

Gender

A B C

Education Programme
for Primary and
Secondary Schools



General Glossary

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General Glossary



Active listening¹

It means, as its name suggests, actively listening. That is fully concentrating on what is being said rather than just passively 'hearing' the message of the speaker. It is a skill that can be acquired and developed with practice. It involves listening with all senses, paying attention to verbal and non-verbal messages.

Arranged Marriage

Forced marriages need to be distinguished from arranged marriages. For the latter, spouses might still have the choice of whether to accept the arrangement. These types of marriages are only synonymic when elements such as coercion, duress, violence or threat vitiate the consent. However, these two forms often coincide, as arranged marriages often take place when the spouses (or at least one of them) are still young and might not dare to say no.

Assertiveness

It enables individuals to act in their own best interests, to stand up for themselves without undue anxiety, to express honest feelings comfortably and to express personal rights without denying the rights of others. Being assertive means being able to stand up for your own and other people's rights in a calm and positive way, without being either aggressive, or passively accepting "wrong". Assertive individuals can get their point across without upsetting others or becoming upset.



Cisgender

A term for people whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex. E.g. a cisgender woman is someone who identifies as a woman and was assigned female at birth. "Cisgender" is the opposite of "Transgender".

Coercion

The action or practice of persuading someone to do something by using force or threats. It can cover a whole spectrum of degrees of force. Apart from physical force, it may involve psychological intimidation, blackmail or other threats –for instance, the threat of physical harm, of being dismissed from a job or of not obtaining a job that is sought. It may also occur when the person aggressed is unable to give consent – for instance, while drunk, drugged, asleep or mentally incapable of understanding the situation.

Communication

"Communication is human interaction, the transfer of information, effect or influence, mutual understanding, community, culture, and so on." (Robert T. Craig). In its basics, it is a process that involves transmission of verbal and non-verbal messages. It consists of a sender, a receiver and channel of communication. In the process of transmitting messages, the clarity of the message may be interfered or distorted by what is often referred to as "barriers".

Consent

Actively agreeing to be sexual, to have sexual intercourses, with someone. Consent lets someone know that sex is wanted. Sexual activity without an expressed consent is considered a rape or sexual assault.

Convention

Rules of political practice which are traditionally regarded as binding by those to whom they apply, however they are not laws as they are not enforced by the courts. The main human rights treaties are referred to as 'Conventions'.

Critical thinking

The ability to form our own opinion from a variety of sources, to think though complex issues in a complex way. Critical thinking opens our minds in the face of stereotypes and any attempts of manipulation. It is a tool through which we can develop a more in-depth understanding of social, political and economic realities and power relations.

Cyberbullying

Repeated behaviour using technology and textual or graphic content to frighten and undermine one's self-esteem or reputation.

¹ Read more at: <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/active-listening.html>

Cyber-harassment

Women's experiences of sexual harassment involve:

- unwanted offensive sexually explicit emails or SMS messages
- inappropriate offensive advances on social networking websites such as Facebook, or on Internet chat rooms

Cyber-stalking

The act of spying, fixating or compiling information about somebody online and communicating with them against their will. The tactic is often used and analysed as an extension of intimate partner violence.

Cycle of violence

A theory that describes the phases an abusive relationship moves through in the lead up to a violent event and its follow-up.



Dating violence

It involves the intentional use of tactics by one partner to gain, maintain or regain power and control over the other while in a dating or intimate relationship, including physical violence or threats, verbal abuse, emotional/psychological coercion, sexual abuse, stalking, isolation or a combination of these strategies.



Early and forced marriage

Marriage is considered early if at least one of the spouses is under 18 years of age. Early and forced marriage has different impacts, such as: leaving school too early, early pregnancy, lifelong dependant relationship. It often goes along with domestic violence and intimate partner violence.

Empathy

The capacity of a person to recognise or understand another person's state of mind or emotion, often captured by the phrase "to put oneself into another's shoes".

Empowerment

The capacity of individuals, groups and/or communities to take control of their circumstances, exercise power and achieve their own goals; a process by which people, organisations, and communities gain mastery over their lives. Empowerment often addresses members of groups that have been excluded from decision-making processes through social discrimination processes, e.g. based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, or disability. Empowerment is the process of obtaining basic opportunities for marginalised people, either directly by those people, or through the help of non-marginalised others who share their own access to these opportunities. It also includes actively thwarting attempts to deny those opportunities.



Family planning

The practice of controlling the number of children one has and the intervals between their births, particularly by means of contraception or voluntary sterilization.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

"All procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons" [World Health Organisation (WHO), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) joint statement, 1997]. A dangerous non-medical and non-religious practice that intentionally removes female genital organs. The ritual cutting or removal of some of or all the external female genitalia.

Typically carried out by a traditional excisor – a woman – using a blade, FGM is conducted from days after birth to puberty and beyond; in half of the countries for which national figures are available, most girls are cut before the age of five. The procedures vary considerably according to ethnicity and individual practitioners. The practice is rooted in gender inequality, attempts to control women's sexuality and ideas about purity, modesty and beauty. It harms women's physical and emotional health throughout their lives and increases neonatal mortality.

The term FGM was adopted by WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA in a joint statement in 1997, reflecting the position of feminist movements and human rights movements; on other spheres, it is also known as “Cut” or “Female Circumcision”. UNICEF estimates that more than 200 million women worldwide have undergone it — with 3 million more at risk every single year. It is not a foreign problem, it can occur in any country (European Union included). In EU countries — and many other countries — FGM is illegal.

FGM Types

The WHO created a detailed typology and identified four main types: Types I–III vary in how much tissue is removed; and Type IV describes miscellaneous procedures, including symbolic nicking.

Type I is “partial or total removal of the clitoris and/or the prepuce”. **Type Ia** involves **removal of the clitoral hood only**. This is rarely performed alone. The more common procedure is **Type Ib** (Clitoridectomy), the **complete or partial removal of the clitoral glans** (the visible tip of the clitoris) and clitoral hood.

Type II (Excision) is the **complete or partial removal of the inner labia**, with or without removal of the clitoral glans and outer labia.

Type III (Infibulation or Pharaonic Circumcision), the “sewn closed” category, involves the **removal of the external genitalia and fusion of the wound**. The inner and/or outer labia are cut away, with or without removal of the clitoral glans.

Type IV refers to all other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, including **pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterization**. It includes nicking of the clitoris (symbolic circumcision), burning or scarring the genitals, labia stretching, and introducing substances into the vagina to tighten it.

Forced marriage

Marriages in which at least one of the spouses is being forced into it. The union might be recognised under civil law, religious law or customary rites. It is binding not only for the spouses themselves, but also for their families and wider community. The spouses can be forced by physical or psychological violence or threats of violence.

There is no international consent upon the definition of forced marriage, but common elements of it include the issue of consent, coercion and duress. A marriage is also being considered forced when a partner stays in it against their will. This might be because of fear of sanctions from their family or community.



Gang rape

Rape of a person by two or more perpetrators.

Gender

A concept that refers to the social differences between women and men that have been learned; they are changeable over time and have wide variations both within and between cultures.

Gender disparities

Differences in women’s and men’s access to resources, status and well-being, which usually favour men and are often institutionalised through law, justice and social norms.

Gender equality

It implies that human beings are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by strict gender roles; that the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally.

Gender expression

The gender a person displays to the world and to those around him/her through things like dress, hairstyle or mannerisms.

Gender identity

It refers primarily to a person’s self-definition as male or female, or both or neither; and a person’s inner emotional and psychological inclination as being male, female, or both or neither. This concept is intimately related to the concepts of gender role and gender expression, which are defined as the outward manifestations of characteristics that reflect the gender identity.

Gender norms

Ideas about how men and women should be and act. This sets up a life-cycle of gender socialisation and stereotyping. In other words, gender norms are the standards and expectations to which gender identity generally conforms, within a range that defines a specific society, culture and community at that point in time.

Gender power relations

Ways in which gender shapes the distribution of power at all levels of society.

Gender roles

Roles or behaviours learned by a person as appropriate to their gender, determined by cultural norms. Like gender itself, gender roles can evolve over time, especially through the empowerment of women and transformation of masculinities.

Gender stereotypes

Generalisations on what is expected from men and women in a specific social context. They are oversimplified ideas of the differences between women and men, their skills, psychological attitudes, ambitions and behaviours. Judgments based on these generalisations may initially appear to help save time and energy, even though they eventually fail to capture the richness of individuals' traits and abilities.

Gender-based discrimination

Directly or indirectly treating girls and women differently from boys and men in a way that prevents either group from enjoying their rights. Even though gender-based discrimination is mostly directed towards women, it can also target men. Discrimination can be direct or indirect. Direct discrimination against girls and women is generally easier to recognise as the discrimination is obvious. Indirect discrimination against girls and women can be difficult to recognise. It refers to situations that may appear to be unbiased but result in unequal treatment of girls and women.

Gender-based violence (GBV)

Any act that is perpetrated against a person's will and is based on gender norms and unequal power relationships. It encompasses threats of violence and coercion. It can be physical, emotional, psychological, or sexual in nature, and can take the form of a denial of resources or access to services. It inflicts harm on women, girls, men and boys.

Gender-sensitive language

Realisation of gender equality in written and spoken language attained when women and men and those who do not conform to the binary gender system are made visible and addressed in language as persons of equal value, dignity, integrity and respect.

Grooming

Actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child, in order to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

Group Cohesion

Social process that characterises groups whose members interact with each other and refers to the forces that push group members closer together.



Hard law

Law or legislation that creates binding obligations.

Heteronormativity

Belief that heterosexuality is the norm. It assumes that sexual and marital relations are most (or only) fitting between people of opposite sex. A "heteronormative" view involves alignment of biological sex, sexuality, gender identity and gender roles. Heteronormativity is often linked to homophobia.

Honour-crime

Violence in the name of honour is a type of violence used to maintain or regain what is perceived as family honour. In strongly patriarchal societies, the family honour is directly linked to the female family members. If a female member acts against the ruling norms, the entire family's honour is damaged. Even rumours can be harming. It is the men's task to guard the family honour and therefore control the female family members. This can be done by coercion, physical or psychological pressure or even forced marriages and honour killings.



Identity

The sense of self, of personhood, of what kind of person one is. Even if identities tend to be considered as fixed or given, sociologists make clear that they are fluid and changeable. Common habits, characteristics and ideas may be clear markers of a shared cultural identity, but essentially, identity is determined by differences: we feel we belong to a group, and a group defines itself as such by noticing and highlighting differences with other groups and cultures.

Intersectionality

Analytical tool for studying, understanding and responding to the ways in which sex and gender intersect with other personal characteristics/identities, and how these intersections contribute to unique experiences of discrimination.

Intimate partner violence

Physical, sexual or psychological harm done by a current or former partner or spouse. This type of violence can occur among heterosexual or same-sex couples and does not require sexual intimacy. Although women can be violent against their male partners and violence may be found in male-male and female-female partnerships, it is well accepted that the overwhelming burden of partner violence around the world is borne by women at the hands of men.



Patriarchy

A social system in which men hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property. Historically, patriarchy has manifested itself in the social, legal, political, religious and economic organisation of a range of different cultures. Even if not explicitly defined so by their own constitutions and laws, most contemporary societies are, in practice, patriarchal.



Rape

Physically forced or otherwise coerced penetration - even if slight - of the vulva or anus, using a penis, other body parts or an object.

Rape culture

It refers to the normalisation of rape, sexual assault or harassment that may be implicit or explicit. It is the pervasiveness of rape to the point that it is so normalised, it becomes a societal "culture" and is prevalent in our everyday lives. It is often the result of generalised ideas of gender and sexuality stemming from patriarchy.

Rape myths

Attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women.

Ratification

The process undertaken by a state implying its intent to be bound by a particular treaty.

Revenge porn

A form of technologically facilitated sexual violence, wherein a perpetrator disseminates nude and/or sexually explicit photos and/or videos of an individual without their consent.

Rights

Absolute rights: These rights may never be interfered with, not even in times of war or national emergency.

Bill of Rights: a document which is usually, but not necessarily, annexed to a written constitution, guaranteeing certain rights to all the people in that country, which is usually enforced by the courts.

Children's rights: human rights concerning children. They are defined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and concern civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights. A child is defined as "any human being below the age of eighteen years, unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier".

Civil and political rights: rights relating to participation in public life, such as right to a fair trial, freedom of speech, freedom from torture. Sometimes known as 'first generation' rights.

Human rights: rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination.

Non - derogable rights: rights that, according to a Bill of Rights or a Human rights treaty, can't be suspended, even in a situation of war or emergency. The right to life and freedom from torture are normally non - derogable rights.

Sexual rights: sexual rights embrace human rights that are already recognised in national laws, international human rights documents and other consensus statements. They include the right of all persons, free of coercion, discrimination and violence to:

- the highest attainable standard of sexual health, including access to sexual and reproductive health care services
- seek, receive and impart information related to sexuality
- sexuality education
- respect for bodily integrity
- choose their partner
- decide to be sexually active or not
- consensual sexual relations
- consensual marriage

Romantic love

It is the conception of love in Western cultures. The evidence suggests that love is a universal emotion experienced by the majority of people, but it manifests itself in different ways because culture has an impact on people's conceptions of love and the way they feel, think and behave in romantic relationship.



Sex positive approach

It recognises that all people are sexual beings with sexual rights, regardless of their age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, HIV status or (dis)ability.

Sexism in language

Language is one of the most powerful means through which sexism and gender discrimination are perpetrated and reproduced. The content of gender stereotypes, according to which women should display communal/warmth traits and men should display agentic/competence traits, is reflected in the lexical choices of everyday communication.

Sex-spreading

Sending digital photos, videos or text of a sexual nature without the consent of the person appearing in them.

Sexting

The act of sending sexually explicit messages and/or photographs or video, generally produced by the sender himself, to other people by means of mobile phones. It can be used as a control strategy in unhealthy and abusive relationships.

Sextortion

A form of sexual exploitation in which a person is blackmailed through a nude image of her/himself that s/he has shared on the Internet through sexting. The victim is subsequently coerced into having sex with the blackmailer, to produce pornography or other actions.

Sexual and reproductive health

“... a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled”.

Sexual harassment

It is multidimensional, ranging from physical forms as unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing-through, to verbal acts as sexually comments or jokes and nonverbal forms such as cyber-harassment.

Sexual objectification

The process of representing or treating a person - usually a woman - like a sex object, one that serves another's sexual pleasure. It is also a way of devaluing women from autonomous human beings to sexual objects.

Sexual orientation

A person's sexual identity in relation to the gender which the person is attracted to (i.e. whether an individual is sexually attracted to men, women, both or none). The fact of being heterosexual, homosexual (gay/lesbian), bisexual, pansexual or asexual – or else auto-sexual, skoliksexual, demi-sexual, etc. There are plenty of sexual orientations. It is not the same as gender identity, which focuses on the gender a person identifies with.

Sexual violence

Any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including - but not limited to - home and work. It includes - but is not limited to - rape within marriage or dating relationships; rape by strangers; unwanted sexual advances or sexual harassment (at school, work, street, etc.); systematic rape during armed conflict; sexual abuse of mentally or physically disabled people; rape and sexual abuse of children; forced married; denial of the right to use contraception or to adopt other measures to protect against sexually transmitted diseases; forced abortion and sterilisation; violent acts against the sexual integrity of women as female genital mutilation or obligatory inspections for virginity; sexual exploitation.

Sexuality

“... a central aspect of being human throughout life encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors”.

Social Norms

Pattern of behaviour in a specific group, community, or culture, accepted as normal and to which an individual accepts to conform. They can be viewed as cultural products (including values, customs, and traditions), which represent individuals' basic knowledge of what others do and think that they should do. In other words, it is a standard of behaviour that people do not necessarily meet. We internalise and learn these “rules” early in life.

Soft law

Law that does not create technically binding obligations on a state, but it sets out standards which are supposed to influence and shape the conduct of a state.

Teen Dating Violence

The traditional concept of teenaged boyfriend and girlfriend, who may or may not be sexually active, where abusive tactics are used to control, manipulate, humiliate, and abuse the other partner. Teen dating violence may also take place among teenagers who only date once or several times without having a formal relationship. The context of teen dating violence is usually non-cohabitating relationships that vary widely in their level of intimacy, role expectations, and duration, such as a partner in a casual unplanned encounter, a sexual partner in a series of casual encounters, or members of a group who regularly socialise or hang out together.

Tradition

A long-established custom or belief that has been passed on from one generation to another.

Transgender (or the abbreviation trans)

An umbrella term for the individuals who may have the genitals of one sex, and a gender identity associated with the other sex. E.g. a person born with a penis who identifies as a female. A “transgender man” identifies as a male and a “transgender woman” identifies as a female. The “transgender” umbrella commonly includes:

- **Trans men**, men of trans experience (also FTM or F2M, though these acronyms are less common now than in the past): a trans person who is transitioning from female to male
- **Trans women**, women of trans experience (also MTF or M2F, though these acronyms are less common now than in the past): a trans person who is transitioning from male to female

as well as many other identities not listed here, and those for which parallels do not exist in English. There are many terms that have been used in the past to describe trans people that are now considered either offensive (such as cross dresser) or as describing a different group of people who are not necessarily trans (such as drag queen or drag king, terms which apply to stage performers who themselves may or may not identify as trans).

Transgender terminology

Gender confirmation surgery: sometimes mistakenly called a “sex change operation” and more recently “sex reassignment surgery”, it involves physically changing one’s sex through surgery. It is often accompanied with hormone treatments.

Hormone therapy: synthetic hormones are taken to affect things like body shape, hair growth patterns and secondary sex characteristics.

Intersex: intersex people are born with physical sex characteristics that don’t fit medical and social norms for female or male bodies. Since their bodies are seen as “different”, intersex children and adults are often stigmatised and subjected to multiple human rights violations, including violations of their rights to health and physical integrity, to be free from torture and ill-treatment, and to equality and non-discrimination.

Pansexuality (or Omnisexuality): the sexual, romantic or emotional attraction towards people regardless of their sex or gender identity. It may be considered a branch of bisexuality or a sexual orientation in its own, as pansexual people are open to relationships with people who do not identify as strictly men or women. It is not the same as polyamory, which means more than one intimate relationship at the same time with the knowledge and consent of everyone involved.

Queer: people who see gender and/or sexual attraction as fluid and non-binary. “Genderqueer” often refers to people who do not adhere to strictly male or female identities and roles; people that often choose to present themselves as neither clearly male nor clearly female, but rather as a gender-free individual whose identity may shift and change over time. “Queer” can also be used as an umbrella term, to describe anyone that’s part of the LGBTIQ community.

Sex: how someone is classified in terms of anatomy - often restricted to “male” or “female”. Babies are assigned a male or female sex at birth, typically due to their external anatomy (whether they have a penis or a vulva). This assignment is then written on their birth certificate. Regardless of this traditional classification, a person’s sex is actually a mix of bodily characteristics like chromosomes, hormones, internal and external reproductive organs, and secondary sex characteristics. Sex is not binary, but instead exists on a complex spectrum.

Transsexual: an out-dated term that refers to individuals who identify with a gender that’s different from the one assigned at birth. The person desires to transition from male to female or vice versa. This term has fallen out of favour for a few reasons, one being that it seems to focus more on the body than on gender identity.

Transitioning: altering one’s birth sex is not a one-step procedure; it is a complex process that occurs over a long period of time. Transition can include some or all of the following personal, medical, and legal steps: telling one’s family, friends, and co-workers; using a different name and new pronouns; dressing differently; changing one’s name and/or sex on legal documents; hormone therapy; and possibly (though not always) one or more types of surgery. The exact steps involved in transition vary from one person to the other. Avoid the phrase “sex change”.

Trust

To believe that someone is good and honest and will not harm you, or that something is safe and reliable.



Women's empowerment

Process by which women gain power and control over their own lives and acquire the ability to make strategic choices. Women's empowerment has five components: women's sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

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Project Gender ABC

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