out daily procedures or applying for their rights, in order to keep them from being autonomous.

- **Economic:** involving controlling or restricting access to financial resources, making the person financially dependent, etc.

It can be inflicted in public (on the street, at the workplace, at school, etc.) or in the private sphere. It can be caused by anyone, from a stranger to a friend of the victim, a colleague, a relative, or a partner.

### The complexity of gender-based violence

Some forms of gender-based violence are easy to spot, like physical abuse, but others are harder to recognize because they don't leave visible marks, such as emotional or verbal abuse. Moreover, the status of victim is often not accepted, considered, or named as such, which further complicates addressing it. A person who has experienced gender-based violence may be referred to as a victim or a survivor.

The term *victim* has been subject to criticism and often replaced by the word *survivor* which emphasizes the agency of people. People affected by gender-based violence may identify with one or the other term based on their own experience and feelings.

Gender-based violence is a complex phenomenon. As well as the way violence is different for everyone. Thus there is no universal definition of what gender-based violence is and what can be considered as an act of violence. It all depends on the victim's feelings because not everyone experiences violence to the same extent. Nevertheless it is absolutely crucial to not minimize violence and how violent an experience can be for someone. Gender-based violence can happen directly through blows and assaults but it can also be more insidious, through harmless-looking words.

### **The Root Causes of GBV**

Gender-based violence is not just about individual acts of harm – it's deeply connected to broader social and cultural systems. It comes from gender-based discrimination and power imbalances.

Those who use violence often feel a sense of superiority over others based on gender, and their goal is to humiliate or assert control over someone else. GBV is rooted in patriarchy – the belief that men are superior to women and gender minorities, which can normalize and justify violence. It is founded on relations of power, led by a feeling or a desire of superiority related to gender expression, and an intention to assert or to prove that superiority.

Sadly, this violence is often underreported and ignored, allowed and normalized by a culture of denial and silence. Many victims feel ashamed or blamed for the violence they experience, which further complicates the issue. The issue of gender-based violence raises different questions. Why do some people feel the desire to harm as a way to show their superiority? How do they get the right and the legitimacy to do so? Why isn't there any society or country where gender minorities and women can be safe and preserved from violence? How can violence happen so often while being so little addressed, halted or condemned by policies and authorities?

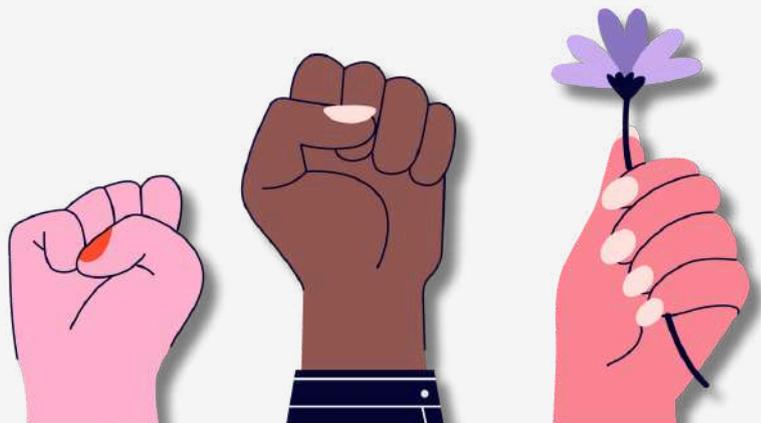
## Intersectionality and GBV

To truly understand gender-based violence, we need to look at it through an intersectional lens. This means recognizing that people's experiences of violence are shaped by many aspects of their identity, like their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or age. For example, someone who is a woman and also part of a marginalized community (like a migrant, someone with a disability, or a person of color) may face a higher risk of GBV.

Data about gender-based violence mostly focuses on women and girls' experience. However, it is important to note that non-binary and trans people experience extraordinary and specific violence. Importantly, men experience violence too in their life, on different levels, and patriarchal ideologies impact them too insofar as they prevent them from talking about the violence they experience. However, it is important to note that non-binary and trans people experience extraordinary and specific violence. Importantly, men experience violence too in their life, on different levels, and patriarchal ideologies impact them too insofar as they prevent them from talking about the violence they experience

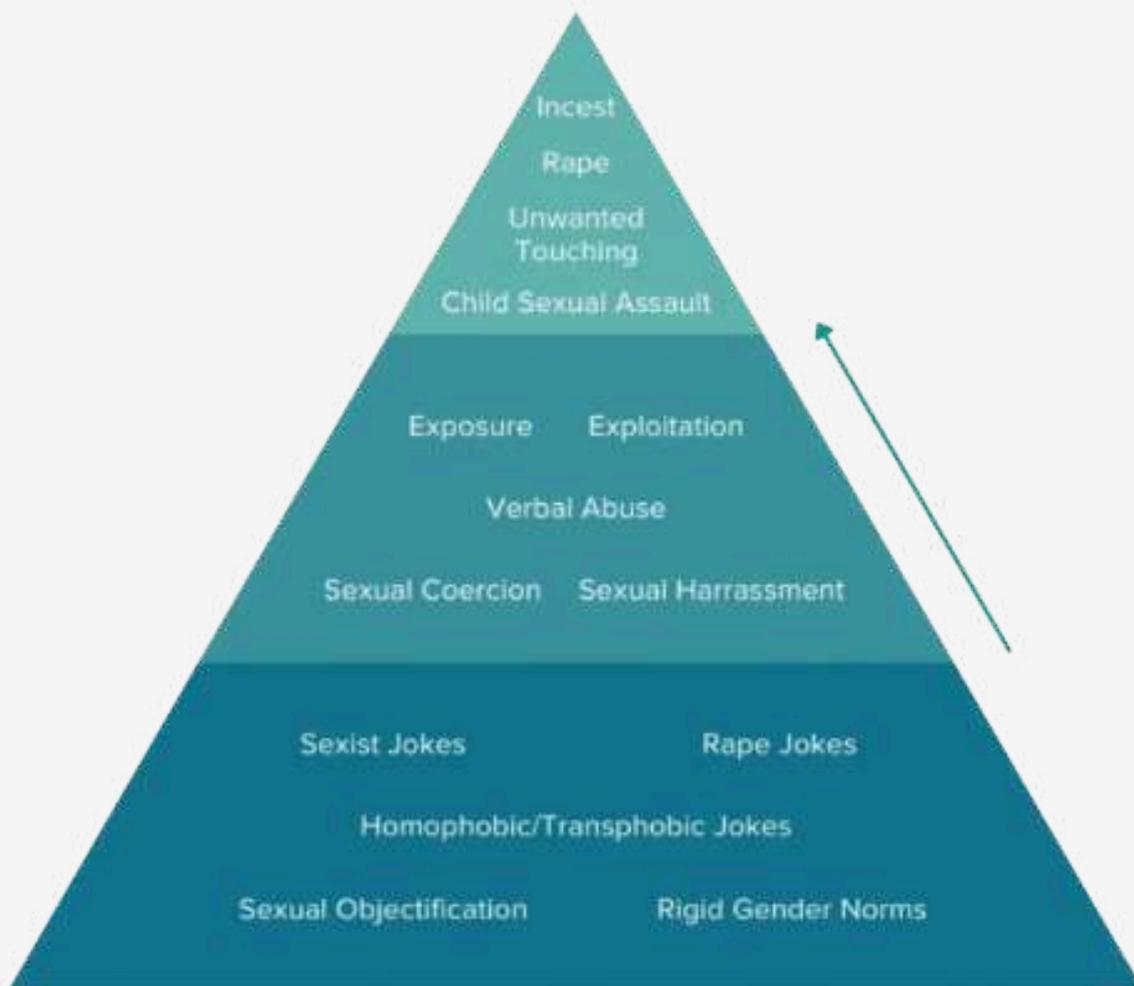
## Statistics and the Reality of GBV

According to the statistics of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, one in three women in the EU has experienced physical violence or threats and/or sexual violence over her lifetime. 13.5 % of women in the EU have experienced physical violence and/or have been threatened with physical violence (but not sexual), and 17.2 % have experienced sexual violence (including rape and other unwanted sexual acts). Among the women who have experienced physical violence or threats and/or sexual violence in their lifetime, 20.5 % have contacted a healthcare service or a social service provider after the incident, and 13.9% have reported the incident to the police. Moreover, a report on hate crime published in 2018 showed that 85% of trans people interviewed for the study experienced verbal abuse and 29% of them experienced physical violence.



# Sexual Violence Pyramid

Acts and Behaviors



Attitudes, beliefs and ideas

## **Gender based violence continuum**

In order to address the issue of gender-based violence, we think it is essential to talk about the concept of violence continuum. It was developed in 1987 by the British sociologist Liz Kelly in her article « The Continuum of Sexual Violence ». Her research is based on women's life experiences of violence. The main point of this concept is to consider all kinds of gender-based violence without categorizing them or establishing a hierarchy between them. According to her, all forms of sexual violence are serious and have effects: the polarization of the continuum refers only to their frequency. She argues that the most common forms of sexual violence are also the most likely to be commonly defined as “acceptable” behaviours, and less likely to be legally defined as punishable offences. For example, sexual harassment at work is often treated as harmless jokes.

The concept was studied, revised and adjusted by many researchers especially in an intersectional and more inclusive perspective than it first was in the 80s.

This concept makes it possible to explain how acts of gender-based violence are the result of the accumulation of various forms of violence, including structural violence, and systemic inequalities. It also allows us to understand how this violence is shaped by different systems of oppression and by gender minorities and women's life trajectories. Thus gender-based violence exists within a continuum allowing so-called “little” common forms of violence such as sexist jokes to let more invasive or intrusive forms of violence to happen and be tolerated such as rape or murder. Acts of gender-based violence are not isolated from one another. They are all part of a system of violence, where allowing small jokes makes it possible to hurt and harm people in many different ways.

## **Rape Culture**

In the continuity of the concept of the continuum of violence, we believe it is important and relevant to talk about rape culture. This concept describes how sociocultural contexts and norms allow, encourage and legitimise violent, degrading and oppressive behaviours

towards gender minorities and women leading to a direct or indirect normalization of rape.

Rape culture takes multiple forms and permeates all strata of society. It is based on the idea that sexuality exists through gendered roles and is inextricably linked to violence and domination.

The confusion between sexuality and violence is maintained by the use of degrading vocabulary and discourse referring to sexuality: the majority of insults have a sexual connotation, sexist jokes and “salacious” remarks abound, while the lexical field of sexuality is often characterized by the idea of possession or domination. This deliberately built confusion between sexuality and violence conveys a degraded image of women, reduced and fragmented as sexual objects. This representation is omnipresent in the media, the advertising industry, cinema, music and literature. It also creates a predatory and impulsive vision of male sexuality, supporting the idea of caricatured roles assigned to men and women. Cultural industries keep nurturing rape culture while being influenced by it because it maintains systems of oppression in which some social categories are kept in privileged positions of power.

Rape culture is made of social norms which means that most people support it through their lifestyle and habits without even being aware of it. It influences the way we perceive sexuality and all kinds of relationships, as well as what we consider normal and acceptable regarding social behaviours.

### **Domestic violence**

Domestic violence is a specific kind of gender-based violence that takes place between romantic and/or sexual partners or ex-partners or between household or family members. It thus includes specific acts of violence among the household such as marriage rape, genital mutilation or forced abortion and sterilization. Men can of course be victims of domestic violence, even though it is a lot rarer than it is for women. Most of the research on this topic focuses on violence towards women within heterosexual relationships. Domestic violence also occurs in homosexual relationships of course, but is more likely to be made unseen and undocumented. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights published a wide-ranging survey in 2014 about domestic

violence, showing that one in five women have suffered physical or sexual violence from a former or current partner, while 43% of women have been victims of psychological abuse or domineering behavior in the context of a romantic relationship. Moreover, more than half of femicide victims are killed by a sexual partner or family member. In France in 2021, among the 112 femicide victims, 104 were killed by a partner or ex-partner, which represents 93% of them.

Domestic violence is a complex social phenomenon. However, according to the feminist theories it clearly occurs as a result of patriarchal structures in society. Beyond the fact that gender structures relations of power and oppression, the household, as an intimate and private environment, appears to be a privileged place for non-visible violence. Moreover, romantic relationships and marriages are considered as places of social success and ruled by many patriarchal norms leading to relationships of emotional, administrative and economic dependence that makes even harder the recognition of violence in such conditions. Domestic violence thus raises the question of how romantic relationships are socially constructed and expressed.

As for any kind of oppression, the intersection of discrimination is to be considered in the analysis that we make of domestic violence. Different factors and identity features can amplify women's vulnerability in a romantic relationship. So a woman experiencing racism, ableism or economic dependence will thus be more likely to suffer domestic violence or to get out of it.

### **Prevention strategies**

Addressing gender-based violence requires more than reacting to violence when it happens; it mandates proactive solutions to prevent such violence from happening.

A key to these prevention strategies lies in investing in and empowering women and gender minorities communities and organizations as they possess more than anyone the knowledge and the tools to reshape societies to be safer, more inclusive, and fair. The first step is then to listen and to trust people facing gender-based violence as a life reality in order to better address it as a societal and global issue. Mobilizing those concerned by gender-based violence as change agents is vital to address such violence.

We have to better recognise women and gender minorities as community facilitators and safe spaces creators. Indeed they can better reach particularly marginalized communities and make prevention initiatives more effective, but also design tailored solutions to people's needs.

Organizations tackling gender-based violence frequently face resistance, legal gaps, denial and inaction. So funding and supporting such organizations is absolutely crucial to prevent violence.

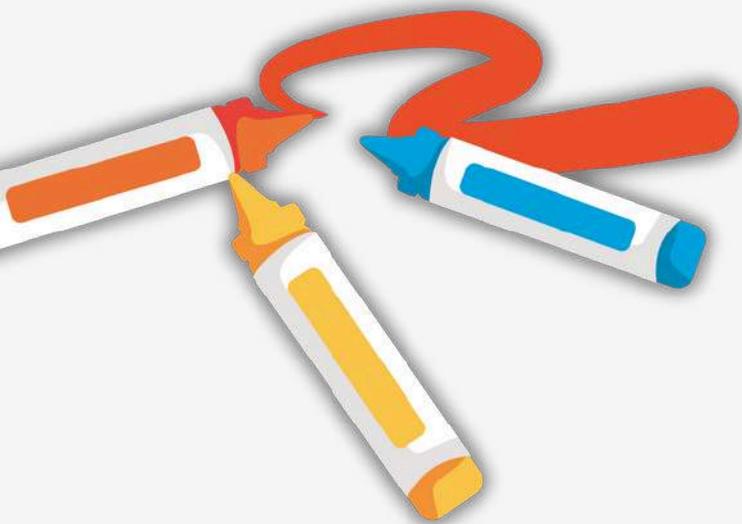
Furthermore, there is no doubt that an inclusive education adapted to society's realities from a young age is crucial in addressing gender-based violence. Empowering youth as well as breaking the silence circle by learning how to recognize, analyze and name gender-based violence in different socio-cultural contexts while condemning any kind of discrimination is essential.

To conclude, gender-based violence must be institutionalized by state authorities and institutions as a public health and equality priority to be efficiently addressed by competent organizations and communities.



# NON-FORMAL EDUCATION (NFE) ACTIVITIES

Here are several non-formal education activities designed for youth workers to explore concepts of gender-based violence with young people in a participatory, empathetic, and reflective way.



## The pyramid of gender-based violence

**Duration: 30 min**

**ACTIVITY 1**

### \* Objectives:

Increase awareness of the continuum of violence, enabling participants to identify and categorize various forms of gender-based violence, from subtle to severe.

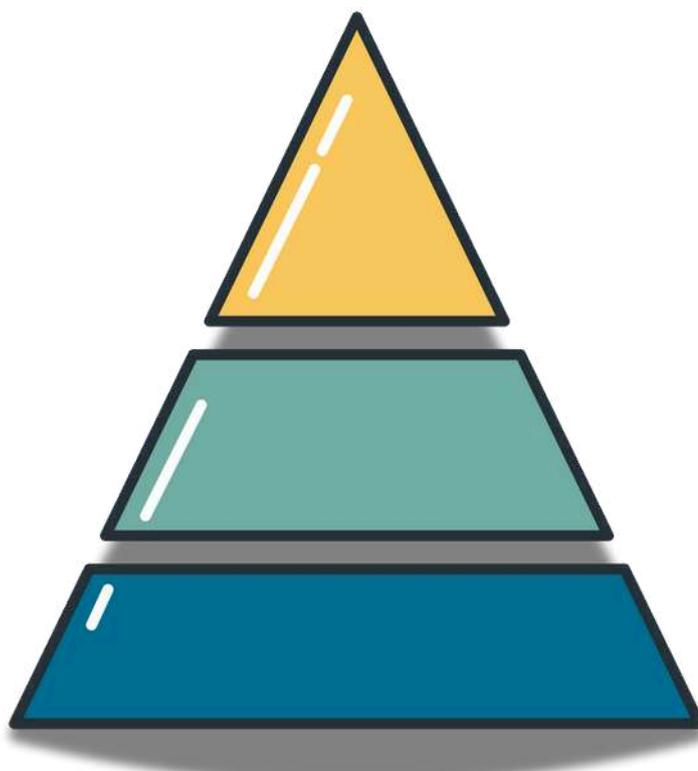
Develop a collective understanding of how different forms of violence are interconnected, illustrating how seemingly "minor" acts normalize and perpetuate more serious violence.

Empower participants to develop concrete, everyday actions to prevent and counter violence at the foundational levels of the pyramid, strengthening their ability to act in their immediate environment.

**Number of participants: 10-15 participants**

### Materials and resources:

- "The Pyramid of Gender Based Violence" diagram (see Appendix)
- Whiteboard or flipchart
- Whiteboard markers



1

Ask participants to share forms of gender-based violence they are familiar with.

2

Note their suggestions on the board, organizing them according to the levels of the pyramid (refer to the Appendix).

3

Draw the pyramid around these forms of violence, explaining that the purpose is not to create a hierarchy but to illustrate that violence is exponential and that each form builds upon others.

4

Explain the continuum of violence: each form of violence feeds off another. Emphasize that all levels of the pyramid must be recognized as violence because eliminating violence at the top requires addressing violence at the bottom.

5

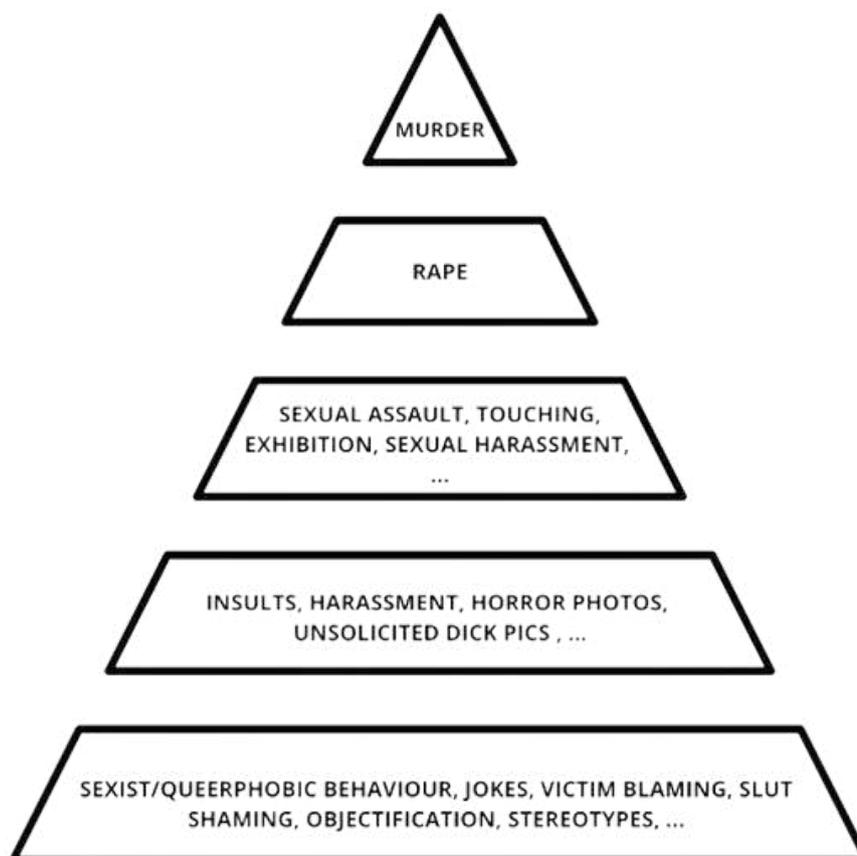
Ask participants for concrete individual actions to combat lower forms of violence (e.g., jokes, objectification, inappropriate comments).

6

Write these actions on the board and display them as an "action plan".

## Appendix

**Continuum of Violence Liz Kelly** (British sociologist) theorized the continuum of violence in 1987, highlighting that all forms of violence against women and gender/sexual minorities are mutually supportive, and none can be fought in isolation. For example, ending femicide requires fighting stereotypes, jokes, and rape culture.



## Pleasure First

Duration: 30 minutes

## ACTIVITY 2

### \* Objectives:

Reconnect the notion of consent with pleasure, separating it from the sole context of violence.

Enable participants to identify activities that bring them pleasure, the sensations associated with it, and responses indicating consent.

Broaden the concept of pleasure beyond intimate activities.

### \* Materials and resources:

- Sticky notes in 3 different colors
- Whiteboard or flipchart
- Whiteboard markers
- Pen for each participant

### Number of participants:

10-15 participants



1

Distribute one sticky note and a pen to each participant. Instruct them to "Write down an activity that gives you pleasure," encouraging precision. Emphasize anonymity, as sticky notes will be read by the facilitator.

2

Collect the sticky notes, read them aloud in plenary, and categorize them on the whiteboard (e.g., physical pleasure, psychological pleasure, shared pleasure, solitary pleasure, guilty pleasure).

3

Give each participant a new sticky note of a different color. Ask them to write down a sensation, feeling, or emotion they experience when someone asks them to do the activity they noted on the first sticky note.

4

Collect and read these sticky notes aloud, placing them on the whiteboard.

5

Repeat the process with a new color sticky note, asking participants to write what their answer would be if someone asked them to do the activity from the first sticky note.

6

Collect and read these sticky notes aloud, placing them on the whiteboard.

7

Debriefing: Explain that what they've created together is a picture of consent. Ask: "When we talk about consent, generally speaking, what are we talking about?". The aim is to elicit answers like "sexuality," "sexual violence," "intimacy". Once they've given this answer, explain: "Consent should work in sexuality as it does elsewhere".

8

Emphasize that the activities noted were not all sexual or intimate, but still brought pleasure. The sensations noted are the same ones one should feel if an intimate/sexual activity is proposed. The responses given in a sexual/intimate context should be as enthusiastic as those noted for non-intimate activities.

- Note: If any feelings or responses noted are not associated with consent (e.g., anxiety, fear, "no thanks"), discuss them and ask participants if they represent consent or non-consent.

**Sexy or Cringe**

**Duration: 1 hour**

**ACTIVITY 3**

**\* Objectives:**

Identify healthy and toxic behaviors in relationships, particularly male-female dynamics.

Encourage critical thinking about content seen and heard on social media.

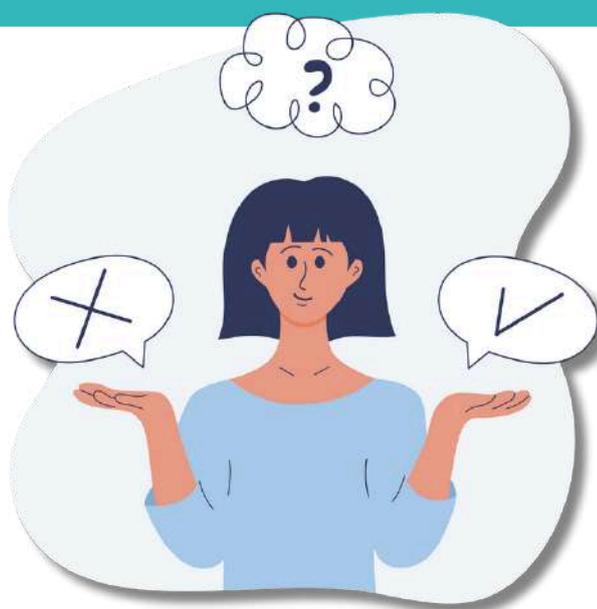
Learn to deconstruct harmful discourse.

**\* Materials and resources:**

1. One green flag, one orange flag, and one red flag per group
2. Phrases from TikTok dating coaches or commonly heard phrases (individually printed)
3. Inspired by the activity book of the Crips IDF

**Number of participants:**

15-20 participants



1

Divide participants into groups of 3 or 4.

2

Explain the concepts of green, orange, and red flags:

- **Red Flag:** A behavior identified as likely to lead to physical, psychological, or economic violence. *Example: Someone who makes fun of your appearance may not respect you generally. Someone violent with others may be violent with you.*
- **Orange Flag:** Unpleasant behavior that doesn't necessarily lead to violence but raises questions. *Example: Someone protective can be good, but can also become possessive.*
- **Green Flag:** A normal behavior identified as positive, indicating care and respect. *Example: Someone who celebrates the successes of others is not jealous or envious.*

3

Give each group 10 phrases and ask them to read and categorize them as green, orange, or red flags, discussing their reasoning (30 min).

4

Once all groups have finished, ask each group to share one green flag and one red flag phrase, explaining their classification (20 min).

# 5

Inform participants that most phrases are taken from TikTok videos and encourage them to question content on such platforms.

## Appendix

### Phrases and their explanations:

- "There's nothing wrong with lying and exaggerating details of your life to impress her. HVD, High Value Demonstration"
  - Flag: RED
  - Explanation: Lying to seduce is manipulation. The person's impression of you will be false, and if she starts to like you, she'll appreciate a version that isn't real.
- "Be enterprising, but not too demonstrative. You have to be able to let them believe that they're the ones who took the initiative, otherwise their ego will take a hit."
  - Flag: RED / ORANGE
  - Explanation: Here again, it's manipulation. Insinuating an idea and making the person think it's coming from them isn't honest. *Follow-up questions: is it important to take care of men's egos? Do women have the right to be enterprising?*
- "Small gestures like bringing a surprise or cooking for her are always appreciated"
  - Flag: GREEN
  - Explanation: Surprising the other, giving gifts, or doing favors can be a pleasure as long as it's not calculated (you do it to please and not expecting something in return). It's part of the language of love: act of service.
- "Before you go to pick up a chick, take five breaths and tell yourself that you're a winner, that you're the boss."
  - Flag: ORANGE
  - Explanation: It's good to give yourself confidence, but you have to remember that you're not here to win anything!
- "One trick that always works is to make the person laugh. Humor lifts the mood and creates nice memories."
  - Flag: GREEN
  - Explanation: Being funny is a great quality that many people appreciate, laughing is also about having a good time!

## Appendix

- "Tip to avoid the 'LAST minute resistance' before hooking up: on the night of the date, it has to be her who comes to you, so she can't say she didn't want to."
  - Flag: RED
  - Explanation: In addition to being dangerous behavior, it's pointless to make clever calculations to get your date to sleep with you. Thinking you can manipulate this kind of behavior is overriding the other person's consent, and is part of rape culture. You NEVER owe someone sex: no matter what that person has offered or paid you, no matter how much you've got that person waiting for you, if you don't feel like it, it's a no.
- "Look after your appearance, put your assets forward, but without being vulgar."
  - Flag: ORANGE
  - Explanation: Feeling beautiful is important. But "vulgar" doesn't really mean anything. Some people think a skirt is vulgar, while others don't think it's vulgar at all! Dress as you like, that's the most important thing. *Follow-up questions: what's vulgar clothing? Is it only for girls? Who decides what's vulgar and what isn't?*
- "Knowing how to take your time is a real skill. Don't rush, let things happen."
  - Flag: GREEN
  - Explanation: There's no point in rushing into things - it doesn't guarantee better results. Take your time - it's better for everyone!
- "Try to make her feel special. Don't just compliment her looks, but her personality too. It's more individualized and makes all the difference."
  - Flag: GREEN
  - Explanation: When you're looking to start a relationship with someone, it's important that it's based on more than just looks. *Follow up questions: what's important when looking for a partner? And in a relationship?*

## Appendix

- "When you hit on a chick, it makes her feel superior. The NEG is the weapon you need to bring her down and get back on top as a guy! It's a gentle, snappy remark: 'That's cute, you're cross-eyed when you're laughing!'"
  - Flag: RED
  - Explanation: Devaluing the person in front of you won't get you anywhere. Girls aren't fooled. And you don't want to base your relationship on this kind of unhealthy relationship. Someone who puts you down is someone who doesn't trust themselves. You deserve someone who values you. It's manipulative to look for ways to lower someone's self-esteem without coming across as the bad guy or gal.
- "It's your first date with the chick. Roll one, wait until she's smoked a bit to start warming her up. She'll be more receptive."
  - Flag: RED
  - Explanation: Drugging someone (with alcohol or otherwise) to force them into intimate or sexual relations (touching, kissing, sleeping, etc.) is chemical submission and is punishable by law. *Add legal information on chemical submission in your country.*
- "It's the Kino technique: you have to touch your target with your hands, be tactile. Touching the girl makes you sexy in her eyes and makes her want to go further. It's neuro-linguistic programming"
  - Flag: RED
  - Explanation: Touching someone without their consent can be considered sexual assault. Furthermore, you can't program someone to be attracted to someone else, or to find them sexy.
- "Change your big wallet for a tiny, super discreet one that will prevent girls from fantasizing about your money. We have to show them that we're the reward, not our money!"
  - Flag: ORANGE
  - Explanation: Women are no more attracted to money than men. If you have the impression that your partner only likes your money, it's probably because he or she isn't a good partner.

## Appendix

- "You have to be superior to her. It's in their nature to look for the best part."
  - Flag: ORANGE
  - Explanation: There's no such thing as female "nature," just as there's no such thing as male "nature." Not every woman is looking for the same thing in a man, and not every woman is looking for a man.
- "Taking care of yourself, putting on cream, brushing your eyebrows, etc, doesn't make you a gay or effeminate guy."
  - Flag: GREEN
  - Explanation: Taking care of oneself is important, and has nothing to do with one's sexual orientation. *Follow up questions: can men dress themselves? wear perfume? apply make-up?*
- "Wear chic perfume to make your crush think you're seeing another girl to make her jealous."
  - Flag: RED
  - Explanation: Once again, this is manipulation. Jealousy is not a pleasant feeling, and in many situations it's not a healthy one. Why would you want to generate an unpleasant feeling in someone you like?
- "The thing you gotta stop doing to get chicks is watching ball movies. If in 2024 you're still watching ball films, you're gay, I don't want to know anything about it."
  - Flag: ORANGE
  - Explanation: There is no correlation between consuming pornography and having or not having partners. Associating behavior with homosexuality is homophobic. *Follow up questions; At what age can you watch porn? Does it teach you anything?*

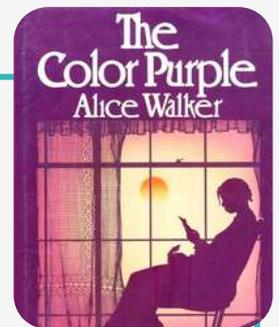
## Resources

To complement the work of preventing and responding to gender-based violence, it is crucial for youth workers to have a variety of reliable and accessible resources.

## Books

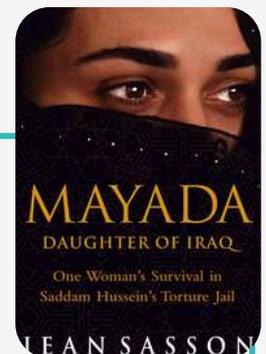
**“The Color Purple”** – Alice Walker.

The Color Purple depicts life for African-American women in early twentieth-century rural Georgia, America. It tells the story of two sisters separated as children through a series of letters spanning twenty years. This is a powerful book that breaks the silence around domestic and sexual abuse, sharing the lives of women through the good and the bad – their pain, companionship, growth, resilience and bravery.



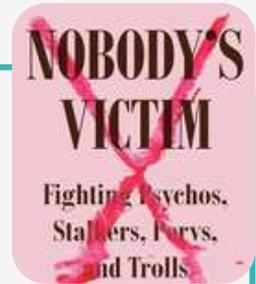
**“Mayada: Daughter of Iraq”** – Jean Sasson.

A member of one of the most distinguished and honored families in Iraq, Mayada grew up among royalty. But when Saddam Hussein's regime took power, she was thrown into the infamous Baladiyat prison with seventeen other nameless, faceless women – each with their own story to tell. These "shadow women" spent their days passing the time by sharing their stories and experiences with each other. Now, through writer Jean Sasson, Mayada is able to tell her story, and the stories of these other women too.



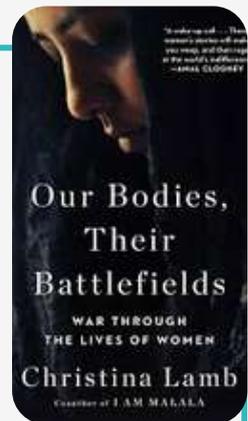
**“Nobody's Victim: Fighting Psychos, Stalkers, Pervs and Trolls”** – Carrie Goldberg.

Carrie Goldberg invites her readers to the courtroom, on the front lines of the war against sexual violence and privacy violations as she sues tech companies, schools and sexual predators. This book details her client's experiences from victimhood to fighter and survivor. Goldberg also shares her own story that inspired her career in law, becoming the advocate and fighter she herself needed.



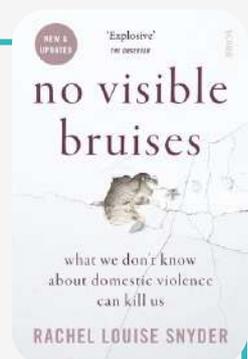
**“Our Bodies, Their Battlefield: What War Does to Women”** – Christina Lamb

Christina Lamb has worked in war and combat zones for over 30 years. In *Our Bodies, Their Battlefields* she elevates the voices of women experiencing conflicts, exposing how rape is used by armies, terrorists and militias as a weapon to humiliate, oppress and carry out ethnic cleansing. Speaking to survivors first-hand, Lamb encounters the suffering and bravery of women in war and meets those fighting for justice. From women who survived the Rwandan Genocide, World War II, the invasion of Iraqi communities by ISIS and more, Lamb shares powerful stories of heroism and resistance.



**“No Visible Bruises: What We Don't Know About Domestic Violence Can Kill Us”** – Rachel Louise Snyder

Award-winning journalist Rachel Louise Snyder once believed all the common misconceptions about domestic violence, but her perception changed when she began talking to the victims and perpetrators whose stories she tells in this book. Reporting from the front lines of what the WHO has deemed a 'global epidemic', Snyder interviews men who have murdered their families, women who have nearly been murdered, and a range of professionals in advocacy and law enforcement, painting a vivid and nuanced picture of what happens when relationships go badly wrong.



## Articles

### **"Gender-based violence: definition, facts and EU actions to stop it" from the European Parliament:**

This article provides a clear definition of gender-based violence, presents relevant statistics, and details the actions the European Union is taking to combat it. It's a good source for understanding the general overview and policy responses.

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20210923STO13419/gender-based-violence-definition-facts-and-eu-actions-to-stop-it>

### **"Violence against women" from the World Health Organization (WHO):**

This WHO article offers global estimates on the prevalence of violence against women, including intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence. It also discusses health consequences, as well as risk and protective factors.

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>

### **"Gender-based violence" from UNICEF:**

This UNICEF article focuses on how gender-based violence affects children, highlighting its prevalence, the ways it manifests (including in humanitarian emergencies), and the devastating consequences for survivors.

<https://www.unicef.org/protection/gender-based-violence-in-emergencies>

## Films

### **"You are not alone: the fight against the wolf pack" (2024, Netflix):**

It addresses a real-life group sexual violence case that had a major social impact and generated a crucial debate about consent and secondary victimization. It is very current, and its documentary format allows for exploration of the complexities of the judicial system and victim support, which is fundamental for both youth and youth workers.

**"Promising young woman" (2020, Emerald Fennell):**

This film offers a raw and provocative look at rape culture, revenge, and the consequences of sexual harassment. Its unique style and challenging narrative can spark important conversations about implicit consent, audience responsibility, and societal complicity in gender-based violence. It is visually engaging, and its message is very powerful for a young audience.

**"Mustang" (2015, Deniz Gamze Ergüven):**

While not explicitly about sexual violence, this film is highly relevant because it explores gender oppression, restriction of freedom, and control over young women within a conservative cultural context. It demonstrates how gender-based violence manifests in more subtle and structural forms, such as forced marriage and limited opportunities, which is vital for understanding the continuum of violence and its cultural roots.

## Documentaries

**"Namrata" (2009, Shazia Javed)**

This short documentary tells the intensely personal story of Namrata Gill – one of the many real-life inspirations for Deepa Mehta's *Heaven on Earth* – in her own words. After six years, Gill courageously leaves an abusive relationship and launches a surprising new career.

**"UNSILENCED: Stories of Survival, Hope and Activism" (2023, UN Women)**

This series highlights the experiences of women and girls facing violence worldwide, while showcasing grassroots activism and solutions.

## Series

### “Adolescence” (Netflix, 2025)

The series follows Jamie Miller, a 13-year-old boy arrested for the murder of a classmate. Through his interactions with the police, a psychologist, and his family, the show explores possible motivations, including bullying, social media influences, “incel” ideology, and toxic masculinity. The series is even being used as an educational resource in schools in the UK, France, the Netherlands, and Belgium.

### “I May Destroy You” (HBO, BBC)

Created, written, and starring Michaela Coel, this drama series follows Arabella, a young London writer who becomes a victim of sexual assault and suffers memory loss. The series intelligently explores themes of consent, trauma, power, social media, and personal reconstruction without resorting to simplification.

## Key Organizations



**UN Women:** United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. Leads global campaigns to end gender-based violence.

Website: <https://www.unwomen.org/en>



**Amnesty International:** Works to defend human rights, including the fight against gender-based violence, through research, campaigns, and mobilization.

Website: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/violence-against-women/>

**Local/National GBV Victim Support Organizations:** It is essential to identify and collaborate with shelters, helplines, rape crisis centers, and associations offering legal and psychological support locally in your country or region. (For example, in Spain: 016, Ana Bella Foundations, etc.; in Latin America: networks of shelters and feminist organizations).

**Council of Europe - Istanbul Convention:** A key international treaty to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence. Provides a comprehensive legal framework.

**Information:** <https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention>



**European Women's Lobby (EWL):** The largest platform of women's organizations in the European Union, working for women's rights and gender equality, including the eradication of violence.

## Glossary of key terms:

For clear understanding and common language, the essential terms for this module are presented:

**Slut shaming:** Slut-shaming consists in blaming and stigmatizing a victim of sexist or sexual violence, because of their behavior, physical appearance or lifestyle, whether real or supposed. This is like labelling them a “slut” and making them take responsibility for the aggression they have suffered.

For example, when confronted with a victim of harassment, you might hear remarks like: “You shouldn't have been out so late” or “Did you see how you were dressed? This type of discourse transfers the blame from the aggressor to the victim, creating a second form of psychological violence.

Slut-shaming helps to make perpetrators' responsibilities invisible, while reinforcing victims' guilt and isolation. It has also been used to discredit the #MeToo movement, insinuating that those who testify do so for attention or personal gain.

**Gray Area in consent:** Consent, above all, means accepting and agreeing to carry out an action together. However, there is a so-called gray area in the consent process: sexual relations with a person who expresses neither an explicit yes nor no, silence or a passive attitude, or when power dynamics or proximity ties influence the decision.

It is therefore essential to remember that silence is not an answer, and consent must be explicit and enthusiastic. Even when a yes is expressed, it's important to take into account the socio-cultural context and any power relationships present in the relationship. For example, a person may not have the choice to say no, because of pressure from a superior, partner or emotional blackmail.

### **Cyberviolence/cyberharassment:**

Gender-based violence also manifests itself in cyberspace. It can take many forms, from cyberstalking (the intrusive monitoring of a person's online activities) to the sending of unsolicited sexual messages or comments.

A particularly alarming phenomenon is revenge porn: the diffusion of images or videos of a sexual nature, taken with or without the consent of the person concerned. Whether disseminated publicly or in a restricted circle, this is a crime punishable by law. It is also important to remember that the simple act of re-sharing and relaying photos, videos or



or insulting messages is considered an accomplice, and exposes the person concerned to the same legal proceedings as the original perpetrator of the cyber-harassment.

**Femicide:** In 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) defined femicide as the murder of women because they are women or girls. In the majority of cases, these crimes are perpetrated by people close to the victim: partners, ex-partners, family members, neighbors, etc.

Why is it important to distinguish femicide from homicide? This distinction highlights the systemic dimension of violence against women. Most of the time, victims of femicide have suffered repeated violence in an intimate sphere: psychological, physical, sexual violence, threats, etc., all part of a cycle of patriarchal domination.

Moreover, some victims outside the conjugal sphere are not always taken into account in femicide statistics. This is particularly the case for sex workers and/or trans women, who, because of their marginalization, are exposed to extreme violence, stigmatization, constant insecurity and precariousness. These conditions can lead to their murder or forced suicide.

**Feminist self defense:** Today, feminist associations and collectives offer feminist self-defense sessions to equip women and queer people to deal with sexist and sexual violence. The aim is not only to learn physical defense techniques inspired by martial arts, but also to develop a verbal defense strategy, recognize one's own limits and identify potentially dangerous situations.

no  
gender  
gap

**THANK  
YOU!**

This document was drafted with the participation of :



2024-1-ES02-KA210-YOU-000253858, Erasmus+

# Gender Identities and the LGBTIQ+ Community

## Theory and definition

The acronym LGBTIQ+ represents a diverse community encompassing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Asexual individuals, as well as other gender identities and sexual minorities. This community, united in its diversity, advocates for equality, recognition, and inclusion.

Sexual orientation refers to the emotional and/or sexual attraction one feels toward one or more individuals. It is important to note that sexual orientation is distinct from gender identity. While sexual orientation describes to whom we are attracted, gender identity describes who we are.

Unlike sex assigned at birth (which refers to biological and sexual characteristics, such as genitals, gonads, or chromosomal patterns), gender identity does not always correspond to the sex assigned at birth. Gender identity reflects an individual's deep and personal sense of belonging to one or multiple specific genders. A person may identify with the traditional categories of man or woman, encompass both, move beyond them entirely, or exist outside conventional societal classifications.

It is a fundamental aspect of a person's self-perception.

Here are some examples of gender identities:

- **Cisgender:** Refers to a person whose gender identity matches the sex assigned at birth (for example, a person born with a vagina who identifies as a woman, or a person born with a penis who identifies as a man). The prefix cis- means "on the same side," indicating that a cisgender person's gender identity aligns with their birth-assigned sex.
- **Transgender:** Refers to a person whose gender identity does not match the sex assigned at birth. This term is an umbrella term that includes all people whose gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth. For example, a person who was assigned male at birth but identifies as a woman is a trans woman. A person who was assigned female at birth but identifies as a man is a trans man. The prefix trans- means "across" or "beyond." The process of **transition** is the set of steps

- (social, administrative, medical) that a transgender person may take to align their appearance and presentation with their gender identity.
- **Non-binary:** Refers to a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. A non-binary individual may identify with both genders, somewhere in between, or with neither. The concept of non-binary serves as an umbrella term that includes various gender identities outside the male/female binary.
  - **Genderfluid:** (a person whose gender identity changes over time, also known as gender fluidity)
  - **Agender:** (a person who does not identify with any gender)
  - And many others... The spectrum of gender identity challenges the binary view of gender, considering it as a fluid continuum rather than a fixed classification.
- **Queer:** The term "Queer" is an umbrella term encompassing all gender identities and sexual orientations that do not conform to established norms of sexuality and gender, particularly heteronormative, cisnormative, and binary norms.

Historically used as a homophobic slur, queer—which translates to "strange" or "unconventional"—has been reclaimed by the LGBTIQ+ community as a symbol of inclusivity and empowerment.

- **Intersex:** Intersex individuals are those whose genetics, chromosomes, hormones, reproductive system, and/or genitals do not strictly align with characteristics classified as male or female by medical and political authorities. Being intersex is a biological variation, not a gender identity or sexual orientation in itself, although intersex individuals have diverse gender identities and sexual orientations.
- **Asexual:** An asexual person is someone who experiences little to no sexual attraction. Asexuality is a spectrum, and asexual people may experience romantic attraction, form intimate relationships, and have desires for closeness, but without the sexual component.
- **Pansexual:** A pansexual person is someone who experiences sexual, romantic, or emotional attraction to people regardless of their sex or gender identity.

Pansexuality encompasses beyond the gender binary.

## **Theoretical Foundations of Gender Identities and the LGBTIQ+ Community**

The study of gender identities and the LGBTIQ+ community draws on various theories and conceptual frameworks that seek to understand, explain, and contextualize human diversity beyond binary and heteronormative norms.

### **Performativity theory and queer theory:**

Performativity theory, developed by Judith Butler, posits that gender is not an innate essence but a social construct manifested through a series of behaviors and actions that conform to social expectations and cultural norms. This perspective conceptualizes gender as a continuous performance, thus paving the way for a more fluid and dynamic understanding of gender identities, beyond traditional binary categories. Emerging in the 1990s, queer theory builds on the works of

scholars and philosophers such as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Michel Foucault. This theoretical approach adamantly rejects rigid binary classifications of gender (male/female) and sexuality (heterosexual/homosexual). Instead, it explores the fluidity of these concepts and critically examines heteronormativity—the assumption that heterosexuality is the default norm in society. Queer theory provides a conceptual framework for understanding the diversity of experiences within the LGBTIQ+ community by deconstructing pre-established categories and promoting a more inclusive view of identity.

### **Intersectionality of Identities:**

- The **intersection** of gender identity and sexual orientation can shape an individual's lived experiences.

For example, a gay transgender man may face multiple layers of prejudice, both as a transgender man and as a homosexual. His experience would differ from that of a cisgender gay man. This double marginalization can arise not only from the dominant cisheteronormative society but also from within the LGBTIQ+ community itself. Similarly, a Black lesbian woman will not have the same experience as a white lesbian woman, for example. While the community strives to be inclusive, it is not always free from its own hierarchies and exclusionary dynamics. Individuals who do not conform to traditional gender roles or who are racialized may experience additional social pressures, even in spaces that are supposed to be welcoming and inclusive.

- Despite these challenges, many individuals within the LGBTIQ+ community find support and empowerment in their gender and sexual identities. They build support networks, lead activist movements, and work toward social change. Gender identity thus becomes a powerful source of personal expression and pride,

while the LGBTIQ+ community provides a space for individuals to live authentically, raise visibility, and celebrate diversity.

### **The specific case of intersex individuals:**

- In our collective imagination, at birth, all women are expected to have XX chromosomes, estrogen, and a vagina, while all men are believed to have XY chromosomes, testosterone, and a penis. However, this is not always the case. Intersex individuals are those whose genetics, chromosomes, hormones, reproductive system, and/or genitals do not strictly align with characteristics classified as male or female by medical and political authorities. According to the United Nations, intersex characteristics occur in 1.7% of births worldwide (approximately 1 in 60 people), and these variations in sex characteristics do not pose any inherent health risk. However, non-consensual surgical interventions and medical procedures are still performed on intersex infants to "normalize" their bodies according to binary gender standards, which can profoundly impact their identity. As a result, intersex activists often

advocate for the right to make their own decisions regarding their bodies and identities seeking greater acceptance both within the LGBTIQ+ community and in society at large. It is important to remember that each individual is unique. Just as gender identity exists on a spectrum, so does biological sex. There are men with less muscle mass, and women with more body hair, for example...

## **Transidentity and the transition process**

### **Is transidentity a mental disorder?**

Transidentity refers to having a gender identity different from the one assigned at birth. For decades, transidentity was pathologized by the World Health Organization (WHO) in its International Classification of Diseases (ICD). It was only in January 2022 that it was removed from the category of "mental disorders." Instead, the WHO introduced the term "gender incongruence," which remains controversial, as it can imply an "abnormality." This pathologization has long been used to justify human rights violations against trans people. They have been subjected to so-called "conversion" or "reorientation" therapies, abusive psychiatric evaluations, and even forced sterilization.

### **Is transition mandatory to be trans?**

Transition is a process that includes psychological, social, and bodily changes experienced by a trans person. It can be social (changing name, pronouns, or clothing style), administrative (changing legal gender and name), or medical (hormone therapy, surgeries, etc.). A trans person does not have to undergo social, legal, or medical changes to be valid as trans. People under the non-binary umbrella (such as non-binary or genderfluid individuals) can also go through transitions. Each transition is unique and personal. The term "transition" is preferred over "transformation," as the latter can be harmful by ignoring the fact that transition is a long, complex, and intimate process that does not always involve a change in physical appearance.

## Challenges faced (discrimination, access to healthcare, social recognition)

Trans people face numerous challenges related to their gender identity, including discrimination, verbal and/or physical violence, and lack of legal recognition, particularly in societies where binary gender categories are strictly enforced. Their transition journey is often long, complex, and filled with obstacles, as transidentity remains stigmatized. These difficulties are especially evident in access to healthcare, employment, and education, and they are even more pronounced for those who belong to other marginalized groups, such as people of color or those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. In addition to the personal and financial challenges of transitioning, trans individuals frequently face systemic discrimination in their healthcare journey and administrative procedures.

### Discrimination and mental health impact on LGBTIQ+ individuals

The Queerphobia/LGBTIQ+phobia is the discrimination specifically related to gender expression or sexuality, targeting individuals or communities perceived as deviating from societal norms. The daily lives of queer individuals remain marked by discrimination and violence worldwide.

There are two main types of discrimination:

**Direct discrimination:** When an individual is explicitly treated less favorably solely because of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

**Example:** An employer refuses to hire someone because the person is

transgender, believing that transgender individuals are 'mentally unstable' and that this could negatively affect their professional collaboration.

**Indirect discrimination:** When seemingly neutral and fair rules or practices (applied to everyone) disproportionately disadvantage members of a specific group.

**Example:** A school that enforces a uniform policy based on sex assigned at birth. Although the rule applies to all students, it discriminates against transgender and non-binary students by forcing them to wear attire that may not reflect their gender expression, affecting their well-being and inclusion.

Even for cisgender individuals, their gender expression may differ from the uniform they are expected to conform to.

**Example:** Non-binary individuals, who do not identify strictly as male or female, face unique challenges. Everyday situations, such as filling out a form that only allows "male" or "female" options, can create confusion and exclusion. The lack of gender-neutral public restrooms can also lead to safety risks or significant discomfort for non-binary individuals.

#### **Statistics: a growing concern**

- In 2021, the NGO Transgender Europe (TGEU) recorded 375 murders of transgender people worldwide, primarily in Latin America. Brazil, Mexico, and the United States reported the highest number of cases.

- A 2020 survey by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) found that 38% of LGBTIQ+ people in Europe experienced harassment in the past 12 months.
- According to Human Rights Watch, as of 2020, 67 countries (35%) still criminalize same-sex relations, and some impose the death penalty (e.g., Iran, Saudi Arabia, and certain regions of Nigeria).

## **The challenges of coming out: between self-affirmation and social barriers**

### **What is coming out?**

Coming out is a process that involves both the public acknowledgment of one's sexual orientation or gender identity, and the affirmation and acceptance of one's own identity. This journey can be long and complex for some people and can occur at any age, within different spheres of life: among friends, in the family, at work, or in a community. It is a deeply personal decision, and no one is obliged to come out if they do not feel the need to do so.

The six stages of coming out according to psychologist Vivian Cass (1979):

1. Identity confusion: Experiencing doubts and questions about one's sexual orientation or gender identity.
2. Identity comparison: Exploring and comparing one's experiences with those of other LGBTIQ+ individuals.
3. Identity tolerance: Recognizing one's identity, but still having some reservations.
4. Identity acceptance: Gaining a clearer affirmation of one's identity and possibly coming out to some individuals.
5. Identity pride: More openly embracing one's identity and connecting with the LGBTIQ+ community.
6. Identity synthesis: Integrating one's sexual orientation or gender identity into a broader sense of self, where it becomes one aspect of a multifaceted identity.

It is important to note that this process is not always linear: it is a theoretical model proposed by psychologist Vivian Cass, but each person is unique, and so is their coming-out journey.

### **Challenges and risks of coming out**

It is important to recognize that coming out is not a viable option for everyone due to their specific family, social, or professional circumstances. The ability to publicly affirm one's identity without fear of rejection, discrimination, or negative consequences is a privilege held by those in more open and tolerant environments. Unfortunately, this personal choice can sometimes be taken away from an individual when their identity is revealed without their consent. This is known as "outing," which refers to the act of revealing someone's LGBTIQ+ identity without their approval. "Outing" can be extremely harmful, posing serious risks to a person's safety and personal well-being.

### **The importance of support and safe spaces**

Social support and the presence of safe spaces play a crucial role for LGBTIQ+ individuals, whether they have already affirmed their identity, are still questioning it, or are unable to come out due to various limitations. Ensuring inclusive and supportive environments helps foster well-being, safety, and self-acceptance within the community.

## Gender expression: between personal identity and social norms

Gender expression refers to how individuals present their gender, particularly through physical appearance and visible characteristics. It is distinct from gender identity, which reflects how a person internally perceives their own gender. Gender expression can align with societal representations of femininity (dresses, makeup, etc.) or masculinity (short hair, visible body hair, etc.). However, gender expression can also challenge norms and exist on a spectrum beyond the binary, allowing for a wide range of possibilities. Gender expression and gender identity do not always align; for example, someone may not identify as a woman but still have a very feminine gender expression. Art forms like drag and voguing highlight this freedom of gender expression. Drag involves exaggerating elements of femininity or masculinity, often in a performance context, while voguing, which emerged from LGBTIQ+ ballroom culture in Black and Latinx communities, is a dance form that plays with gender postures and attitudes. These practices demonstrate that gender expression can be fluid, creative, and independent of imposed norms.



# How to promote gender identities and the LGBTIQ+ community in communities

Promoting the understanding, acceptance, and rights of gender identities and the LGBTIQ+ community is fundamental to building truly inclusive and just communities. Youth workers play a crucial role in this process. Here are key approaches to fostering inclusion:

## Education and awareness:

- **Workshops and information sessions:** Organize interactive workshops for young people and educators that address the diversity of gender identities and sexual orientations. These sessions should include clear definitions, explanations of the difference between sex, gender, and orientation, and debunk common myths.
- **Personal stories and testimonials:** Invite members of the LGBTIQ+ community (when appropriate and safe for them) to share their personal experiences. Human stories are powerful in generating empathy and understanding.
- **Critical media literacy:** Analyze how media (movies, series, social media, news) represent the LGBTIQ+ community. Discuss stereotypes, positive representation, and lack of visibility.
- **Accessible educational resources:** Provide educational materials (brochures, links to reliable websites, books) that are easy to understand and offer accurate information on gender identities and sexual orientation.

## Creating Safe and Inclusive Spaces:

- **Explicit support environments:** Clearly state that the youth center, school, or community space is a safe place for LGBTIQ+ individuals. Display supportive signs (e.g., rainbow flags, "Safe Space" stickers).
- **Support and alliance groups** (gsas - gay-straight alliances): Facilitate the creation of groups where LGBTIQ+ youth and their allies can meet, share experiences, get support, and organize activities.

- **Clear, non-discriminatory policies:** Ensure that the center's code of conduct and policies explicitly prohibit discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation, and that procedures for reporting incidents are known and effective.
- **Consistent use of pronouns and names:** Model and promote the correct use of everyone's preferred pronouns and names. Implement practices that allow young people to indicate their preferred pronouns (e.g., badges, introductions).
- **Gender-neutral restrooms:** If possible and appropriate for the context, advocate for the availability of gender-neutral restrooms to ensure that all individuals feel safe and comfortable.

### Challenging prejudice and discrimination:

- **Active bystander intervention:** Train young people and staff on how to safely and effectively intervene when they witness homophobic, transphobic, or biphobic comments, harassment, or discrimination.
- **Fostering open dialogue:** Create opportunities for young people to ask questions and express their doubts in a respectful and educational environment, dispelling ignorance rather than shame.
- **Awareness campaigns:** Organize campaigns or events in the community that celebrate LGBTIQ+ diversity, such as International LGBTIQ+ Pride Day, Trans Visibility Day, etc., to increase visibility and normalization.
- **Addressing misgendering and deadnaming:** Educate young people about the harm caused by these practices and foster a culture of respect for each person's chosen name and gender identity.

### Promoting alliance and youth leadership:

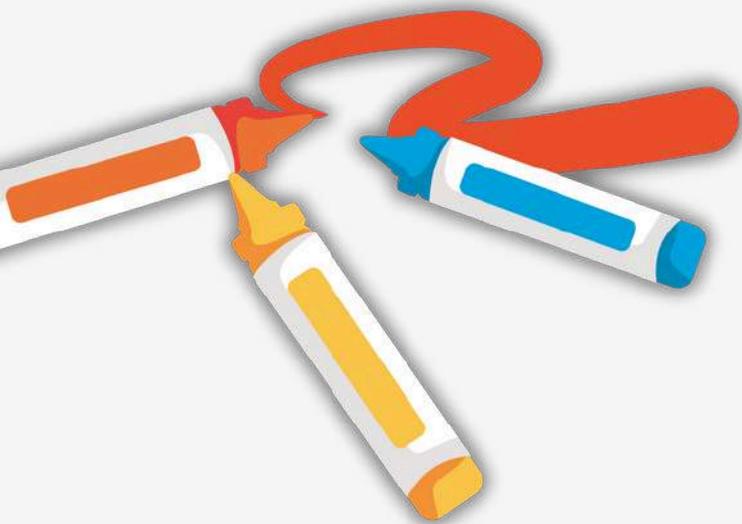
**Ally training:** Develop training programs for young people who wish to be effective allies of the LGBTIQ+ community, teaching them how to educate others, advocate, and support their peers.

- **Empowerment of LGBTIQ+ youth:** Offer leadership opportunities for LGBTIQ+ youth in program planning and execution, allowing them to shape their own initiatives.
- **Collaboration with LGBTIQ+ organizations:** Work in conjunction with local and national organizations specializing in LGBTIQ+ rights and support to access their expertise and resources.

By implementing these strategies, youth workers can empower young people to become agents of change, building more just, equitable, and welcoming communities for all gender identities and sexual orientations.

# NON-FORMAL EDUCATION (NFE) ACTIVITIES

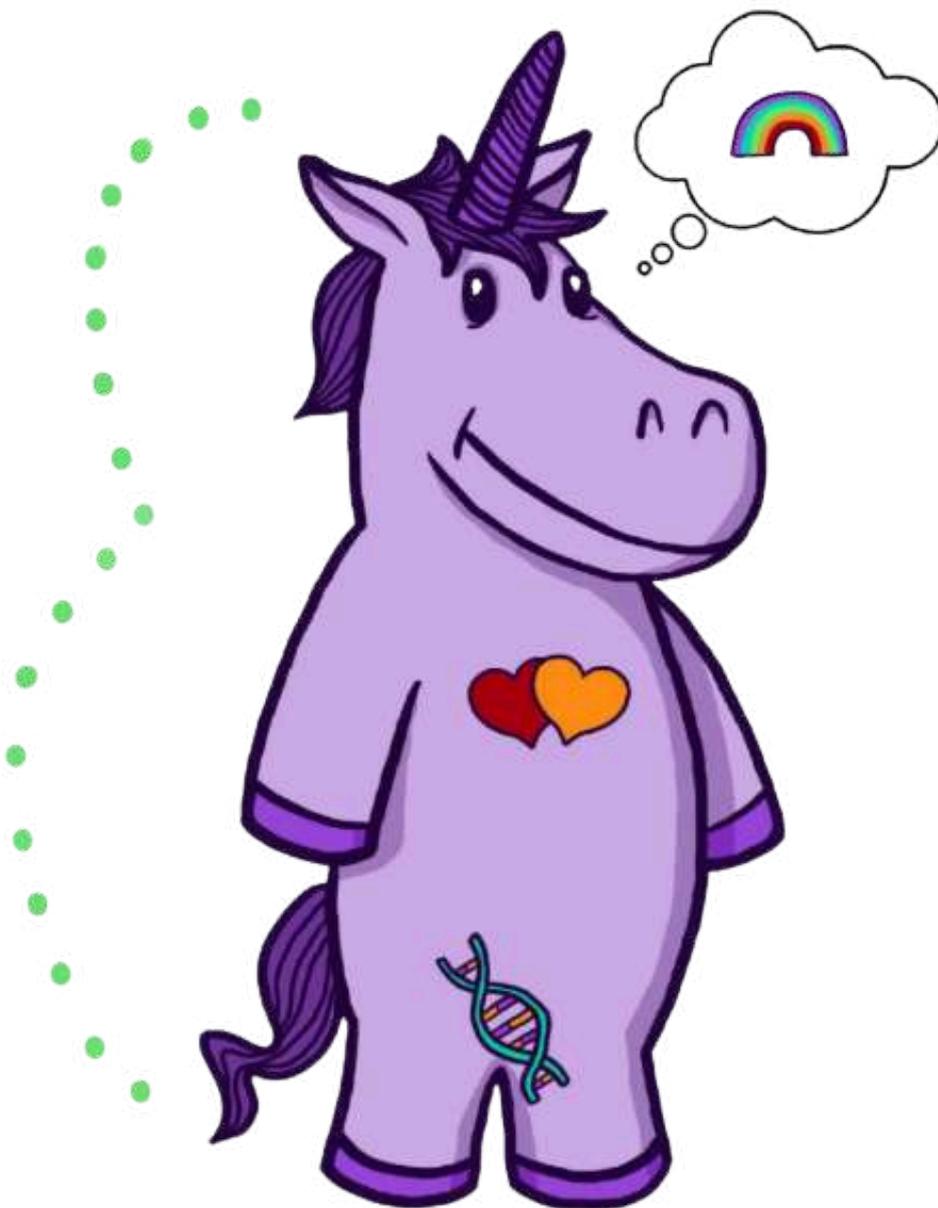
Here are several non-formal education activities designed for youth workers to explore concepts of gender identities and the LGBTIQ+ community with young people in a participatory, empathetic, and reflective manner.



**"The Unicorn"**

**Duration: 30 min**

**ACTIVITY 1**



## Appendix

### Definitions :

**Gender identity:** Gender identity is an inner sense of belonging to a gender category. It can correspond to the sex assigned at birth based on the body and genitalia (cisgender), but it can also be different (transgender).

**Sexual orientation:** Sexual orientation is about who you're attracted to physically or sexually. There are lots of different sexual orientations (lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, etc.).

**Romantic orientation:** Romantic orientation defines who you are emotionally and emotionally attracted to. It is different and distinct from sexual orientation. Although many people feel both, romantic attraction can exist without sexual attraction.

**Sex assigned at birth:** You are assigned your sex at birth, based on your bodily appearance: at birth, doctors declare whether you are a “male”, a “female” or an intersex person, depending on a number of factors.

**Gender expression:** Gender expression is how you express your gender to the world and/or how it is perceived by the world (usually via the way you dress, hairstyle, make-up, etc.).

**\* Objectives:**

Familiarize participants with terms and concepts of gender identity, sexual/romantic orientation, gender expression, and sex assigned at birth, and learn to differentiate them.

Gain a better understanding of these concepts through simple and reclaimable definitions.

Allow participants to access this knowledge through a channel other than ideology or "for-or-against" arguments.

**\* Subjects involved:**

Civic education, citizenship studies, gender studies, contemporary history, sociology, social psychology, visual arts, communication.

**Number of participants: 15-20 participants**

**Materials and resources:**

Whiteboard or flipchart  
Whiteboard marker  
Printed copies of the unicorn and definition (see appendix)

**This activity is from the LoveAct project:**

<https://thegendertalk.eu/media/annex-activity-sheets-en.pdf>

# 1

**Before the activity:** Read the list of definitions in the appendix.

# 2

### **How to set up the activity:**

- Ask participants to form groups of 3 or 4.
- Distribute a unicorn, a definition sheet, and a pen to each group.
- Ask them to place the concepts in the empty spaces on the unicorn. Meanwhile, draw the unicorn on the board and add arrows to the elements to be placed.
- When everyone has finished, each group reads a definition and says where they placed it on the unicorn. Check if everyone agrees.
- For each definition, you can ask: "Do you know any elements that refer to this word/concept?" This can help introduce the next activity.

### **Examples of words associated with each part of the unicorn:**

- Sexual orientation: hetero, bi, pan, lesbian, etc.
- Romantic orientation: heteroromantic, biromantic, homoromantic, etc.
- Sex assigned at birth: female, male, intersex
- Gender expression: feminine, masculine, etc.
- Gender identity: woman, man, non-binary, etc.

## "The glossary"

**Duration: 1 hour**

## ACTIVITY 2

### \* Objectives:

Increase participants' knowledge of queer vocabulary.

Limit stereotypes by learning true definitions.

Raise awareness about discrimination by providing details about queerphobic violence.

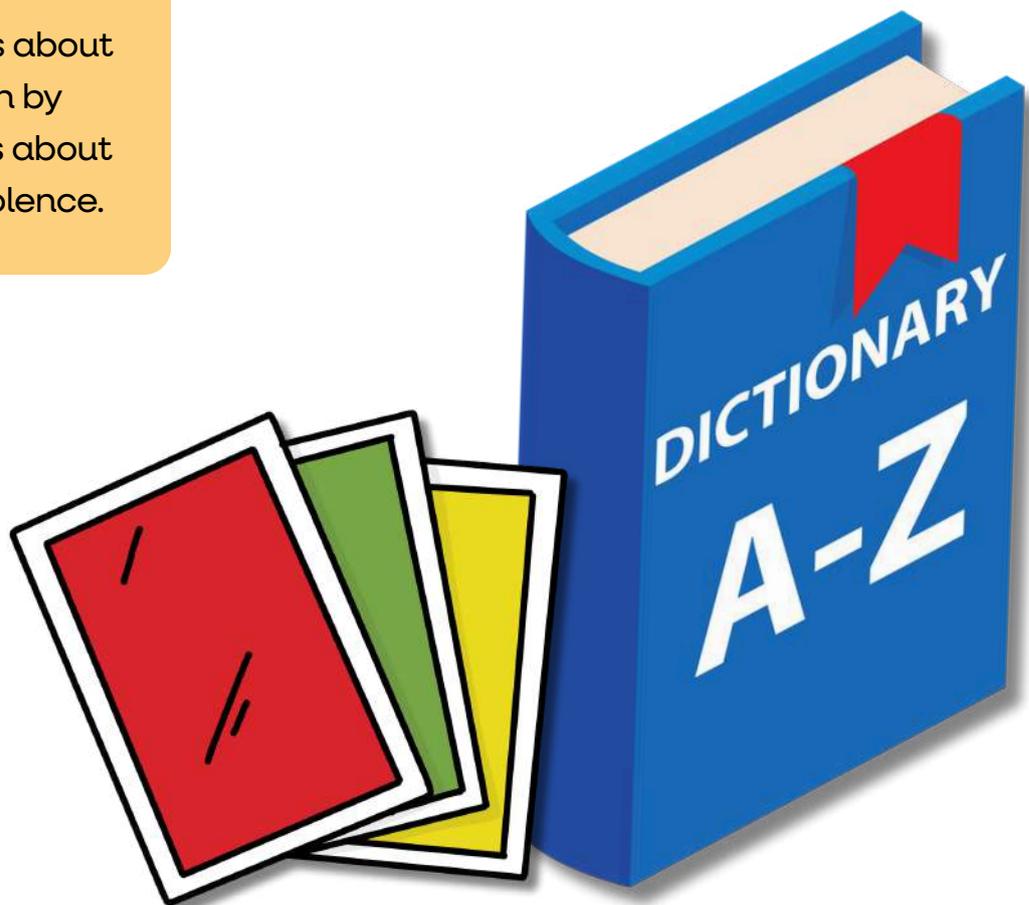


### Materials and resources:

- Enough printed glossaries for each group.
- A sheet of paper for each group.
- A pen for each group.

### Number of participants:

15-20 participants



# 1

**Before the activity:** Make sure to read the list of definitions in this chapter's dictionary. Print double-sided glossary cards (see appendix). Terms are on the front, and their definitions are on the back.

# 2

## How to set up the activity:

- Put participants into small groups.
- Distribute the glossary in order.
- Give them the following instructions: "You must take the cards one by one, see if you know the word written on them, and establish a common definition. Once you agree on a definition, flip the card and read the one we propose. If any of the definitions are unclear or if you don't agree, write all your questions and/or suggestions on a piece of paper."
- Allow 30 minutes to review all cards.
- Return to the plenary session, ask if there are any questions or suggestions, and review certain terms if deemed necessary.

## The glossary card template

## "Privilege market"

**Duration: 20 min**

**ACTIVITY 3**

### \* **Objectives:**

Understand the impact of discrimination and queerphobic prejudices on affected individuals.

Foster empathy among participants toward queer people.

Realize that discrimination mechanisms infiltrate all facets of a person's life.



### **Materials and resources:**

1. Privilege sheet
2. €100 bills
3. Pens
4. A spacious and clear room

### **Number of participants:**

minimum 3



# 1

**Before the activity:** Print fake bills (€100 bills) and the "privilege cards" sheet (see Appendix).

# 2

### How to set up the activity:

- Form small groups of 3 to 5 participants.
- Distribute a privilege sheet to each group and explain how the activity will unfold: "Imagine that we live in a world where you don't have access to any of the privileges listed on the sheet. Now I will give you a certain amount of money to buy these privileges. Each privilege costs €100. As a group, discuss and decide which privileges you want to buy."
- Distribute the fake money to each group. You can vary the amounts (e.g., from €300 to €900) to create initial inequality.
- Allow 20 minutes for group discussion. Each group should mark the privileges they choose to buy with a pen or marker.
- Return to a plenary session where each group presents which privileges they chose and explains why.
- Facilitate a group discussion by asking questions such as:
  - a. Was it easy or difficult to choose privileges?
  - b. Was there anything that surprised or frustrated you?
  - c. What type of person do you think has access to most privileges? Which one has access to the least?
  - d. Why do you think each group received a different amount of money? → Because even within the LGBTIQ+ community, people are born with different levels of privilege and oppression. A white gay man, a racialized trans woman, and a lesbian with a disability experience different realities.

# 3

**Conclusion:** Conclude the activity by sharing statistics or data that support the structural nature of discrimination in society.

- **For example (French context):** According to SOS Homophobia's 2024 report on LGBTIQ+phobias in France, 77% of LGBTIQ+phobia cases manifest within the family in the form of rejection and insults (41%), often from parents.
- In public places, out of 241 cases recorded in 2024, 69% involved insults and 42% physical assaults.
- In schools, 55% of victims are under 18, and most cases involve students, both as victims and perpetrators. The main manifestations of LGBTIQ+phobia are rejection (77%), insults (50%), and harassment (49%).

## Appendix

- I don't have to hide my romantic and/or sexual relationship for fear of people's reactions.
- I've never been afraid to hold my partner's hand in public.
- I've never had to change the way I speak, dress, or behave to avoid being perceived as LGBTIQA+.
- I'm not afraid of being rejected by my family because of my gender identity or sexual orientation.
- I can freely talk about my relationships with my family.
- I've never had to do a "coming out" to my family.
- I always receive appropriate healthcare because medical professionals are trained and do not question my sexual orientation or gender identity.
- I've never avoided a medical appointment out of fear of discrimination.
- I don't have to explain my gender identity to a healthcare provider.
- I've never been afraid that revealing my LGBTIQA+ identity could harm my career.
- I was never bullied at school because of my real or supposed sexual orientation or gender identity.
- I can display photos of my partner on my desk without fear.
- I've never had to check a country's laws before traveling to see if my identity is criminalized.
- I've never feared for my physical safety because of my physical appearance or gender expression.
- I don't have to justify the legitimacy of my identity to administrative services.
- I grew up seeing characters in the media (films, TV shows, books, newspapers, etc.) who shared my sexual orientation or gender identity.
- I've never felt that my identity was seen as a "trend" or a "phase".
- I've never had to educate others about my gender identity or sexual orientation.
- I see fictional characters who share my sexual orientation often getting happy endings in movies or TV shows.

## Resources

To enrich the work with young people on gender identities and the LGBTIQ+ community, it is essential to have resources that provide accurate information, support, and diverse perspectives. Below are suggested relevant materials and organizations.

### Books

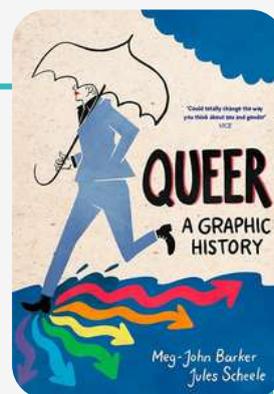
#### "All boys aren't blue" – George M. Johnson.

This memoir by George M. Johnson recounts their journey as a young, Black, queer, and non-binary person. Through personal stories, they share their challenging childhood, their adolescence marked by identity searching, and their first sexual experiences. Johnson addresses themes such as homophobia, racism, and the challenges of navigating an unconventional masculinity in a society that imposes strict norms. It is an honest and raw book that blends personal testimony with reflection on the social struggles faced by LGBTIQ+ people of color.



#### "Queer: a graphic history" – Meg-John Barker, Jules Scheele.

"Queer: A Graphic History" is an illustrated book that explores the basic concepts of queer theory in an accessible and visually engaging way. Through simple drawings and clear explanations, the authors present essential concepts such as gender, sexuality, and how social norms are constructed and contested. They also explain important figures in queer theory like Judith Butler and Michel Foucault. This book is an excellent starting point for anyone who wants to understand the complex ideas of queer theory, all while being captivated by modern illustrations.



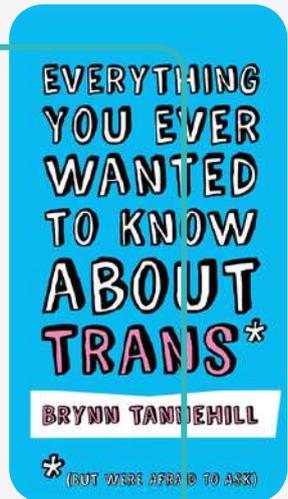
**"The last one" – Fatima Daas.**

"The last one" is a poignant novel by Fatima Daas, a young Muslim lesbian author, telling her story of navigating her Algerian heritage, her Muslim faith, and her queer identity. Through fragments of her life, Fatima explores her internal struggles and conflicts with family and societal homophobia, as well as her desire to be authentic. The book offers a unique perspective on the difficulty of navigating multiple identities at once, especially for young people from cultural and religious minorities. It is a story of self-discovery and resistance to marginalization.



**"Everything you ever wanted to know about trans (but were afraid to ask)" – Brynn Tannehill.**

In this comprehensive guide, Brynn Tannehill, a trans woman and activist, answers the most common and often misunderstood questions about trans people. The book covers a wide range of topics: transition, medical treatments, discrimination, the social and psychological aspects of the trans experience, and the challenges trans people face. Tannehill demystifies many misconceptions and provides factual and accurate information, approaching the issues in a human and accessible way. It is an essential resource for anyone who wants to understand the realities of trans people without judgment.



## Articles

**"The reception of LGBTIQ+ refugees in Europe" – Pour la Solidarité.**

This article from Pour la Solidarité delves into the unique challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ refugees and asylum seekers in Europe, highlighting how many are forced to flee their home countries due to persecution based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression (SOGI), often facing dual vulnerability upon arrival. The study critically examines existing asylum norms and procedures based on SOGI across various European countries,

including Belgium, France, Italy, and Spain, drawing on international reports and organizational insights. It also references the "Rainbow Welcome!" project, aiming to develop essential awareness and training tools for professionals, thereby striving to improve the reception and integration of LGBTIQ+ refugees in Europe.

<https://pourolsolidarite.eu/en/publication/reception-lgbtqi-refugees-europe/>

**"An evidence-based framework for supporting older lgbtqi+ adults in rural communities: findings from the lgbtqi+ social networks, aging, and policy study" – OXFORD Academy.**

This article examines the significant challenges faced by older LGBTIQ+ adults in rural U.S. South, such as limited access to affirming healthcare, discrimination, stigma, and social isolation exacerbated by rural hospital closures and conscientious objection laws. Despite these obstacles, the study highlights their resilience and reliance on "chosen families" for support, ultimately emphasizing the urgent need for policymakers to expand LGBTIQ+ inclusive data, target funding, and implement policy initiatives to address health disparities in these communities.

<https://academic.oup.com/ppar/article/34/4/150/7908475>

## Films

**"Laurence anyways"** (2012, Xavier Dolan)

This film offers a deep and direct exploration of transgender identity and the transition process. It follows Laurence's journey as she decides to live as a woman, and the profound impact this decision has on her relationships and society. It's crucial for understanding the trans experience, acceptance, and the emotional and social challenges involved.

**"Joyland"** (2022, Saim Sadiq)

Set in Pakistan, this film provides a poignant look at transgender identity and the complexities of masculinity and gender roles within a specific cultural context. The central relationship involving a trans dancer illuminates the lives of trans individuals and the societal, familial, and personal pressures related to gender identity and expression.

### **"But I'm a Cheerleader" (1999, Jamie Babbit)**

While often associated with lesbian identity, this satirical comedy is highly relevant to gender identities due to its sharp critique of the imposition of binary, heteronormative gender roles and expressions. It humorously yet incisively portrays how society attempts to "correct" or force individuals into specific gender molds, making it valuable for discussing gender non-conformity and performativity.

## Documentaries

### **"Paris is burning" (1990) - Jennie Livingston.**

A film classic documenting the ballroom culture in New York City in the late 80s, offering a window into the lives of young Black and Latinx LGBTIQ+ individuals, most of them trans or drag. It explores themes of identity, community, race, class, gender, and sexuality, showing how art and self-expression can be a form of resistance and resilience in the face of discrimination.

### **"Disclosure" (2020, Sam Feder)**

Documentary directed by Sam Feder (Netflix). This documentary examines the representation of trans people in film and television, and how these representations have shaped public perceptions of trans identity. Featuring prominent trans figures, "Disclosure" offers a critical and historical look at the impact of media on transphobia and trans visibility. It is a powerful resource for debating media representation and its effects.

## Series

### **"Sex Education" (Netflix)**

This series is incredibly relevant due to its open, honest, and educational approach to a wide range of topics concerning sexuality, relationships, and, crucially, gender identities and sexual orientation. It sensitively and explicitly addresses the doubts,

Fears, and experiences of young people discovering who they are. Trans and non-binary characters are well-developed and their stories are integral to the narrative, offering multiple entry points for discussions with young people about self-acceptance, respect, and diversity. Its overall tone is inclusive and often very insightful.

### "Heartstopper" (Netflix)

An exceptionally positive and heartwarming series, "Heartstopper" tackles LGBTIQA+ identity in adolescence in a very accessible and affirming way. While its primary focus is often on sexual orientation (gay/lesbian), it also features non-binary characters and explores the complexities of identity formation in a manner that deeply resonates with young audiences. Its hopeful tone and the portrayal of healthy relationships and mutual support make it an excellent choice for fostering empathy and understanding in youth settings.

### "Pose" (FX)

Though aimed at a more mature audience and dealing with complex themes (racism, HIV/AIDS, survival), "Pose"'s relevance for gender identities, especially transgender identity, is immense. A significant portion of its cast and main characters are trans women of color, and the series offers a deep, authentic visualization of their lives, struggles, dreams, and the formation of "chosen families" within New York's ball culture scene. For youth workers, it can be a powerful resource for understanding the historical and social context of the trans community, resilience, and the vital importance of community, though its content would require careful handling and adaptation depending on the age group.

## key organizations

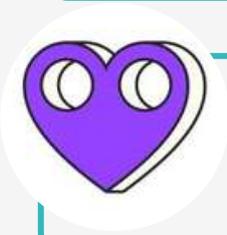


**ILGA-Europe:** An organization advocating for the rights of LGBTIQA+ people across Europe through policy advocacy, research, and support for local activists.  
**Website:** <https://ilga.org/>



**Transgender Europe (TGEU):** A network fighting for the rights and protection of transgender people in Europe through legal action, awareness-raising, and community support.

**Website:** <https://tgeu.org/>



**IGLYO (International LGBTIQ+ Youth & Student Organisation):** An organization specifically representing and supporting LGBTIQ+ youth in Europe through education, leadership development, and campaigns tailored to their needs.



**OII Europe (Organisation Intersex International Europe):** An association protecting the rights of intersex people by fighting against non-consensual medical interventions and promoting legal recognition of intersex individuals.



**Rainbow Welcome:** A European initiative working to improve the reception and integration of LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees by providing training and resources to reception services.



**OutRight International:** A global organization working to advance the human rights of LGBTIQ+ people around the world. They conduct research, advocate for policy changes, and support grassroots activists.

**Website:** <https://outrightinternational.org/>



**FELGTBI+ (Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gais, Trans, Bisexuales, Intersexuales y Más):** A Spanish organization that brings together more than 50 LGBTIQ+ entities from across the territory. They are dedicated to defending rights, raising visibility, and educating about sexual and gender diversity in Spain. Website: <https://felgtbi.org/> (This is a specific example for Spain; you might consider looking for similar local organizations for your specific context).

## Glossary of key terms:

**For clear understanding and common language, the essential terms of this module are presented:**

**LGBTIQA+:** Acronym representing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Asexual individuals, and other gender identities and sexual minorities.

**Gender identity:** An individual's deep and personal sense of being a man, woman, both, neither, or somewhere on the gender spectrum. It may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth, based on body and genitals (cisgender), but it can also be different (transgender).

**Sexual orientation:** Refers to the emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attraction a person feels toward other people. There are many different sexual orientations (lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, etc.).

**Sex assigned at Birth:** The classification of a person as male or female at birth, based on observable biological characteristics (genitals). At birth, doctors declare whether you are "male," "female," or intersex, depending on a number of factors.

**Cisgender:** A person whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth. For example, a person born with a vulva, considered a girl as a child, and who now feels like a woman, is a cisgender woman.

**Transgender:** A person whose gender identity does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth. For example, a person born with a vulva, who was considered a girl as a child and now feels like a boy, is a transgender man.

**Queer:** An umbrella term or identity used by people who do not conform to traditional gender and/or sexuality norms. It is often used to describe fluid and non-binary identities.



**Intersex:** A person born with sex characteristics (genitals, gonads, chromosomes, etc.) that do not fit typical binary definitions of "male" or "female." For example, a baby born with a penis and vulva, or with a vulva and testosterone (so when the child grows up, they will have more body hair than the average girl), etc. This is not a disease or a disability. Intersex people represent 1.7% of the population.

**Asexual:** A person who experiences little or no sexual attraction to other people. This does not mean they never have sex, but that sex provides them with little or no pleasure, and it is not an activity that particularly interests them.

**Agender:** A person who does not identify with any gender, or considers themselves genderless.

**Pansexual:** A person who experiences sexual, romantic, or emotional attraction to other people regardless of their sex, gender identity, or gender expression. A pansexual person is attracted to all genders without distinction or preference.

**Non-Binary:** A person whose gender identity is not exclusively male or female. They may identify as a combination of genders, genderless, or with a different gender.

**Genderfluid:** A person whose gender identity is not fixed and may change or fluctuate over time (from day to day, or week to week, for example). A genderfluid person may feel male at one moment, female at another, for example.

**Sexism:** Discrimination or prejudice based on a person's sex or gender. It reinforces rigid gender roles and expectations.

**Homophobia:** Fear, irrational aversion, or discrimination towards homosexual people.

**Transphobia:** Fear, irrational aversion, or discrimination towards transgender people. It often includes *misgendering* and *deadnaming*.

**Biphobia:** Fear, irrational aversion, or discrimination against bisexual people, often based on stereotypes or the denial of their sexual orientation.

**Intersectionality:** An analytical framework that recognizes how an individual's various social identities (such as gender, race, social class, sexuality, disability) intersect and overlap to create unique experiences of discrimination and/or privilege.

**Misgendering:** The act of using pronouns, articles, or gendered language that does not correspond with a person's gender identity. It is considered a form of violence and disrespect for identity.

**Deadname:** The birth name of a trans or non-binary person who has changed their name. Using this name (when the new one is known) is disrespectful and considered a form of violence that denies the person's current identity.

**Coming Out:** The personal process by which an LGBTIQ+ person reveals their sexual orientation or gender identity to others. It is an ongoing and personal journey.

**Ally:** A person (often cisgender and/or heterosexual) who actively supports the rights, dignity, and inclusion of the LGBTIQ+ community. They play a crucial role in education and the fight against discrimination.

**Transition:** The process by which a transgender person aligns their external presentation and/or their body with their gender identity. It can include social changes (name, pronouns, clothing), legal changes (documentation), and/or medical changes (hormone therapy, surgeries). Transitions are diverse and personal and can be long and complicated.

no  
gender  
gap

**THANK  
YOU!**

This document was drafted with the participation of :



2024-1-ES02-KA210-YOU-000253858, Erasmus+

# New masculinities

## Theory and definition

Have you ever wondered why people say that a man "shouldn't cry" or that he "has to be strong and decisive"? For a long time, society has imposed a specific model of masculinity: the tough guy who doesn't show weakness, who is always in control, and who doesn't let emotions get to him. But does this view really make sense? And more importantly, is it the only way to be a man? This model, aside from being rigid, has often made it difficult for men to process their emotions, build relationships, and connect with themselves.

Today, however, things are changing. People are increasingly talking about "**New masculinities**", a concept that doesn't propose a single model to follow but rather encourages breaking free from stereotypes and living one's male identity in a more authentic and peaceful way. This shift is thanks to gender equality movements (including feminism) that have opened up spaces for men to reconsider their roles and challenge traditional expectations.

**New masculinities** refer to a progressive and evolving understanding of what it means to

be a man, moving beyond traditional, restrictive, and often harmful patriarchal norms. This concept emphasizes the importance of gender equality, empathy, emotional intelligence, and respect for all individuals, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation. It promotes a masculinity that is not defined by dominance, aggression, or emotional suppression, but by authenticity, vulnerability, and a commitment to justice.

This involves:

**Challenging traditional gender roles:**

Actively questioning and dismantling the rigid expectations historically placed on men, such as the pressure to be stoic, aggressive, or solely focused on providing.

**Embracing emotional expression:**

Encouraging men to acknowledge, express, and manage a full range of emotions, moving away from the idea that emotional vulnerability is a sign of weakness.

**Promoting empathy and respect:**

Fostering genuine understanding and consideration for the

experiences and perspectives of others, especially women and marginalized gender identities, and rejecting misogyny, homophobia, and transphobia.

**Active engagement in care and domestic responsibilities:**

Encouraging men to take on an equal share of household chores, childcare, and caregiving roles, recognizing this as a fundamental aspect of partnership and equality.

**Rejecting violence and aggression:**

Actively working to dismantle harmful notions of

masculinity that equate strength with violence or control, promoting peaceful conflict resolution and respectful interactions.

**Building healthy relationships:**

Fostering relationships based on equality, communication, and mutual respect, free from power imbalances or control.

**Supporting feminism and gender equality:**

Recognizing that the liberation of women and other gender identities is intrinsically linked to the liberation of men from rigid patriarchal constraints. New masculinities are inherently allied with feminist movements.

In essence, new masculinities propose a more liberating, inclusive, and equitable vision for men, which benefits not only men themselves by allowing them to live more authentically, but also society as a whole by fostering greater gender equality and reducing gender-based violence and discrimination.

## **Theoretical foundations of new masculinities**

The concept of new masculinities is rooted in various theoretical frameworks that critique traditional masculinity and advocate for more equitable and flexible expressions of maleness. These foundations draw heavily from feminist theory, gender studies, critical masculinity studies, and psychology.

**Feminist theory:** This is the most foundational influence. Feminist scholars have extensively analyzed how patriarchy structures society

and limits the roles and experiences of both women and men. They argue that traditional masculinity, which often relies on dominance over

women and the suppression of emotions, is a product of patriarchal systems. New masculinities arise from the recognition that dismantling patriarchy is not only beneficial for women but also liberates men from the rigid and often harmful expectations imposed by traditional male norms. Key feminist thinkers like **Bell Hooks** (e.g., in "The will to change: men, masculinity, and love") have explored how patriarchal conditioning prevents men from fully experiencing love, connection, and emotional intimacy, thus advocating for men's active role in dismantling patriarchy for their own liberation.

**Critical masculinity studies:** Emerging largely from feminist critiques, this field specifically focuses on examining the diverse constructions of masculinity across cultures and historical periods. It critiques hegemonic masculinity, which is the dominant and idealized form of masculinity in a given society (often associated with power, heterosexuality, and aggression). Scholars like **R.W. Connell** (e.g., "Masculinities") have highlighted

that masculinity is not a monolithic concept but is plural, relational, and often contested. New Masculinities can be seen as a counter-hegemonic form, challenging the established norms and advocating for more inclusive and non-toxic expressions.

**Gender as a social construct:** Like gender itself, masculinity is understood as a social construct rather than a purely biological one. This means that traits, behaviors, and expectations associated with "being a man" are learned and perpetuated through social, cultural, and historical processes, rather than being innate. This understanding allows for the possibility of redefining and changing what masculinity means, paving the way for "new" forms

**Psychological perspectives:** Psychology contributes to understanding how the pressure to conform to traditional masculinity can negatively impact men's mental health, leading to emotional suppression, higher rates of suicide, substance abuse, and difficulty forming healthy relationships.

New Masculinities offer a psychological liberation by allowing men to be more authentic, express emotions, and seek help without feeling that it compromises their "manhood".

**Intersectionality:** This framework, pioneered by **Kimberlé Crenshaw**, is crucial for understanding that masculinity is not experienced uniformly by all men. Race, class, sexuality, disability, and other social categories intersect with gender to create diverse experiences of masculinity. For example, the expectations placed on a Black man might differ significantly from those on a white man, and thus, "New masculinities" must be inclusive and attentive to these diverse experiences, challenging all forms of oppression, not just sexism.

In summary, the conceptual background of new masculinities emphasize that masculinity is a learned social construct, not a fixed biological reality. They draw from feminist critiques of patriarchy, sociological analyses of power and gender, and psychological insights

into male well-being, all converging on the idea that dismantling traditional, harmful male norms is essential for creating a more just, equitable, and humane society for everyone.



# How to promote new masculinities in communities

Promoting new masculinities within communities is a crucial step towards achieving gender equality and fostering healthier societies. Youth workers are ideally positioned to facilitate this change, given their direct engagement with young people and their influence on social norms. Here are key actions and approaches:

## Education and awareness:

- **Workshops and discussion groups:** Organize sessions for young men and boys to discuss what masculinity means to them, identify harmful stereotypes, and explore alternative ways of being a man. Use interactive methods like storytelling, role-playing, and critical media analysis.
- **Media literacy:** Help young people critically analyze media portrayals of masculinity (in films, video games, advertising) to understand how they perpetuate stereotypes and to identify more diverse and positive representations.
- **Parental engagement:** Offer workshops for parents to discuss positive parenting strategies that challenge gender stereotypes from an early age, encouraging emotional expression and shared responsibilities for boys.

## Role modeling and mentorship:

- **Highlight diverse male role models:** Showcase men who embody new masculinities – those who are emotionally intelligent, actively involved in caregiving, challenge homophobia, and advocate for gender equality. This can include public figures, community leaders, or older youth.
- **Mentorship programs:** Establish mentorship programs where older male youth or adult men who exemplify new masculinities can guide younger boys, offering practical advice and support for navigating gender expectations.

### Creating safe and inclusive spaces:

- **Encourage emotional expression:** Create environments where boys and young men feel safe to express their emotions without fear of judgment or ridicule. This can involve structured activities or simply fostering an atmosphere of acceptance.
- **Promote healthy communication:** Teach and model effective communication skills, including active listening, expressing needs, and resolving conflicts non-violently.
- **Support for LGBTIQ+ Youth:** Ensure that initiatives for new masculinities are inclusive of and supportive of LGBTIQ+ boys and young men, addressing homophobia and transphobia that often target non-conforming masculinities.

### Challenging harmful behaviors:

- **Bystander intervention training:** Equip young people with the skills to intervene safely and effectively when they witness sexist comments, harassment, or aggression from peers.
- **Disrupting "Bro culture":** Address and challenge group dynamics that normalize sexism, misogyny, or aggressive behavior among young men. Encourage peer accountability and mutual respect.
- **Advocate for comprehensive sex education:** Promote sex education that includes consent, healthy relationships, and challenges gender stereotypes regarding sexuality.

### Policy and structural change:

- **Advocate for parental leave:** Support policies that encourage men to take parental leave, normalizing their role as active caregivers and challenging the idea that caregiving is primarily a female responsibility.
- **Promote gender-neutral language:** Encourage the use of inclusive language in all community materials and communications.
- **Collaborate with local institutions:** Work with schools, sports clubs, and community centers to integrate principles of new masculinities into their programs and policies.

By implementing these strategies, youth workers can empower young men to embrace more authentic, equitable, and respectful forms of masculinity, contributing to a more just and inclusive society for everyone.

## **Key Subtopics Related to New Masculinities**

To fully grasp the concept of new masculinities, it is essential to explore its intersection with various aspects of life and society. These subtopics illustrate how the shift towards more equitable male identities influences individual well-being and societal structures.

### Emotional intelligence and expression:

**Relationship:** Traditional masculinity often discourages emotional expression in men, promoting stoicism and the suppression of feelings other than anger or dominance. New masculinities emphasize the importance of emotional literacy, enabling men to recognize, understand, and express their full range of emotions in healthy ways. This involves moving beyond the "boys don't cry" mentality.

**Contribution:** This subtopic highlights a core tenet of new masculinities: fostering emotional authenticity in men. It is crucial because emotional suppression can lead to various mental health issues and hinders the formation of deep, meaningful relationships. By promoting emotional intelligence, this subtopic shows how new Masculinities benefit men personally and contribute to healthier relational dynamics.

## Key Subtopic

### Shared domestic and care responsibilities:

**Relationship:** Historically, domestic chores and caregiving (childcare, elder care) have been overwhelmingly assigned to women, reinforcing the "double burden." New masculinities advocate for men to actively and equally participate in these responsibilities, challenging the notion that care work is inherently "feminine" or less valuable. This includes taking parental leave and contributing daily.

**Contribution:** This subtopic directly addresses the practical application of gender equality within the home. It illustrates how new masculinities translate into tangible changes in daily life, leading to a more equitable distribution of labor and supporting women's professional and personal development. It underscores the idea that true equality requires men's active participation in all spheres, including the traditionally "private" one.

### Positive relationships and consent:

**Relationship:** Traditional masculinity can sometimes foster notions of control or entitlement in relationships, contributing to issues of power imbalance and lack of consent. New masculinities promote relationships built on mutual respect, open communication, empathy, and enthusiastic consent. This involves challenging concepts like toxic jealousy, possessiveness, and the idea that "no means convince me."

**Contribution:** This subtopic is vital for promoting healthy, respectful, and safe relationships. By focusing on consent and mutual respect, it directly counters harmful aspects of traditional masculinity and helps prevent gender-based violence. It shows how New Masculinities contribute to safer environments and more fulfilling interactions for everyone.

## Key Subtopic

### Men as allies in feminism and gender equality:

**Relationship:** Historically, feminism has been seen as a "women's issue," sometimes leading to men feeling excluded or even defensive. New masculinities positions men as active and indispensable allies in the fight for gender equality. This means understanding and acknowledging male privilege, listening to women's experiences, challenging sexism among peers, and advocating for feminist goals.

**Contribution:** This subtopic emphasizes that gender equality is a shared responsibility, not just a struggle for women. It outlines the active role men can play in dismantling patriarchal structures and promoting a more just world. By highlighting alliance, it shows how new masculinities are not just about personal transformation but about collective social change.

### Critique of hegemonic masculinity:

**Relationship:** Hegemonic masculinity refers to the dominant, idealized form of masculinity in a given society, often associated with power, heterosexuality, physical strength, and emotional stoicism. New masculinities actively critique and deconstruct this singular, rigid model, recognizing that it is limiting and harmful for men who don't fit it, as well as for women and other gender identities.

**Contribution:** This subtopic provides the theoretical foundation for why new masculinities are necessary. By analyzing and challenging the dominant form of masculinity, it clarifies what new masculinities are moving away from and why this shift is beneficial. It helps to understand the systemic nature of gender expectations.

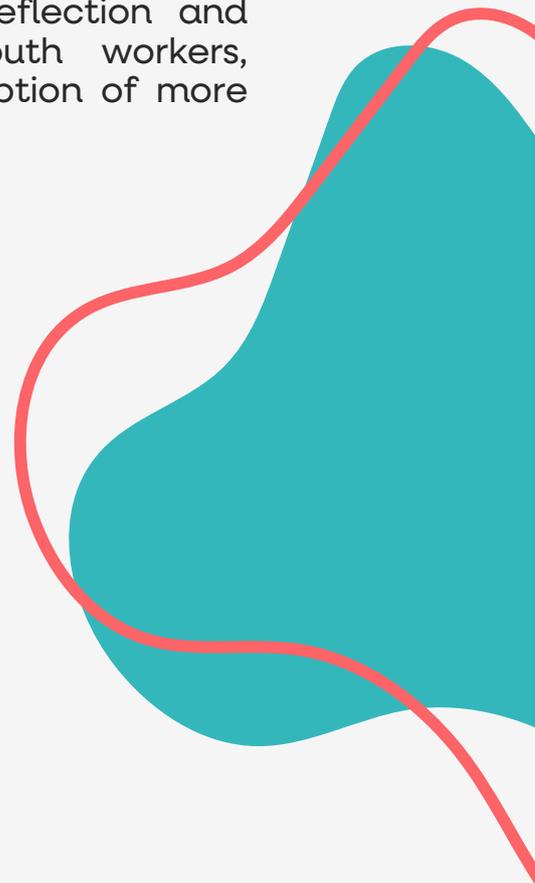
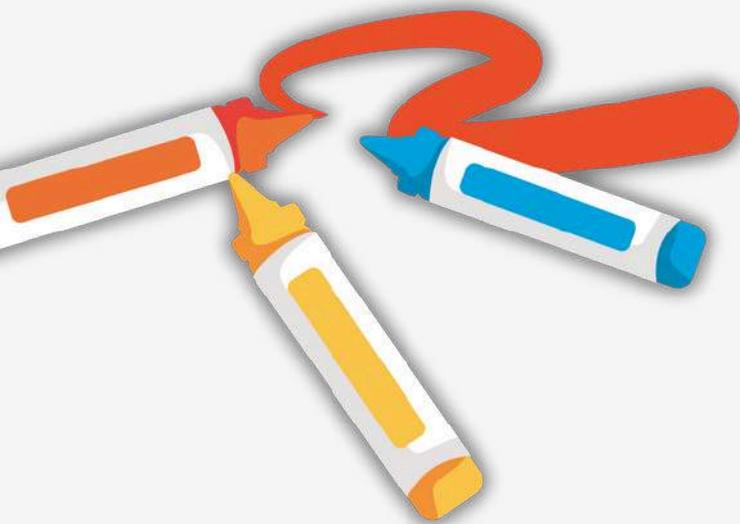


## Key Subtopic

These subtopics collectively contribute to a holistic understanding of new masculinities, demonstrating their relevance not only to individual identity and well-being but also to the broader goals of gender equality and social justice.

# NON-FORMAL EDUCATION (NFE) ACTIVITIES

These activities are designed to facilitate reflection and dialogue on new masculinities among youth workers, promoting a shift in perspective and the adoption of more equitable practices.



## **Real men don't do housework... or do they?**

**Duration: 90 minutes.**

## **ACTIVITY 1**

### **\* Objectives:**

Stimulate critical thinking about concepts of masculinity and femininity.

Explore the relationship between gender, power, and social roles.

Deconstruct stereotypes through personal experiences and social representations.

Promote inclusive language and attitudes.

**\* Subjects involved:** Civic education, citizenship studies, gender studies, contemporary history, sociology, social psychology, visual arts, communication.

**Number of participants: 15-20**

### **Materials and resources:**

- A3 paper or flip chart sheets.
- Markers and post-its.
- Magazines, newspaper articles, printed ads, social media images.
- One copy per group of the updated Activity Texts (1–5) – you can find them below in this module.
- A suitable group work space (classroom, study hall, workshop room...).

# 1

## Introduction (5 minutes):

- Present the topic: gender roles and stereotypes today.
- Ask the question: "What does it mean to be a man or a woman today?"
- Explain that participants will work in groups to analyze texts and visuals and create a critical, creative product.

# 2

## Group formation & material distribution (5 minutes):

- **Divide participants into three types of groups:**
  - Women-only groups.
  - Men-only groups.
  - Mixed-gender groups.
  - (If needed, use only mixed groups while ensuring diverse perspectives).
- **Distribute:**
  - Texts 1–4 to same-gender groups.
  - Text 5 + visual materials (magazines, social images, ads) to mixed groups.

# 3

## Group work (30 minutes):

- **Same-Gender Groups (Texts 1–4):**
  - Read and analyze the assigned text.
  - Reflect on personal, family, and cultural experiences.
  - Create a visual summary: mind map, poster, or creative storytelling.
  - Title the work with a provocative phrase.

- **Mixed groups (Text 5):**

- Create a visual collage representing gender roles, expectations, and stereotypes in:
  - Work.
  - Relationships.
  - Media.
  - Daily life.

Include positive elements or disruptors: alternative models, inspiring examples, counter-narratives.

4

**Group presentations (25 minutes):**

Each group presents in 4–5 minutes:

- A summary of their discussion.
- Key points and reflections.
- The message behind their visual product.

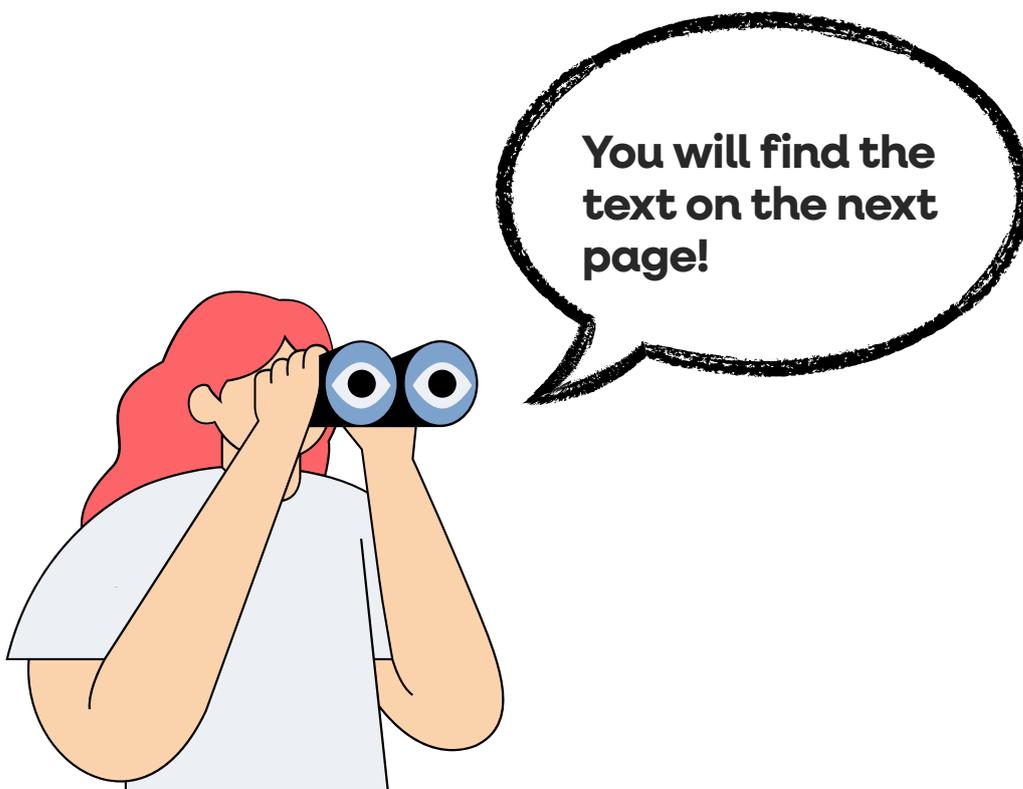
All posters and collages are displayed to create a "Critical Gallery" in the room.

# 5

## Phase 5 – Final debate (20 minutes):

Facilitate a closing discussion using these guiding questions:

- What kinds of gender models did you internalize growing up?
- Which stereotypes are still present in your daily life?
- In what spaces do you feel free to be yourself beyond gender expectations?
- How do media, social networks, or family shape your view of gender roles?
- What can we do to build a more equitable culture, free from rigid roles?



### **Text 1 – 'Don't Be a Girl!'**

How many times have boys been told not to cry, not to be a 'sissy (p\*\*sy)'? As if showing emotions was something to be ashamed of. As they grow up, many men learn to suppress sadness, fear, vulnerability. But at what cost? Bottling up emotions can lead to difficulties in relationships, emotional isolation, and mental health struggles. The truth is, emotions aren't gendered. They are human. So why is ignoring your feelings seen as 'more manly'?

### **Text 2 – The Breadwinner Myth**

Even today, even though many women earn well and are financially independent, there's still a widespread idea that men should be the 'providers'. This puts pressure on men to achieve financial success at all costs, and many feel inadequate if they don't meet this standard. At the same time, it's often used to justify why men do less at home or in emotional care. But is this really what being a man is about?

### **Text 3 – Good Girls Don't Raise Their Voice**

Girls are often taught early on to be polite, sweet, patient—not to make noise or cause problems. As they grow older, many women keep these behaviors at university, at work, or in relationships. But what happens when a woman speaks up, asserts herself, takes the lead? She's often labeled 'aggressive', 'too much', 'emotional'. Why is male independence seen as strength, and female independence as a threat?

#### **Text 4 – The Invisible Mental Load**

Young women today study, work, and are independent. Yet, in couples or family life, they often take on most of the daily 'management': remembering appointments, planning meals, sending birthday messages, organizing social events. This is called the 'mental load'—a silent, unpaid job that's usually expected of women. But who decided it should be their job?

#### **Text 5 – What Kind of Image Is This?**

Look through magazines, social media, and advertising. What do they say about what it means to be a man or a woman? Men are often shown as strong, confident, leaders. Women are portrayed as polished, sensual, kind—often in support of others (as mothers, partners, assistants). But where are the real bodies? The non-binary people? The sensitive men? The ambitious women? And most importantly: who sets these standards?

**Man enough?  
rethinking  
masculinity today**

**Duration: 60  
minutes.**

**ACTIVITY 2**

**\* Objectives:**

Recognize key elements of toxic masculinity.

Reflect on social pressures placed on boys and men.

Explore new, healthier models of masculinity: emotional, empathetic, inclusive.

**\* Materials and resources:**

- A3 sheets, markers, post-its.
- Provocative quotes (provided below).
- Space for small group work.

**Number of participants:**

10-20 (Ages 18–30).



# 1

## Opening brainstorm (10 min):

**Question:** "What comes to mind when you hear the word 'masculinity'?"

Each participant writes 1 word on a post-it.

Words are read aloud and posted on a wall or board.

Quick reflection: Are the words mostly positive or negative?

Repetitive? Surprising?

# 2

## Critical stimulus (5 min):

Read one or more of the following quotes:

- "Real men don't cry."
- "Be a man."
- "A man must always be strong."
- "Men don't talk about feelings."

## Discussion prompts:

- Have you heard or said things like this before?
- How do they affect men and boys?

# 3

## Group work (25 min):

Split into small groups (3–5 people). Choose one of the following:

### Option A: Critical poster

**Title:** "What Being a Man Means to Us Today"

Groups create a visual poster with alternative, positive messages about masculinity.

### **Option B: Short storytelling**

- Title: "The Time a Man Was Different..."
- Groups write a short (real or fictional) story that breaks a masculine stereotype.

4

### **Sharing and final discussion (20 min):**

Each group presents briefly (3–5 minutes).

Lead a final discussion with these questions:

- Did anything resonate personally with you?
- What surprised you or challenged your thinking?
- What would you like to change in how masculinity is talked about or shown?

## "The journey of the new man"

**Duration: 60 minutes.**

## ACTIVITY 3

### \* Objectives:

Stimulate reflection on traditional and alternative models of masculinity.

Deconstruct gender stereotypes through dialogue and creativity.

Promote healthier and more inclusive identities and relationships.

### \* Materials and resources

- A3 sheets or flip chart paper.
- Markers, post-its, glue, scissors. Magazines, printed ads, social media images.
- Space for group work and a final "Gallery".
- Blank paper for the final "Identity Card".

### Number of participants:

15–20 young people (ages 18–30). Organized in mixed-gender or single-gender groups, based on context and comfort level.

# 1

## Introduction and icebreaker (5 minutes):

- Ask participants: "What does it mean to be a man today?" "What behaviors are rewarded or punished in society?"
- Write keywords on a board or collect them on post-its.
- Explain the concept of the workshop as a "journey" through different themes.

# 2

## Group work – journey stops (30 minutes):

Divide participants into 3 or 4 small mixed-gender groups.

Each group is assigned one of the following Journey Stops:

- **Stop 1 – Strength and Emotion:**
  - (Exploring the myth of the strong, emotionally detached man).
  - Guiding question: Which emotions do you feel free to express? Which ones do you hide? Why?
- **Stop 2 – Respect and power:**
  - (Power dynamics in gender roles).
  - Guiding question: In what situations is power used to exclude, dominate, or protect? How could power be used to create fairness?
- **Stop 3 – Healthy relationships:**
  - (Care, friendship, intimacy).
  - Guiding question: What does it take to build a fair and non-toxic relationship?

### Each group:

- Analyzes the topic using the guide text (provided below).
- Shares personal experiences.
- Creates a visual product: poster, collage, slogan, or visual storytelling.
- Titles their work with a provocative or poetic phrase.

# 3

### Sharing and final discussion (25 min):

Each group has 3–4 minutes to present:

- Their process and key reflections.
- The message behind their creative product.
- One critical point or question to share with the others

All works are displayed to create a “Critical gallery” in the room.

Lead a final discussion with these questions:

- What gender models did you internalize as a child?
- What stereotypes still affect your daily life?
- In what spaces do you feel free to be yourself, beyond gender expectations?
- How do media, family, and social networks shape your view of gender roles?
- What kind of culture do we want to build? What do we need to change?

## Guide texts for the journey stops

(Each group receives one short, thought-provoking text along with a guiding question. These are used to spark discussion and create a visual or symbolic output (poster, collage, slogan, drawing...))

- **Stop 1 – Strength and emotion:**

**Guide text:** "From a young age, many boys are told: 'Don't cry,' 'Be strong,' 'Don't be soft.' But what happens when someone is taught to suppress pain, fear, or vulnerability? Maybe true strength also means asking for help and showing empathy."

**Guiding question:** Which emotions do you feel free to express? Which ones do you hide? Why?

- **Stop 2 – Respect and power:**

**Guide text:** "Male power often hides in plain sight: in the voice that interrupts, in the silence that dominates, in the joke that diminishes. Sometimes, those with power don't even notice they have it. But respect starts with listening and being aware of the impact we have on others."

**Guiding question:** In what situations is power used to exclude, dominate, or protect? How could power be used to create fairness?

- **Stop 3 – Healthy relationships:**

**Guide text:** "Many emotional or romantic relationships are shaped by fixed roles: the man is strong and protective; the woman is caring and sensitive. But the most authentic connections are those where both people can be strong, soft, messy, and human. Balance comes from mutual care—not control."

**Guiding question:** What does a fair, non-toxic, healthy relationship look like to you?

# Identity card: the new man / the ally i want to be:

Symbolic Name: .....

Values i want to stand for (select from the list in the next page):

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Qualities I want to grow (select from the list in the next page):

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Behaviors or beliefs I want to leave behind (select from the list in the next page):

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Things I want to carry with me on my journey:** (e.g., healthy relationships, trust, critical thinking, new role models...)

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**Who I want to support:** (e.g., friends, partners, siblings, coworkers, young people...)

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## list to complete the identity card:

### VALUES

Empathy, Honesty, Respect, Vulnerability, Kindness, Courage, Compassion, Self-awareness, Authenticity, Patience, Humility, Collaboration, Equality, Love, Non-violence, Trust, Support, Gratitude, Listening, Fairness, Growth, Openness, Justice, Inclusivity, Understanding, Accountability, Self-care, Resilience, Creativity, Curiosity, Confidence, Forgiveness.

### QUALITY

Emotional Intelligence, Self-Confidence, Courage, Empathy, Active Listening, Compassion, Vulnerability, Assertiveness, Resilience, Patience, Kindness, Openness to feedback, Humility, Self-awareness, Flexibility, Gratitude, Curiosity, Creativity, Integrity, Adaptability, Honesty, Accountability, Generosity, Optimism, Collaboration, Emotional resilience, Fairness, Self-discipline, Respect for diversity, Trustworthiness, Forgiveness, Leadership.

### BEHAVIOR/BELIEF

Toxic competition, Fear of vulnerability, Need to control others, Superficiality, Fear of being judged, Toxic masculinity, Emotional suppression, Gender stereotypes, Dominance over others, Aggression as strength, Disrespect towards women, Objectifying others, Avoiding accountability, Emotional immaturity, Hyper-competitiveness, Selfishness, Perfectionism, Insecurity, Dependency on others' approval, Shaming or blaming, Pride in ignorance, Disregard for emotions, Fear of asking for help, Closing off to new ideas, Rigid gender roles, Disconnection from feelings, Misogyny, Entitlement, Denying empathy, Fear of change, Dismissing others' experiences, Lack of self-care, Withholding affection or support, Deflecting responsibility, Being dismissive or insensitive, Apathy or indifference

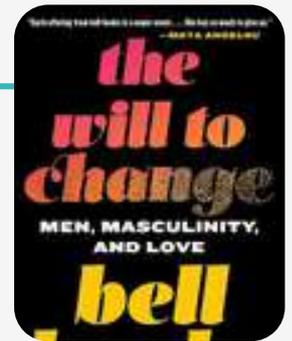
## Resources

The resources presented here are in English to ensure global accessibility and offer valuable perspectives for training and practice.

## Books

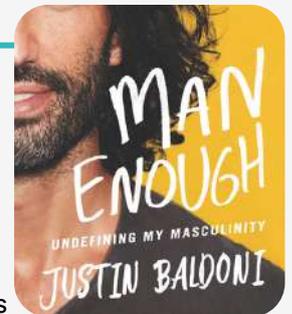
### "The will to change: men, masculinity, and love" by Bell Hooks.

As mentioned in previous sections, this book is fundamental for understanding how patriarchal culture limits men's emotional lives and their capacity for love. Hooks argues that men's liberation from these restrictive norms is essential for their spiritual and emotional well-being, and for achieving true gender equality. It's a powerful call for men to embrace a more expansive and authentic masculinity.



### "Man enough: undefining my masculinity" by Justin Baldoni.

Actor Justin Baldoni explores his own journey with masculinity, vulnerability, and challenging societal expectations of what it means to be a man. Based on his popular web series "Man enough," the book invites men to reflect on their own experiences and to redefine masculinity in a way that allows for emotional expression, genuine connection, and a commitment to equality. It's an accessible and personal account for young men struggling with traditional norms.



### "For the love of men: a new vision for mindful masculinity" by Liz Plank.

This book argues that patriarchy harms men as well as women. Liz Plank offers a refreshing perspective on how men can reclaim their true selves by embracing empathy, kindness, and vulnerability, challenging the destructive aspects of traditional masculinity. It's a well-researched and engaging read that provides practical insights into creating a more positive and equitable future for all genders.



## Videos

### **"The mask you live in" (2015) – Documentary by Jennifer Siebel Newsom.**

This film explores the damaging impact of rigid masculine norms on boys and men in the United States. It delves into how society's definition of "man box" masculinity (tough, aggressive, non-emotional, hypersexual) contributes to issues like violence, depression, and difficulties in forming healthy relationships. It is a powerful tool for prompting discussion on the need for new masculinities.

### **"A better man" (2017) – Documentary by Attiya Khan and Lawrence Jackman.**

This unique documentary follows a woman who meets with her abusive ex-partner years later to discuss the violence he inflicted on her. It's a challenging but important film that explores accountability, healing, and the potential for men to change their behavior and embrace non-violent masculinities. It offers a powerful case study for conversations about responsibility and transformation.

## Articles

### **"What masculinity means to me" (The New York Times).**

- This series of short essays and reflections from various men explores what masculinity means to them personally. It provides diverse perspectives on modern manhood, encompassing struggles, joys, and evolving definitions, offering a rich tapestry of contemporary masculine experiences.
- *Note: Specific URL may vary, search "The New York Times What Masculinity Means to Me" for updated links.*

### **"Men's roles in achieving gender equality" (UN Women).**

This article from UN Women highlights the critical importance of engaging men and boys as partners in achieving gender equality. It outlines various ways men can challenge harmful gender norms, advocate for women's rights, and contribute to building more equitable societies. It reinforces the idea that new masculinities are essential for global progress on gender issues.

**Note: Specific URL may vary, search "UN Women Men's roles in achieving gender equality" for updated links.**

## Podcast

### **"Man enough"** (Hosted by Justin Baldoni, Jamey Heath, and Liz Plank).

Based on the book and web series, this podcast features honest and vulnerable conversations with celebrities and experts about masculinity, mental health, relationships, and societal expectations. It's a great resource for hearing diverse perspectives on what it means to be a man today and how to live more authentically.

### **"Hidden brain" – "The problem with a perfect man" (NPR).**

This episode explores how traditional masculine ideals can be detrimental to men's well-being and relationships. It delves into the psychological pressures men face to conform to societal expectations and offers insights into the benefits of breaking free from these rigid norms.

## Key Organizations

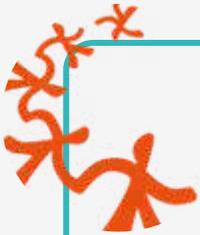
These organizations are dedicated to promoting healthier masculinities and engaging men in gender equality efforts, offering valuable resources and programs:



**MenEngage Alliance:**

A global alliance of NGOs and UN agencies that works with men and boys to achieve gender equality. They advocate for gender-transformative approaches, promote human rights, and challenge harmful masculinities.

**Website:** <https://menengage.org/>



**Promundo:**

A global leader in promoting gender equality and preventing violence by engaging men and boys. They conduct research, develop programs, and advocate for policies that foster positive masculinities, shared caregiving, and non-violence.

**Website:** <https://www.promundo.org.br/en>



**The good men project:**

An online platform and community that explores the changing roles of men in the 21st century. It features articles, discussions, and resources on fatherhood, relationships, ethics, and challenges traditional notions of masculinity.

**Website:** <https://goodmenproject.com/>



**Next gen men:**

A Canadian non-profit that works with boys and men to redefine masculinity, promote gender equality, and prevent gender-based violence. They offer educational programs and workshops for youth and educators.

**Website:** <https://nextgenmen.ca/>

## Glossary of key terms:

**For clear understanding and common language, the essential terms of this module are presented:**

**New masculinities:** A progressive and evolving understanding of what it means to be a man, moving beyond traditional, restrictive, and often harmful patriarchal norms. It emphasizes gender equality, empathy, emotional intelligence, and respect for all individuals.

**Hegemonic masculinity:** The dominant and idealized form of masculinity in a given society at a particular time, often associated with power, heterosexuality, physical strength, and emotional stoicism. It serves as a benchmark against which other masculinities are judged.

**Toxic masculinity:** Refers to the harmful aspects of traditional masculine norms that encourage dominance, aggression, emotional repression, and violence as signs of "manliness." It's not about being male, but about the harmful societal expectations placed on men.

**Emotional intelligence:** The ability to understand, use, and manage one's own emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges, and defuse conflict. A key component of new masculinities.

**Shared caregiving:** The equitable distribution of domestic chores and care responsibilities (e.g., childcare, elder care) between partners, challenging the traditional assignment of these roles primarily to women.

**Male privilege:** The unearned social, economic, and political advantages that men typically receive in patriarchal societies due to their gender, often without being aware of them.



**Allyship:** The practice of supporting and advocating for a marginalized group to which one does not belong. In the context of new masculinities, it refers to men actively supporting women and other gender identities in their fight for equality.

**Vulnerability:** The capacity to be open to emotional experiences, including fear, uncertainty, and emotional risk. New masculinities encourage men to embrace vulnerability as a strength, rather than suppressing it.

**Bystander intervention:** The act of safely and effectively challenging inappropriate or harmful behavior (e.g., sexist remarks, harassment) when one witnesses it, rather than remaining silent or inactive.

**Gender-transformative approaches:** Strategies and programs that actively challenge and change restrictive gender norms and power imbalances, aiming to achieve gender equality. New Masculinities are central to such approaches.

**Emotional labor:** The effort required to manage one's own emotions and often to manage the emotions of others, particularly in social and professional contexts. Traditionally, this burden falls disproportionately on women. New masculinities encourage men to take on an equitable share of emotional labor.

**Patriarchal bargain:** The strategies, often unconscious, by which individuals (including women and men) adapt to and even support patriarchal norms in exchange for certain benefits or to avoid negative consequences, even if those norms ultimately limit them.

no  
gender  
gap

**THANK  
YOU!**

This document was drafted with the participation of :

