

FACT SHEET

GBV AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH

#1

DEFINITIONS

WHAT IS GENDER? Gender refers to the socially constructed ideas about human behaviour, actions and roles in relation to ideas of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' (Brook).

WHAT IS GENDER IDENTITY? Gender identity refers to a person's internal feelings about their gender. This can be the same or different to the gender they were assigned at birth (Brook).

WHAT IS GENDER EXPRESSION? This refers to how someone expresses gender. This can be through how people dress, their behaviour and their interests (Pocket.queerpedia).

WHAT IS SEXUAL PREFERENCE OR SEXUALITY? This is a way of describing who you are attracted to. For example, as a woman, you may be attracted to another person who identifies as a female (homosexual or lesbian) or you may be attracted to someone who identifies as male (heterosexual or straight) or you might be attracted to both people who identify as male and people who identify as female (bisexual) or you may be attracted to any person, regardless of that person's gender, sex, or sexual preference (pansexual).

WHAT IS TRANS-GENDER? Trans-gender refers to someone whose gender identity is different from the sex assigned at their birth (Healthline).

WHAT IS CIS-GENDER? Cis-gender refers to someone identifying as the same sex and gender they were assigned at birth (Pocket.queerpedia).

WHAT IS QUEER? Some people prefer this term as an umbrella or all-inclusive term for people who belong to the LGBTQIA+ spectrum (Pocket.queerpedia).

GENDER NORMS AND STEREOTYPES: refer to the behaviours, mannerisms, personality traits and likes/dislikes that society expects men and women to have, to be and to do. Gender roles are often presented as 'natural' or 'normal' ways that men and women should behave, but these roles have become the 'norm' because society is structured in a way that reinforces these beliefs. Stereotyping gender roles means that we make generalisations, thinking all men and women are expected to behave the same and to be interested in the same things (Brook).



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.

Patriarchal gender roles and the stereotypes society has about how men and young boys should behave are damaging for boys and young men too. Research shows that boys who are exposed to violence as children, can behave more violently as teens and adults. A lot of boys and young men struggle with managing their emotions, making it harder to ask for help when they are struggling.

In any relationship where there is an unhealthy power imbalance, one person will overpower the other, making it difficult for the other

person, to ask for what they need.

As young people, this can make it hard to protect ourselves and say no when something does not feel safe or okay. 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.



DIFFERENT WAYS TO TALK ABOUT ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH

- Do young men and young women face different challenges during adolescence?
- How do different young people cope with the challenges that come during adolescence differently depending on their gender?
- Do you feel young men and young women need different kinds of support for their mental health?
- How do gender stereotypes impact on mental health and wellbeing?

RESOURCES

- Planned Parenthood SA (Cape Town) - 021 762 0700
- Marie Stopes (Cape Town) - 021 422 4660 / 0800 11 77 85
- Lovelife Call Centre - 0800 121 900

DID YOU KNOW?

9% OF ALL DEATHS

AMONG TEENAGERS IN SOUTH AFRICA ARE

DUE TO SUICIDE

GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN

are up to three times more likely than boys to have depressive disorders and to attempt self-harm

