Women and Gender in Society: Definitions and Key Questions

Look up the meaning of these words and write your own definitions. Follow your interests and reputable sources to learn more about gender diversity in your community.

Gender inequality is the unequal treatment of people based on their gender. It comes from a mistaken idea that there is more value to one gender over another. Ideas about what men, boys, girls, and women are supposed to do and how to be comes from repetition of images and expectations over time. Inequality also shows up as bias against nonbinary expression of gender.

Sexuality is related to who and what gender a person loves and is attracted to. Sexuality is also expressed as preferences in romantic relationships and behavior.

Equality is when everyone is treated the same. This is different than equity, which is when people have what they need in status, rights, and opportunities.

Sex is a physical categorization of gender, such as female, male, and intersex.

Gender refers to the sex one identifies with, such as male, female, or nonbinary. There are many ways that a person may define their gender.

pronouns: A pronoun is a word that can stand in for a noun, such as it or she. Using a person's correct pronouns affirms how they wish to be identified, such as by he/his/him or they/them.

Key Questions

1. Tell a story of a time you witnessed someone being treated differently or unfairly because of their gender, masculine or feminine presentation, or sexual orientation. What can you do or say in reaction to this mistreatment?

2. How can you change your everyday language to be more inclusive of gender, roles, and biased expectations?

3. Where do you see opportunities for growth related to women and gender equality in your community? In the country? In the world?

4. How does your community (or school or workplace) address issues related to women and gender? What resources are available? How do these resources help the community?