

FACT SHEET

MENTAL HEALTH AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

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DEFINITIONS

Gender-based violence (GBV) is any violence directed against a person because of that person's gender. GBV is the most pervasive form of violence that exists today, affecting one in every three women in the world. This year, Amina Mohammed, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations called GBV "the most pressing human rights issue of our time." In South Africa, GBV is so widespread that many say that the country has a "culture of violence".

Gender is a social and cultural construct that highlights the differences in men and women, girls and boys, and based on this differentiation, allocates expected roles and responsibilities to each. Gender-based roles, therefore, change over time and will vary across different cultural contexts. The concept of gender refers to the behaviours, activities, and opportunities that society considers appropriate for girls and boys, as well as for women and men.

Psychological violence: All forms of violence have a psychological aspect, since the main aim of being violent or abusive is to hurt the integrity and dignity of another person. Psychological violence manifestations include isolation or confinement, withholding information, disinformation, and threatening behaviour.

Digital Abuse/Cyberbullying happen when technology is used to bully, harass, stalk or intimidate a person. This can happen via texting or messaging on social networks. In most cases, this abuse takes the form of emotional and/or verbal abuse, and even though it happens online, it can have a strong impact on a victim in real life.



50% of the assaults against women are by someone close to them (partner, neighbor, family member)

GENDER AND MENTAL HEALTH

Gender norms and stereotypes impact the everyday lives of young people. These beliefs can contribute to gender inequality. Gender inequality means that people are treated differently based on their gender. The impact of this on young women can mean that girls and young women have less access to economic and other opportunities, which might mean that they struggle to study further and to get the same jobs as young men. This affects their access to opportunities, to earn an income and support themselves and their families. Another way that this manifests is when girls and young women are expected to accept unwanted sexual advances from men. These dynamics place girls and young women at a higher risk of falling pregnant before they are ready or contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. International research shows that there is a gap between mental health outcomes for young men and young women, with adolescent girls having poorer average mental health than adolescent boys.



Research shows that boys who are exposed to violence as children, can behave more violently as teens and adults. In intimate relationships, this can lead to emotional abuse and traumatic experiences that include physical and sexual violence.

These experiences are not limited to heterosexual relationships and happen also in same sex relationships. Sexual assault or violence at any age can lead to depression and anxiety disorders, which is why gender-based violence often leads to mental health problems.

Girls and young women are up to three times more likely than boys to have depressive orders and to attempt self harm

