

THE MEN'S PROJECT – GLOSSARY

This short glossary contains terms and definitions that are frequently used and of particular importance in the context of The Men's Project. These definitions are widely adopted in the field of scholarship and advocacy on the prevention of violence against women.

Adolescent family violence – see Family violence.

Backlash describes the resistance, hostility or aggression from some groups or individuals that undermine gender equality or violence prevention strategies. Backlash can include attempts to discredit arguments about gender inequality or the gendered nature of violence, and efforts to preserve existing gender norms and hierarchies.

Family violence is a broader term than **domestic violence**, as it refers not only to violence between intimate partners but also to violence between family members. This includes, for example, elder abuse, adolescent violence against parents and siblings (**adolescent family violence**) and violence by parents against children. Family violence includes violent or threatening behaviour, or any other form of behaviour that coerces or controls a family member or causes that family member to be fearful. In Indigenous communities, family violence is often the preferred term as it encapsulates the broader issue of violence within extended families, kinship networks and community relationships, as well as intergenerational issues.

Gender refers to the socially assigned attributes, roles, activities, responsibilities and needs connected to being male or female in a given society at a given time, and as a member of a specific community within that society. Women and men's gender identity determines how they are perceived and what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities.

Like class, age, sexuality, ethnicity and socio-economic group, the notion of gender needs to be understood as a cross-cutting socio-cultural variable. Gender refers to social attributes that are learned or acquired during socialisation as a member of a given community. Gender is therefore an acquired identity. Because these attributes are learned behaviours, they are context and time-specific and changeable (with increasing rapidity as the rate of technological change intensifies), and vary across cultures.

Gendered drivers are the specific elements or expressions of gender inequality that are most strongly linked to violence against women. They relate to the particular structures, norms and practices arising from gender inequality in public and private life. Gendered drivers are considered to be the most significant underlying causes required to create the necessary conditions in which violence against women occurs. They must always be considered in the context of other forms of social discrimination and disadvantage.

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of all people irrespective of their gender. Equality does not mean that everyone is the same or must become the same, but that rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on the sex of one's body, sexuality, or gender identity.

Gender norms and structures are ideas about how women and men should be and act. These 'rules' are learned and internalised early in life, which sets up a life-cycle of gender socialisation and stereotyping.

Gender stereotypes are preconceived ideas whereby males and females are arbitrarily assigned characteristics and roles determined and limited by their sex. Sex stereotyping can limit the development of the natural talents and abilities of boys and girls, women and men, their educational and professional experiences as well as life opportunities in general. Stereotypes both result from and are the cause of deeply engrained attitudes, values, norms and prejudices. They are used to justify and maintain the historical relations of power of men over women as well as sexist attitudes which are holding back the advancement of women.

Hegemonic masculinity is the notion of how men manage to assume and retain dominant positions in society, usually at the expense of women or other, marginalised, such as non-white or non-heterosexual, men. Being a hegemonic male is generally associated with being powerful, dominant, stoic, and successful.

Hyper-masculinity describes an exaggerated image of hegemonic masculinity, mainly in media, overemphasising the ideals set out for men and hence reinforcing them. Hyper-masculinity is associated with sexual and physical aggression against women and is common in places where men congregate and dominate, such as sports, prisons, the military, and typically male dominated working environments.

Intersectionality relates to the observation that power structures based on categories such as gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality and functionality interact with each other in various ways and create inequalities, discrimination and oppression. One single power structure cannot be understood in isolation from other power structures.

Masculinity, like gender, is neither a natural, biological category nor a fixed, clearly defined norm. It is socially and culturally constructed, learned and performed. What is considered specifically masculine has not only been evolving over time, it is also influenced by parameters such as class, ethnicity, age, sexuality or geographical location. This leads to a complex interplay of experiences, ideals, practices and images that makes a clear definition of (one) masculinity impossible. Consequently, one has to speak of multiple expressions of masculinity – *masculinities*.

Restorative justice approaches involve bringing together the individuals most affected by a crime or other wrong to discuss what happened, what the impact on those harmed has been, and what can be done to repair the harm done. These approaches provide a forum for victims and other members of the community to be heard, for offenders to accept responsibility for their actions, and for relationships to be restored (where appropriate). Restorative justice processes have been found to produce higher levels of satisfaction among victims of crime than in formal justice processes, and in some circumstances to reduce reoffending rates.

Sex refers to the biological and physical characteristics that tend to define humans as female or male. These sets of characteristics are not mutually exclusive as there are individuals who possess both.

Toxic masculinity is a collective term associated with harmful attitudes and behaviours displayed by some men, such as different forms of violence, misogyny, sexual aggression, machismo, homophobia and male privilege reflected in a sense of entitlement, as well as rape culture and most forms of mainstream pornography.

Violence against women is any act of gender-based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of harm or coercion, in public or in private life. This definition encompasses all forms of violence that women experience (including physical, sexual, emotional, cultural/spiritual, financial, and others) that are gender based.