



WORKSHEET

STORIES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Activity 7

Story 1: Matilda

Matilda is 22 years old and lives with her sister and her father Jim, who is now retired. Their mother passed away a few years back, after enduring long-lasting experiences of abuse. When some friends came over to Matilda's house to take her out to a bar with them, her father tells her: 'Where the hell do you think you're going? You're not allowed to go out! You're not going to bars where men will drool all over you'. Matilda insists that she will go, but Jim now screams 'No you are not! This is my house! I make the rules around here. You live with me and you should listen to what I tell you!'

Matilda's friends feel uncomfortable and go outside to wait for her. One of the friends expresses that she didn't like how Jim treated his daughter and she is worried that Matilda might be in danger. Another one mentions that 'Well, he's her father and he has the right to set the rules, especially because she lives under his roof'. In the end, the friends agree with Matilda is a grown up and she can make her own decisions. She earns her own money and she doesn't have to answer to anyone about what she does and where she goes.

Matilda gets her coat and is at the door. When Jim realizes she is still getting ready to leave he grabs her violently by the arm and swings her to the wall.

Please discuss the following questions in your groups:

1. What type of violence did Matilda experience? Name a few examples of the different types of violence.
2. Is the violence Matilda experienced gender-based? Why so? Please explain.
3. Was Matilda responsible at all for the violence she experienced? Did she provoke Jim's behaviour in some way?
4. What was her father trying to achieve with his behaviour towards her?
5. What do you think of the way Matilda's friends reacted? Why did they react like that?
6. How do you think Matilda feels now?
7. What do you think she should do? How can she deal with this situation?
8. What would you do if you were Matilda's friend?

Story 2: David⁹¹

David always described himself as feeling "different". His parents thought that David had always looked boyish and behaved like a boy even though he was assigned a female sex at birth. For this reason, they were not particularly surprised when, a year ago, he told them that he felt like a boy and wanted to live as one. He made conscious changes in his appearance, clothing, looks, mannerisms and overall style in order to express himself as closely to his true self as he could.

⁹¹ Adapted from the case studies presented by Möller B et.al (2009).in *Gender identity disorder in children and adolescents. Current Problems in Pediatric and Adolescent Health Care*, 39(5):117-43



However, this did not go well for him at school. Most of the people in the school avoid him and act as if he is invisible. Some of the students also complained that they didn't want him taking swimming class with them which resulted in David being excluded from the class altogether. It pained David to no longer be able to do things that he really used to enjoy. Teachers continue to call him by the name that he was given at birth, which he perceives as a "slap in the face." He is also frequently having difficulties concentrating in his classes and he is increasingly withdrawing from his social environment.

Having only a couple of friends and failing most of his school subjects made him feel like a "loser." He is depressed and experiences high anxiety.

Please discuss the following questions in your groups:

1. What type of violence did David experience? Name a few examples of the different types of violence.
2. Is the violence David experienced gender-based? Why so? Please explain.
3. Was David responsible at all for the violence he experienced? Did he provoke this with his behaviour in some way?
4. Why are the teachers still calling him with by the name that he was given at birth? What are they trying to achieve with his behaviour towards David?
5. How do you think David is feeling?
6. What do you think David should do? How can he deal with this situation?
7. What would you do if you were David's friend?

Story 3- Toni⁹²

Toni is a 25-year-old, Roma sex worker. Toni was being harassed by her next-door neighbour at her building. The next-door neighbour intimidated

her, verbally abused her and vandalized the entrance of her home several times. In getting the police involved, Toni suffered even more trauma: the police officers also made derogatory remarks against her, grabbed her by the hair and threw her against the wall. When another neighbour, who saw what was going on, asked them to stop, the Police said, "she looked like this when we got here".

Please discuss the following questions in your groups:

1. Why do you think was Toni abused?
2. What type of violence did Toni experience? Name a few examples of the different types of violence.
3. Did Toni experience multiple discriminations because of her different characteristics?
4. How do these different characteristics affect her vulnerability towards violence? (for instance, how do they affect her exist strategies and access to protection/safety?)
5. Is the police brutality that Toni experienced a type of violence? What is this type of violence called? What impact does this type of violence have?
6. Is the violence Toni experienced gender-based? Why so? Please explain.
7. Was Toni responsible at all for the violence she experienced? Did she provoke this with her behaviour in some way?
8. What was the next-door neighbour and the police trying to achieve with their behaviour towards Toni?
9. How do you think Toni is feeling now?
10. What do you think Toni should do? How can she deal with this situation?
11. What would you do if you were Toni's friend?

Story 4- Jorge⁹³

Jorge is the son of a lesbian couple who adopted him when he was two years old. Jorge never felt

⁹² Adapted from the NCVAP report on 'Hate Violence against the LGBTQ communities in the United States in 2009', http://avp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/2009_NCAVP_HV_Report.pdf

⁹³ Adapted from GLSEN educational material on 'No name calling week': <https://www.glsen.org/no-name-calling-week>





that his family was different—his moms always seemed just like any other parents. He is proud of his family and very openly talks about his two moms. Lately, though, when some of the boys at school found out about his family, they started making rude comments about his moms. They also started posting derogatory remarks about Jorge himself, harassing him both in person and online, often calling him a “fag”, a “poof”, a “woofer”, the ‘crooked son of dykes” and other cruel names.

Last week ,after basketball practice, a couple of the other players made a big deal about changing in the same locker room as a “queer” and told Jorge that he is more fit to play field hockey with the girls’ team. Soon after that, he started receiving personal messages threatening that if he doesn’t quit the basketball team they will beat him up.

Please discuss the following questions in your groups:

1. What type of violence did Jorge experience? Name a few examples of the different types of violence.
2. Did Jorge also experience gender-based violence? In what way?
3. Was Jorge responsible at all for the violence he experienced? Did he provoke this in some way?
4. Why were the boys calling him names and behaving in this? What are they trying to achieve with their behaviour towards Jorge?
5. How do you think Jorge is feeling?
6. What do you think Jorge should do ? How can he deal with this situation?
7. What would you do if you were Jorge’s friend?

Story 5: Anita

Anita is a freshman in high school. She likes dating older boys because they are more popular and this makes her feel popular too. She is seen with a new guy quite often. She also likes to dress

trendy with clothes that some of her classmates find to be ‘quite sexy’.

A lot of people in school talk behind her back and are creating negative rumours about her. A few weeks ago she was ‘tagged’ in a photo of a classmate from a party as ‘Janette and the school slut behind her’. The picture got various likes and a few nasty comments in the bottom. Anita feels very sad because her reputation is important to her. And people don’t understand how different she really is from the perception they have of her.

At a friend’s party last week, Anita met a guy who was a senior. He chatted her up and when he realized who she was from the photo she was tagged in, he started touching her and making sexual advancements towards her. Anita pushed him away and left angrily, to hear him shout: ‘why don’t you want to sleep with me anyway? Everyone knows that you’ve been sleeping with the entire school, you whore!’

Please discuss the following questions in your groups:

1. What type of violence did Anita experience? Name a few examples of the different types of violence.
2. Is the violence Anita experienced gender-based? Why so? Please explain.
3. Was Anita responsible at all for the violence she experienced? Did she provoke this with her behaviour in some way?
4. What were her classmates trying to achieve with their behaviour towards her?
5. What was the boy at the party trying to achieve with his behaviour towards her?
6. How do you think Anita feels now?
7. What do you think she should do? How can she deal with this situation?
8. What would you do if you were Anita’s friend?



Story 6: Hector⁹⁴

Hector is a college student. He is often the recipient of verbal abuse because of the way he chooses to express his gender through his style, clothes and overall mannerisms. He usually hears others naming him “queer,” “freak,” and “faggot”, while people who may be standing by just look away. In the bathroom one day, a group of young men cornered Hector and pushed him to the ground. Alex, one of the guys in the group, watched as his peers repeatedly kicked Hector and screamed obscenities at him. Noticing that Alex wasn't joining in, John, the guy that started all this, moved over to make room and motioned for Alex to participate in the beating. When Alex hesitated, John commented, “What's the matter? You feel sorry for the faggot? Or are you a faggot yourself?” Alex reluctantly walked over and began kicking Hector.

Please discuss the following questions in your groups:

1. What type of violence did Hector experience? Name a few examples of the different types of violence.
2. Is the violence Hector experienced gender-based? Why so? Please explain.
3. Was Hector responsible at all for the violence he experienced? Did he provoke this violence with his behaviour in some way?
4. Why did John and his gang behave this way towards Hector? What are they trying to achieve with their behaviour towards Hector?
5. Why did Alex participate in the abuse in the end?
6. How do you think Hector is feeling?
7. What do you think Hector should do? How can he deal with this situation?
8. What would you do if you were Hector's friend?

Story 7: Arya⁹⁵

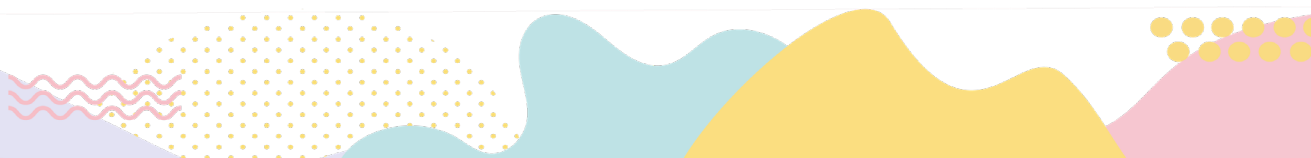
Arya came as a refugee in our country together with her husband and her 4-year-old daughter, Hana. Her settling in time was very stressful and extremely difficult. This caused significant stress in Arya's marriage and her husband started having various extra-marital affairs, which he actually boasted about. His main excuse for turning to other women was for sexual satisfaction: he insisted that Arya could not satisfy him sexually because she was 'cut' (had experienced female genital mutilation, FGM). Arya feels very guilty about this and constantly blames herself even though having gone through FGM was not her choice but a very hurtful practice she was forced to go through as a child.

A year later, her mother managed to also join them in their new country of residence. Her mother now insists that Hana also needs to go through FGM so she can be 'pure' and the family can ensure she will marry well because she will remain a virgin. If she doesn't get cut, the community will consider her as 'haram' ('dirty') and will ostracize not only Hana but the entire family as well. Because her mother is a birth attendant, she offered to perform the procedure herself.

Arya is very perplexed about what she should do. She remembers that her own experience was very painful and traumatic, not only physically but especially emotionally. She doesn't want her own child to experience this type of harmful practice. At the same time, she is under great pressure from her mother to have her daughter go through the procedure, as her rite of passage to womanhood. She is also concerned about how her own community may react if she decides against FGM for her daughter.

⁹⁴ Adapted from 'How Does Homophobia Hurt Us All?'(2002) GLSEN. www.glsen.org

⁹⁵ Inspired by excerpts from the research conducted by Ahmed et al (2019). A qualitative assessment of women's perspectives and experience of female genital mutilation in Iraqi Kurdistan Region. *BMC Women's Health* 19, 66





Please discuss the following questions in your groups:

1. What type of violence did Arya experience?
Name a few examples of the different types of violence.
2. Is the violence Arya experienced gender-based?
Why so? Please explain.
3. How was Arya affected by her having undergone FGM herself?
4. How do you think Arya is currently feeling after her mother's visit?
5. What do you think Arya should do ? Should she proceed with her daughter having FGM or not?
Why do you believe that?