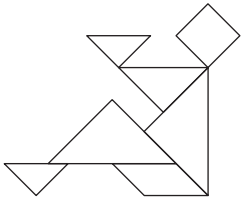
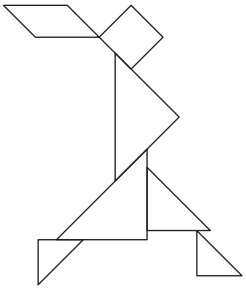
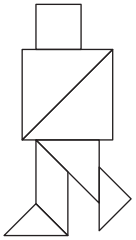
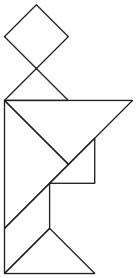
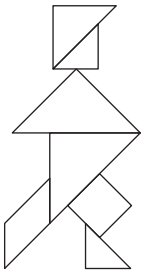
Focusing on intersectionality and the role of gender within it











Toolkit

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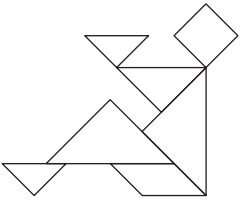
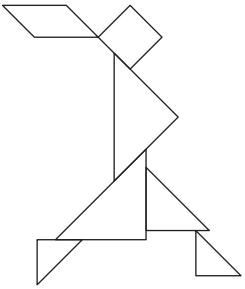
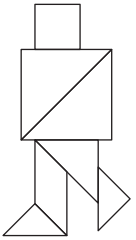
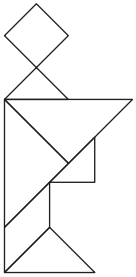
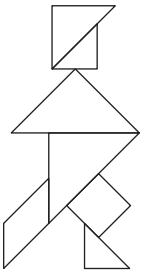










Toolkit

PhD Marta Guarch-Rubio (coord.)

The way we imagine discrimination or disempowerment often is more complicated for people who are subjected to multiple forms of exclusion. The good news is that intersectionality provides us a way to see it.

Kimberle Williams Crenshaw

CONTENTS

SECTION II

Prologue

This pedagogical toolkit is a highly accessible excellent educational resource. It brings together insights from psychological science and formulates a set of activities that will support educators to teach and discuss about issues related to individual and structural differences, inequalities, oppression and injustice.

The intersectionality lens is more important than ever, as our societies have become more complex, where the traditional stratification and categorization of social groups are imbued with new layers of social, cultural, digital, economic, and political power. Bringing an understanding of power and using this concept of "looking to the world through the intersecting lenses of social identities" is not only important, but difficult. Typically, people use a single axis or category to make sense of the world: others are judged according to one categorical identity at a time (i.e., "you belong to this group or not," "you are inside my group, as ingroup versus you are in the other, the outgroup"). The activities in this book increasingly scaffold a much more complex understanding and ability to analyse the world through the multiple and intersecting layers of people's identities. One person simultaneously belongs to multiple groups, and the effects of the positions of these groups on their life prospects are not cumulative but "interactive."

In particular, the toolkit focuses on gender as a key concept where social and political power has persistently pushed the women of the world lower on the social hierarchy, below the men, in the typically patriarchal modern Western societies. To understand the effect of this power hierarchies

on people's lives, we need to look more attentively to how gender interacts with other group memberships. The human story is complicated by how being a female interacts with being a member of a racialised group, of a certain age and marital status and having a lower socio-economic position, for example. The intersectionality lens is the analytical tool that allows us to understand how people's lives are situated exactly at the intersection between multiple categories that allow them different levels of privileges or power, therefore conditioning their access to justice or equity.

It is not easy to explain how structures of power work in a society. It is even more difficult to show how these hierarchies of social and political "worth" affect the individuals' psychological functioning: the way we perceive ourselves and others, the way we feel more or less "worthy" in our own eyes (our self-esteem), and the way these perceptions influence our thinking and evaluations of others (our biases and stereotypes).

This book achieves this difficult task of explaining it all in "plain English" and guiding us with specific pedagogical tools to make our teaching practices more inclusive. The authors draw on fundamental readings and research in psychological science to explain step by step key concepts and provide a set of multimedia activities that will scaffold a student's understanding of very complex topics. The majority of activities use videos (TedTalks or YouTube clips) to provide context of explanation, followed by an in-depth reflection and opportunity to apply the learning to oneself. This combination of tools is both modern and timely, adapted to how young people consume information nowadays.

In addition, the video materials provide a range of expertise which makes for a comprehensive collection of views and identities of the speakers themselves. The selection is also informed by gender, and intentionally promotes some of the strongest female voice of our times, such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

The authors of this toolkit focus their efforts on applying psychological knowledge about power and intersectionality to the pedagogical practices. The deeper level of reflection involved in activities is the most reliable self-transformation tool. Only by reflection and applying theoretical or outside knowledge to our own life can we really feel and see the impact of that knowledge on ourselves. This method's effectiveness and its introspection is particularly relevant when it comes to questioning our position of power and privilege, and when it comes to highlighting how the female voice and position in society have been systematically pushed down in the social hierarchies.

The feminist analytical framework of the toolkit makes it even more educationally powerful: if we zoom into gender dynamics and then add other layers of identities that bear histories of oppression (i.e., ability, ethnicity, race, socio-economic status), we become more acutely aware of the interactive (not additive) effects of systematically being excluded or marginalized from power positions. The toolkit discusses the difference between gender stereotypes, gender roles and sex roles to highlight how they are socially constructed and how, therefore, they can be challenged and socially re-constructed from a more critical and socially just perspective. Whether you are a female or male student,

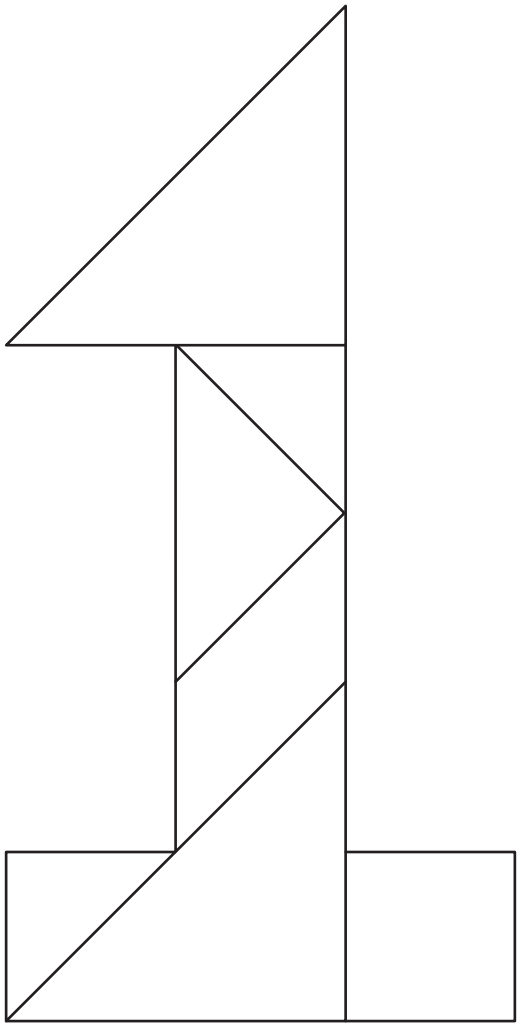
whether you are non-binary or a member of the LGBTQI+ communities, the activities in this toolkit will help you see the intersecting layers of identities that adjust and calibrate your own position in society. The more reflective we are on our own position, the more careful and attentive we become to how our judgement of others is affected by societal stereotypes.

The toolkit ends with insightful recommendations on how to bring an intersectionality lens into research practices, so that the knowledge we produce can itself be informed and produced with power and justice in mind. This invites the reader to new approaches to social knowledge where we become deeply aware of how the identities of the researcher intersect with the topic and participants of the research to give perspectives on the world. This toolkit makes Crenshaw's 1989 concept of "intersectionality" highly relevant and critical to raising the standards and social mission of current day social sciences. Intersectionality helps unpack and uncover the layers of oppression and discrimination that are perpetuated by social hierarchies in science and society alike. Using intersectionality as a methodological tool increases our sensitivity as well as empowers us to speak against the status quo, to fight conformity and conformation biases and to look for the silence and the silenced, for the untold and unheard stories. This toolkit provides a scaffold to learning how to interrogate structures of power and opens our minds to a more critical and complex approach to "how we know about the world."

As a psychologist of social inclusion, migration and diversity, I strongly endorse and recommend this toolkit as

an essential resource for educators across disciplines, to be use in their pedagogical practices. The psychological foundations of each concept and activity are explained in plain non-jargon language, which makes this toolkit easy to use across the whole academic spectrum. Students will benefit from understanding these key concepts around cognitive biases, stereotypes, and the combined intersectional power of our identities, which will help them become better scientists for whom social justice and human dignity are at the centre of knowledge production.

Anca Minescu, PhD
Associate Professor at the University of Limerick, Ireland



SECTION I

What prior knowledge is required before reading this book?

The book you hold in your hands is conceived as a working tool. It represents one of the tangible outcomes of the TInGLE project (Erasmus+). Over three academic years (2023--2024, 2024-2025, and 2025-2026), the TInGLE project aimed to strengthen a strategic partnership among three academic institutions located in three European countries: University of Bicocca (Milano, Italy), Vilnius University (Lithuania) and San Jorge University (Zaragoza, Spain).

The project has developed transdisciplinary, practical, and actionable knowledge concerning the impact of gender, class, and ethnicity/race, along with other intersecting factors such as age and ability, within scientific and academic curricula and practices.

This book is one of the results of that work and takes the form of a toolkit with a particular focus on psychology, intersectionality, identities, and, especially, gender. Through the integration of theoretical perspectives and practical strategies, the toolkit seeks to generate applied knowledge that addresses persistent gaps within higher education institutions. It aims to support, enhance, and sustain the implementation of Gender Equality Plans and intersectional curricula, while incorporating the essential lens of intersectionality in the development of knowledge and tools designed to counter discrimination and inequality, both within academia and in society at large.

Despite notable progress in equity policies, academia continues to exhibit persistent inequalities embedded in

rigid hierarchical structures. Higher Education institutions such as universities are characterized by deeply embedded cultural traditions that frequently resist change. Research highlights recurring experiences of marginalization, including increased harassment, limited career advancement, identity taxation, social isolation, and inadequate mentoring (Lukkien et al., 2025). These disparities are primarily driven by factors such as gender (Conell, 2020; Maguire et al., 2025) minority status, differences on social class (Jack & Black, 2024), and disabilities (Brown & Leigh, 2018) These factors intersect within curricular structures, institutional practices and norms, epistemic exclusion, and systemic bias, producing layered forms of exclusion that complicate efforts to achieve meaningful equity (Benschop & Verloo, 2011).

These disparities not only limit access and representation but also shape students' academic experiences, particularly in the social sciences degrees, where critical perspectives on equity are essential. For university students, inequities can produce limited access to resources (Farquharson et al., 2024; Fitzgerald et al., 2025), reduced academic performance, feelings of isolation, reduced sense of belonging (Jack & Black, 2024), and unequal opportunities for academic and professional growth, that affect certain groups to a greater extent (Gilani & Thomas, 2025; Naim, 2025). At the institutional level, these dynamics lead to a lack of diversity in their programs, teaching methods, research agendas, and potential for innovation (Miles et al., 2024).

To understand these inequalities, we draw on comprehensive frameworks that examine identities and their lived experiences. In the educational context, discrimination refers

to any action or omission that, grounded in prejudice or stereotypes, restricts students' access, persistence, or full participation in educational processes, thereby undermining their learning, development, and emotional well-being (Guamán-Gómez et al., 2020). Equally important is to analyze these dynamics through the lens of intersectionality, an approach that investigates how social categories such as gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and disability among others intersect to create unique configurations of discrimination, privilege, and inequality. These multiple marginalized identities cannot, and should not, be understood in isolation from one another (Chapman, 2011; Thompson & Frazier, 2025).

Furthermore, it is important to recognize that these multiple identities are often socially constructed, contextual, and temporary, shaped by specific historical moments and social locations rather than fixed or essential attributes (Anthias, 2012; Collins & Bilge, 2016). Intersectionality emerged precisely as a critical analytical tool to make visible, and ultimately transform, these often hidden dynamics of power, focusing on how multiple privileges and oppressions are simultaneously experienced at the intersections of different axes of power (Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1991). By rejecting monolithic movements based on a single, exclusive identity, intersectionality promotes a more nuanced understanding of the complexity, variability, and singularity that characterize lived human experience (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016; Warner, 2008).

Accordingly, this book serves as a resource for producing transdisciplinary, practical, and actionable knowledge to promote critical, gender-sensitive education grounded in

intersectional approaches. As such, it is conceived as a toolbox for enhancing the understanding of, and for addressing, intersectional social inequalities and discrimination, phenomena that are inherently complex and sensitive. It integrates solid theoretical foundations with practical strategies and activities, offering a flexible framework that can be adapted to the specific needs of diverse contexts while ensuring that research remains relevant, applicable, and closely connected to real-world settings.

This toolkit should be understood as a starting point for more in-depth inquiry into the complexity and multidimensional nature of intersectionality, not as an endpoint of analysis. Drawing on gender studies, intersectional theory, critical psychology, and educational research, this toolkit outlines key concepts, theoretical frameworks, and pedagogical strategies designed to support psychology faculty in the development of inclusive curricula.

As awareness is the first step toward transforming reality, we invite you to engage with this work.

1. Intersectionality

A call to action in the field of Psychology: Embracing intersectionality "For Us to Do Better"

Psychology's pedagogy has long been shaped by dominant epistemologies that have systematically marginalized not only the contributions of women and other excluded groups but also the diverse ways of knowing and lived experiences they represent (Fine & Gordon, 1991; Milar, 2000; Morawski, 2007). As Higher Education strives to align with principles of equity and human rights, educators are tasked with integrating critical perspectives that challenge these monolithic frameworks to reflect the plurality of contemporary societies. Intersectionality, as conceptualized by Crenshaw (1989, 1991), constitutes a critical theoretical framework that should be integrated into contemporary psychology. It highlights how multiple social categories interact to produce overlapping systems of disadvantage and privilege. This framework enables a more nuanced analysis, allowing scholars to move beyond the obvious and to identify blind spots that often remain undetected when employing a single-axis approach (Collins & Bilge, 2016).

It emphasizes that the different components of a person's identity are interconnected rather than separate. These elements combine and influence one another, shaping distinct identities and lived experiences that cannot be fully understood by examining each dimension on its own or without considering the broader social, cultural and historical context (Varsik & Gorochovskij, 2023). Intersectionality frames identity as a dynamic and relational construct in which

multiple identity dimensions are co-constituted, creating unique experiences through social interaction and structural conditions. As such, it has been considered as a framework to explore how different dimensions of people's identities intersect to shape their experiences of discrimination and oppression (Crenshaw, 1989; Thomas et al., 2021).

Kimberle Crenshaw on Intersectionality. The Big Idea

Intersectionality, understood as the interaction of gender with other social categories such as, but not limited to, class, race, sexual orientation, age, and disability, provides a critical lens for analyzing intersecting forms of discrimination and for fostering inclusive and equitable pedagogical practices. It is a valuable framework for examining the multiple and complex experiences of privilege and oppression that emerge from overlapping, and sometimes invisible, identities and social categories as they interact with structural systems of power and inequality. These interactions give rise to unique experiences that vary according to specific temporal and contextual conditions, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the complexity and diversity of human experience. Moreover, the explicit incorporation of an inclusive, gendered, and intersectional perspective can fundamentally reshape how social problems are experienced, identified, and understood, allowing for the inclusion of a broad range of lived experiences.

This perspective enables the examination of how factors such as, but not limited to, gender, race, class, sexual orientation, age, and ability interact simultaneously to shape mental health outcomes and psychological well-being (Bowleg, 2012; Rosenthal, 2016). However, the integration of intersectional perspectives into mainstream psychology presents significant challenges, as conventional psychological paradigms often continue to isolate experiences of discrimination. For example, by focusing on sexism while neglecting other, interconnected forms of oppression.

When applied to psychology, this framework not only enhances the discipline's explanatory power but also challenges researchers and educators to critically examine their own assumptions, methodologies, and practices (Cole, 2009; Edyburn et al., 2023).

In the classroom, adopting an intersectional and gender-sensitive approach involves moving beyond additive models that treat gender, race, or class as separate and independent variables. Instead, it requires recognizing the structural and contextual dynamics that shape psychological phenomena. For instance, patterns of mental health disparities cannot be fully understood without considering how gender intersects with socioeconomic status, migration background, or sexual orientation (Hankivsky, 2012). Similarly, the study of cognitive development or organizational behaviour must account for how norms, stereotypes, and power relations influence both individual experiences and broader institutional contexts.

The implementation of an intersectional, gender-inclusive perspective requires a dual effort. On the one hand,

identifying commonalities across diverse experiences is central to incorporating an intersectional approach; on the other hand, maintaining sensitivity to nuanced differences between groups, even when similarities are identified, is essential. This approach necessitates attention to both individual uniqueness and broader structural dynamics, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of human diversity and difference (Warner, 2008).

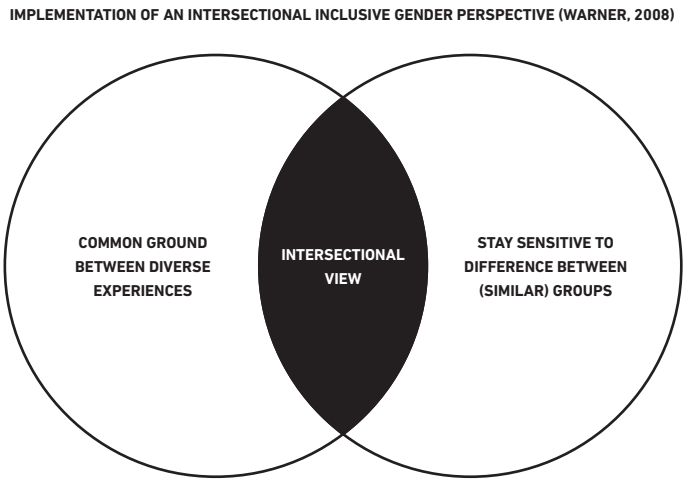


Figure 1. Inclusive intersectional gender perspective implementation. Author's own elaboration based on Warner (2008)

Additionally, it is essential to focus on power, which constitutes a central axis of analysis, because intersectional forms of violence emerge where and when systems of domination and exclusion intersect, producing unique forms of oppression that often remain undetected by traditional methods and interpretive frameworks.

Therefore, it is necessary to examine not only social constructions but also the various forms of power and oppression that individuals experience in multiple ways throughout their lives. It is not sufficient to consider differences in isolation; rather, it is crucial to analyze how these differences interact with domains of power. This approach provides a more nuanced understanding of social inequalities by directing attention both to institutional and structural dimensions as well as to individual and experiential realities.

Moreover, this perspective underscores the importance of developing critical pedagogical questions that can deepen psychology's engagement with intersectionality, fostering transformative learning experiences that challenge conventional assumptions about identity, power, and social justice (Bowleg et al., 2023; Buchanan & Wiklund, 2021; Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994; McLaren, 2008). Within psychology, a discipline centrally concerned with the study of human behaviour, cognition, and mental health, the integration of intersectionality into teaching is essential to ensure both theoretical rigor and social responsibility. In addition, addressing challenges such as institutional resistance, epistemological biases, and the reproduction of stereotypes, offers recommendations to promote social equality, diversity, and equity within higher education.

SIMPLY PUT

- An intersectional perspective is essential for understanding the multiple and complex sociological phenomena of contemporary society. The use of intersectional lenses means going beyond putting people into boxes and the "one size fits all" approach.

- By analyzing the interaction between multiple identities and structures of power, psychology can move beyond simplified explanatory models.
- Currently, forms of oppression are a key area of research and present a significant analytical challenge for psychology and sociology. It is not enough to create a space to study intersectionality within sociology and psychology; the focus must also extend to education.
- It is vital to understand and examine power as a key element in the construction of different social roles in order to explain how diverse intersectional perspectives are formed.

CORE IDEA

Open your ears to different voices. To address injustice effectively, all we need to do is learn to listen and observe more intentionally. Intersectionality requires us to consider the full complexity of human experiences.

PEDAGOGICAL TASK

"See the frame, map the levels: Learning intersectionality for practice"

Purpose: Apply the concept of intersectionality in a psychological context by connecting Kimberlé Crenshaw's ideas to a clinical or social case study, and by examining frames, multilevel injustice and structural conditions.

1. Anchor: Watch & Ground the Concept.

   Watch: "The Urgency of Intersectionality" (Crenshaw, TED Talk, 2016).

2. Essay Task.

   After watching the video "The Urgency of Intersectionality" (Crenshaw, K., TED Talk, 2016), write an essay connecting the video to a clinical or social case in psychology (e.g., healthcare, workplace discrimination, etc.). Additionally, answer the following questions:

   a. How would you define the concept of "frame" as it is presented in the video, and how does it relate to the approach to social justice?

   b. Can you distinguish and explain the different levels of social injustice explored in the video?

   c. What perspective would enable us to analyze an issue through an intersectional lens instead of considering only one dimension?

3. Final Reflection.

   Watch the video "What everyone gets wrong about intersectionality today" (Southbank Centre, YouTube, 2013). Intersectionality is not only about multiple identities; it is also about how structures can make certain identities a vehicle for vulnerability. To identify the number of relevant intersections, you must consider the context. Answer the following questions:

   a. What´s happening? What kind of discrimination is going on?

   b. What are the policies that result in discrimination?

   c. How do institutional structures contribute to discrimination against certain people?

Now, identify the unit of analysis (individual, interactional, institutional or policy/ecosystem) and answer the following question: In which level(s) do you see each case?

Specify the most salient intersections for the case (e.g., gender, race, class, migration status, disability, sexual orientation and age) and explain why the context makes them relevant.

Name the frame(s) in play (e.g., media narratives, diagnostic criteria, legal categories, data collection practices). How do these frames reveal or obscure harms?

Translate insights into action: What data would you collect differently? What clinical adaptations or organizational/policy changes would follow?

LINKS

"The Urgency of Intersectionality" (Crenshaw, TED Talk, 2016)

"What everyone gets wrong about intersectionality today" (Southbank Centre, YouTube, 2013)

2. Social categories

Regardless of awareness, the social groups to which we belong

The conceptualization of human beings as social by nature was one of the Aristotelian foundations that, from the 4th century BCE to the present, has shaped the development of contemporary social psychology. This axiom regarded the individual as a member of the groups to which they belong and, consequently, anticipated the need to study human beings by considering the impact that these social units have on individuals and, conversely, the influence individuals exert on these groups.

In social psychology, social categories are cognitive constructs through which individuals classify themselves and others into groups based on shared attributes (e.g., gender, ethnicity, age, occupation), although members of these groups may not necessarily interact. These categories serve to simplify social perception, guide information processing, and provide the foundation for group-based identities, attitudes, and behaviours (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987).

When psychologists conceptualize social categories as defining structural relationships with implications for individual, social, and institutional practices, it becomes necessary to attend to both differences and similarities, even among groups that appear disparate. Such similarities may not be immediately apparent, and the incorporation of an intersectional perspective can significantly aid in reconceptualizing the meaning and consequences of social categories, as well as their impact on lived experience.

Social Identity and Social Interaction | Lisa Sechrest-Ehrhardt

According to Tajfel and Turner's (1979) Social Identity Theory, group membership defines individuals' identities, from which they pursue a positive self-concept, both individually and collectively, extended to the ingroup or social units of belonging. In this way, it is expected that, in an attempt to economize cognitive resources and avoid conflicts of interest, human beings seek out others with similar thought patterns (DeLamater et al., 2015), reinforcing affiliation with groups that align with their beliefs.

For instance, hatred toward foreigners, economically disadvantaged individuals, people with disabilities, and individuals with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities constitutes an element of identity for these groups, where consistency between cognition and action is required, reinforcing the identity of both the group and its members. Additionally, violence driven by hatred toward certain minority groups tends to be collective rather than individual (Emcke, 2017). Factors such as social pressure, the need for belonging and recognition within the ingroup, and the avoidance of cognitive dissonance help explain these violent behaviours.

Festinger (1957) proposed Cognitive Dissonance Theory, which posits that inconsistency between two or more cognitions produces discomfort, leading individuals to select the cognition that minimizes this discomfort. Consequently, when individuals experience tension between an education promoting tolerance and diversity and the assimilation of new thought patterns grounded in hate speech, they tend to

adopt the stronger cognition. For this reason, hate speech gains traction under the social pressure of groups that support it, making educational strategies essential. Classroom education that provides rational, analytical, and prejudice-free heuristics represents an effective tool to disrupt the mechanisms that sustain these discourses of hate.

Thus, social psychology provides a theoretical framework for explaining discrimination and, at its most extreme, hate speech, grounded in group membership and the functional dynamics of individuals within groups. In this regard, Tajfel's (1970) contributions regarding the minimal group paradigm and intragroup homogeneity theory laid the foundation for the rational understanding of prejudice and stereotypes as antecedents of discrimination. On one hand, the minimal group paradigm assumes that mere group membership implies ingroup preference as well as rejection and discrimination toward the outgroup. On the other hand, the theory of outgroup homogeneity explains the tendency to ignore the individuality of outgroup members, perceiving them as identical and lacking distinctive traits, in contrast to ingroup members, who are seen as unique and singular. Consequently, if these cognitive differentiation and social segregation processes are not managed, they can become fertile ground for dehumanizing processes, such as those that contextualized the genocides of the 20th century (Pérez, 2016). Furthermore, perceiving the outgroup as a potential adversary reinforces existing prejudices and stereotypes, which in turn perpetuate a distorted image of the outgroup.

As such, social categories are also the means through which societies structure inclusion and exclusion (Tajfel, 1981). They are not neutral descriptors but function as markers that shape identity, determine access to resources, and influence exposure

to stigma. Social Identity Theory posits that social identity emerges from three distinct, sequential processes: social categorization, social identification, and social comparison.

If identity is ignored, context is also overlooked. This can lead to misunderstandings of what someone is experiencing. Employing an intersectional approach rather than assuming neutrality is a more equitable and accurate practice. Applying intersectional perspectives in daily work is particularly important, as it allows for the recognition that individuals do not experience life in isolated categories but through overlapping identities, values, and experiences. Moreover, this approach facilitates the formulation of more nuanced and insightful questions.

Intersectionality extends this perspective by emphasizing that these identities are not discrete but interrelated, and that their interaction generates unique social realities. It emphasizes not only how power structures generate multiple forms of disadvantage but also how individuals experience and embody their positions within these intersecting systems (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Moving beyond a merely addi tive approach, intersectionality provides a framework for understanding the structural and historical roots of power and discrimination. For the teaching and practice of psychology, acknowledging the socially constructed and historically situated nature of these categories is essential for fostering critical thinking and preventing the reproduction of stereotypes in classroom discussions and research practices.

Identity, Intersectionality, and Representation in the Digital Space. Jasmine Le

What is Social Identity Theory? (Easiest Explanation)

SIMPLY PUT

- The construction of identity is closely connected to sociological theory. Depending on their sense of group belonging, each individual feels and acts in different ways.
- By its very nature, whenever a social category exists, there is an imbalance in terms of power and inclusion among different social groups. Therefore, the experiences of groups formed by individuals can vary significantly depending on access to resources, social prejudice, purchasing power, and other structural factors.
- Intersectionality serves as a bridge between data and lived reality. Through an intersectional perspective, it is possible to develop key educational practices and resources aimed at reducing social inequalities.

CORE IDEA

Questions of identity, belonging, and inclusion are closely linked to social categorization. Social Identity Theory suggests that the desire to be part of a group can foster preference for one's own group and exclusion of others. An intersectional perspective is therefore crucial to grasp how overlapping identities operate and to design more effective responses to discrimination in particular settings.

PEDAGOGICAL TASK 1

"Deconstructing Social Identity"

Purpose: This activity encourages you to critically examine your own identity using the framework of Social Identity Theory.

1. Personal Identification.

   Start by considering the following questions:

a. Who are you? Think about the social categories that contribute to your identity (e.g., gender, ethnicity, nationality, social class, occupation, religion, ability, age, etc.).

b. How would you describe yourself in relation to these categories?

c. How will you define yourself?

2. Social Perception.

Reflect on how others might view your identities.

a. How could different individuals classify or interpret you?

b. How might these perceptions shape your opportunities or interactions?

3. Interaction of Social Categories.

Analyze whether your social categories should be considered separately.

a. Do they function independently, or are they interconnected?

b. In what ways do their intersections form complex patterns that influence your experiences?

4. Final reflection.

Based on this reflection, consider whether you can reinterpret your own identity and your perceptions of others. Is it possible to see yourself (and others) from a new perspective?

PEDAGOGICAL TASK II

"My appearance: The one in many"

Purpose: This activity uses Tomoko Sawada's self-portraits to explore how our perceptions and judgements are shaped

by personal appearance. Students will think about the idea that a person's personality is reflected in their appearance, using contemporary art as a lens through which to view this concept.

1. Anchor & Initial Discussion.

   Watch "Tomoko Sawada's self-portraits create familiar characters" (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2018). Use it as a starting point for conversation.

   a. Do you consider identity to be a static concept or a fluid and evolving one?

   b. Which visual cues trigger assumptions about identity (e.g. hair, clothing, make-up, posture, setting or expression)?

   c. Is identity something inherent and fixed, or is it socially constructed? To what extent are your perceptions shaped by cultural norms?

2. Artistic Lens & Exploration.

   Engage with additional examples of Sawada's work to deepen the discussion. Specifically, her debut piece *400 ID* displays four hundred passport-sized self-portraits representing four hundred different women. Show your students her works entitled *Facial Signature* and *Recruit.* As you view them, consider how costume, setting, expression, repetition, and series format shape perceptions of identity.

   - Instruction 1: Look at Sawada's work and, for one image (or a pair or series), list the observable cues (what you can see) and the inferences (what you can conclude). Mark any potential biases involved in each conclusion.

- Instruction 2 (optional debiasing): Try one debiasing technique, such as considering the images to depict a different gender, race or age, taking time to separate description from inference and replacing labels with behaviours. Then restate your interpretation. What changes?

3. Final Reflection & Application.

   Read to your students the following Sawada reflection:

   When I started to take pictures, I loved my image taken in photos, which looked attractive and cute. I could make myself look like a model or an actress in pictures. As I looked at my pictures again and again, the gap between my real image and my image in a picture widened.

   Conclude with a debate in which you encourage your students to discuss Sawada's words and the next set of questions:

   a. Is appearance a reflection of identity? Is it easy to change your appearance? Does your essence change when you change your appearance?

   b. How do selfies and photographs impact the way you see yourself and others?

LINKS



"Tomoko Sawada's self-portraits create familiar characters"
(San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2018)

3. Social cognition

Social cognition drives how we see others, often using shortcuts, stereotypes and implicit biases, that simplify but distort reality

From a broad perspective, social perception refers to the cognitive construction and understanding of the world based on sensory data (DeLamater et al., 2015). More specifically, it is the process through which we form impressions founded upon the traits and personalities of others.

The act of observing others' behaviours and inferring their underlying causes, such as intentions, abilities, traits, motives, and situational pressures, facilitates our understanding of conduct through what is known as the attribution process (Myers, 2019). Social perception and attributions are not passive activities; they are not merely the recording of sensory stimuli. Instead, our cognitive structures and expectations actively influence how we perceive and interpret information.

SIMPLY PUT

- Social cognition clarifies how individuals rely on culturally influenced mental shortcuts to navigate complex social contexts. These shortcuts determine how we perceive, interpret, and judge others.
- These automatic processes can manifest as cognitive biases, implicit biases and stereotypes. They can strengthen generalised beliefs and influence behaviour without conscious awareness.
- Cognitive biases and stereotypes can play a role in the unintentional perpetuation of inequality and discrimination.

One of the most effective ways to address this issue is to encourage critical reflection and analytical thinking.

CORE IDEA

Human beings rely on culturally shaped mental shortcuts to efficiently navigate complex social environments. However, these mechanisms, expressed as cognitive biases, implicit biases, and stereotypes, systematically shape how we interpret, perceive, and evaluate others. During this cognitive process, these biases can reinforce generalized assumptions and unintentionally sustain inequality and discrimination.

3.1. Cognitive biases

To understand the foundations of discriminatory processes, it is necessary to acknowledge that not all human decisions are consciously deliberated at all times. Frequently, the use of heuristics, mental shortcuts, leads individuals to make decisions based on the information immediately available, which is often derived from past experiences and perceptions (DeLamater et al., 2015). This, in turn, gives rise to cognitive biases (Ellis, 2018).

A cognitive bias can be defined as a systematic error in thinking that occurs when people process and interpret information from their environment, thereby influencing their decisions and judgements. These cognitive shortcuts play a significant role in our social interactions and have the potential to result in systematic errors in thinking and decision-making.

Your brain is biased by default. Here's how to reset it.
David Eagleman

Implicit bias constitutes a core component of implicit social cognition. Accordingly, individuals' perceptions and behaviours can be influenced by the implicit biases they harbor, even in the absence of conscious awareness of such biases. Implicit bias may give rise to implicit prejudice or implicit attitudes; for instance, it may manifest as a negative evaluation of a particular social group of which the individual is not consciously aware. These biases are thought to emerge from experience and are grounded in learned associations between specific attributes and social categories, including race and gender. Implicit biases are particularly salient and problematic because they can generate behaviour that is incongruent with an individual's explicitly endorsed beliefs or stated principles.

Implicit Bias | Concepts Unwrapped

A recent classification of cognitive biases, the Cognitive Bias Codex by Benson has listed 187 biases (Ellis, 2018). Cognitive biases affecting everyone, regardless of intelligence or experience, and they can be either favorable or unfavorable. The most common biases are: Familiarity/availability, confirmation bias, representational bias and overconfidence bias.

- Familiarity or availability bias refers to a cognitive heuristic whereby individuals estimate the probability or frequency of an event on the basis of the ease with which similar instances can be recalled from memory. In this sense, events that are more salient, recent, emotionally charged, or frequently represented in media tend

to be perceived as more likely, irrespective of their objective statistical probability.

- Confirmation bias refers to the cognitive tendency to preferentially seek, interpret, and recall information in ways that affirm pre-existing beliefs or hypotheses, while systematically disregarding or undervaluing disconfirming evidence.
- Representational bias in visualization pertains to the influence of representational constraints and perceptual salience on interpretation, whereby specific design choices, framing devices, or visual emphases shape the viewer's understanding and may privilege certain patterns or relationships over others.
- Overconfidence bias denotes the systematic tendency of individuals to overestimate the accuracy of their judgments, knowledge, or performance relative to their objective correctness or demonstrated competence.

Embracing a mindset of continual learning and open-mindedness will enable us to become more resistent to their perverse influence.

Cognitive Bias Codex

Implicit Bias Explained – Perception Institute

SIMPLY PUT

- Cognitive biases are shortcuts linked to our cultural background, including cultural norms, values and stereotypes. Culture provides the context for our cognitive processes, shaping our perceptions and influencing what we pay

attention to and how we interpret information. Culture also impacts our cognitive processes, predisposing us to specific biases through shared norms and values.

- There are over 180 recognized cognitive biases that affect everyone, regardless of their intelligence or experience. These biases can be either favorable or unfavorable.
- Cognitive biases emerge when mental shortcuts are used. These systematic thinking errors can distort our perception of reality.

CORE IDEA

Since much of human decision-making relies on shortcuts, cognitive biases can silently transform stereotypes into unfair judgements and outcomes, even when people explicitly value fairness. They can contradict one's stated principles. Crucially, everyone is susceptible to this, so we need to consciously align our decisions with equity.

PEDAGOGICAL TASK

"Do You Dare to Discover Your Biases?"

After watching the video "Should You Trust Your First Impression?" (Mende-Siedlecki, TED Talk, 2013), take a blank sheet of paper and a pen. Now, focus on thinking about three people whom you initially did not find likable but whom you eventually came to accept into your life.

Once you have identified these three people, follow the steps below:

1. Briefly describe in writing the situation in which you met each person (create a separate section for each individual).

2. Now explain what your first impression of each person was in that specific situation. Speak honestly and without judging yourself; perhaps their appearance, voice, or behaviour did not resonate with you—everything is valid.
3. Next, identify the first sentence or thought that came to your mind during that initial "negative" encounter.
4. Then, explain when that person began to take on a more positive (or at least neutral) meaning in your life. What changed? How did this new perspective begin to develop?
5. Assign a new sentence to this later stage. What thought now comes to mind when you think again about each of the three people? Is it more positive? How would you define this "second" impression?

As a final step, after completing the five points above, write a reflection summarizing what you have learned about first impressions: those initial judgments that may arise but change over time through experience and interaction. In your reflection, address the following questions:

a. Do you think that, as Mende-Siedlecki argues, negative impressions tend to carry more weight when categorizing the people you selected? Why do you think this happens?
b. Did you encounter any difficulty in labeling or describing the chosen individuals during the exercise? If so, what do you think explains this difficulty?
c. Based on your own examples, what have you learned?

LINK

"Should You Trust Your First Impression?" (Mende-Siedlecki, TED Talk, 2013)

3.2. Stereotypes

A stereotype is defined as a set of characteristics attributed to all members of a particular social group or category (McCauley et al., 1980; Taylor, 1981). Stereotypes constitute categorical, extreme, and often inappropriate judgments that nonetheless remain socially widespread. By disregarding individual variability, they subsume all persons who share a given category under a single, undifferentiated classification.

Stereotypes function as mechanisms of categorization, enabling individuals to form impressions of others and to predict their behaviour based on minimal information about the groups to which they belong (DeLamater et al., 2015). However, stereotyping necessarily entails overgeneralization. Although stereotypes may contain elements of truth, not all members of a given group conform to such generalized attributes. Consequently, stereotypes often give rise to erroneous inferences and contribute to previously discussed cognitive biases.

Importantly, the content of stereotypes is not static; rather, it evolves over time in response to changing social and cultural contexts. Moreover, stereotypical overgeneralizations are frequently made unconsciously, with limited awareness of the potential impact that such judgments may have

on others (Bornstein & Pittman, 1992; Hepburn & Locksley, 1983). Acting on the basis of stereotypes can produce significant negative consequences for those targeted—for instance, employment discrimination against individuals belonging to particular ethnic groups (Pager et al., 2009).

Beyond these direct adverse consequences, there is another, less immediate yet equally harmful effect: stereotype threat. It is defined by the American Asociation of Psychology (2025) although identified last century by Claude M. Steele and Joshua Aronson. It is an individual's expectation that negative stereotypes about their member group will adversely influence others' judgments of their performance and that a poor performance will reflect badly on the member group. This expectation may undermine the individual's actual ability to perform well. In an academic setting, for example, it has been shown that African American students' performance in tests of intellectual ability can suffer because of anxiety induced by thinking that they are expected to perform poorly and will be judged according to negative stereotypes.

Stereotype Threat:
A Conversation with
Claude Steele

There is nothing inherently negative about stereotypes *per se;* however, they frequently contain negative or discriminatory elements, even though this is not necessarily the case. For example, assertions such as "Asians are excellent in mathematics" or "Black individuals are naturally gifted

athletes" may appear positive, yet they nonetheless constitute essentializing generalizations that reduce individual variability and reinforce categorical thinking.

The underlying basis for the use of stereotypes lies in cognitive economy: the tendency to simplify and organize social information efficiently. In this process, individuals are often grouped into three classical categories: gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. However, numerous additional categorizations also structure social perception, including occupation, age, political ideology, mental health status, hobbies, neighborhood of residence, vacation preferences, musical tastes, school attended, university affiliation, family occupation, and other social markers (Miller, 1982; Rahn, 1993; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2007; Rothbart, 2011).

All of these dimensions constitute forms of group membership that shape individual identity and collectively contribute to what has been described as the concept of intersectionality.

The origins of stereotypes may stem from direct interpersonal contact (Campbell, 1967). For example, encountering a single passionate Italian individual may lead to the overgeneralized conclusion that all Italians are passionate. Stereotypes may also arise from the biased distribution of social groups across particular social roles (Eagly & Steffen, 1984). For instance, observing that a high percentage of professional basketball players in the NBA are racialized individuals may lead to the erroneous inference that athletic ability in basketball is inherently linked to race.

More broadly, stereotypes may emerge as a natural consequence of social perception processes (McGarty et al., 2002). When individuals process and store large amounts

of social information, they tend to organize and recall it in terms of categories rather than specific persons (Taylor et al., 1978). Consequently, behaviours are often encoded and remembered as characteristic of groups rather than of individuals (Rothbart, 2011). Applied to this context, one might conclude, for example, that "women are naturally talkative," after recalling that many women spoke during a meeting, even if one cannot remember which specific women spoke.

Stereotypes are notably resistant to change. Even in the presence of concrete evidence that contradicts them, individuals tend to accept information that is consistent with existing stereotypes while discounting incongruent information (Lord et al., 1984; Snyder, 1981; Weber & Crocker, 1983). When an individual does not conform to a stereotype, cognitive subtyping often occurs: subcategories are created within the stereotyped group to accommodate exceptions without undermining the overall stereotype. Creating subtypes is a cognitive strategy that allows the maintenance of existing schemas, as it is cognitively easier to categorize exceptions than to revise deeply entrenched stereotype-consistent thought patterns. Consequently, resisting or countering stereotypes requires deliberate and sustained cognitive effort.

SIMPLY PUT

- Stereotypes function as a way of structuring social perception by categorizing different aspects of reality, either consciously or unconsciously, in a way that ultimately generates discriminatory patterns of behaviour.

- Although stereotypes help us to classify social information, they ignore individual differences and can lead to unfair generalizations about entire groups.
- In order to reduce cognitive distortions, information must be accurate and evidence-based. This helps to challenge the false beliefs that are created by social categorization. Therefore, critical thinking and an openness to new perspectives are necessary to better understand and question social stereotypes.

CORE IDEA

Stereotypes are simplified group templates. They can misrepresent individuals and encourage bias, and they are often applied unconsciously and vary depending on the context. They interact with cognitive biases, triggering stereotype threat and undermining performance among targeted groups. To successfully mitigate, it is vital to have accurate, evidence-based information and to be able to critically self-reflect.

PEDAGOGICAL TASK 1

"The Danger of a Single Story"

Purpose: This activity highlights the dangers of portraying people as one-dimensional, and illustrates how 'single stories' can create stereotypes. It invites you to use an intersectional lens to challenge such narratives.

1. Anchor & Initial Discussion.

   Watch the first 11 minutes (or the full talk, if time allows) of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "The danger of a single story" (TED Talk, 2009). Use it as the

starting point for a conversation. Answer the following questions:

a. What are examples of single stories in the news or on social media? Discuss dominant narratives from the Global North and how they shape perception and identity.

b. Who owns the power? Who shapes the narrative?

2. Introducing an Intersectional Lens.

a. Reflect on how an intersectional perspective can challenge "single stories."

b. How can the use of an intersectional lens help us reject the single story?

c. How do "single stories" shift when we view intersections (e.g., gender × race, class, nationality, ability, etc.)?

3. Final Reflection & Application.

a. Return to the single story that you identified at the beginning and rethink it from an intersectional perspective.

b. Which intersection(s) became visible once the single story was challenged?b) Close by revisiting Adichie's core idea, moving from single to plural stories.

LINK

"The danger of a single story" (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, TED Talk, 2009)

PEDAGOGICAL TASK II

"Beyond the 'Refugee' Stereotype"

Purpose: Examine your mental image of "refugees," compare it with real-world counterexamples, and reflect on how narratives create stereotypes. Then, reframe it using an intersectional lens.

1. Initial Reflection.

   Respond to the following prompts:

   a. How do you imagine a refugee? What stereotypes do you hold about this group?

   b. Write your answers on a sheet of paper (Optional: submit anonymously).

   Optional hook: Create a quick word cloud using mentimeter of class associations with "refugee."

2. Counterexamples: Common Thread.

   Consider the following question: Do you know who Steve Jobs, Albert Einstein, Victor Hugo, Hannah Arendt, and Sergey Brin are? Please indicate what they have in common.

   Optional "blind bio" reveal: First share nameless mini-bios (2-3 lines each). Ask students to infer whether the person would be portrayed as a "refugee," then reveal the names.

3. Reveal & Reconsideration.

   Indeed, they share a common characteristic: they were refugees.

   a. Do they fit the characteristics you initially associated with the idea of a refugee?

Optional intersectional add-on: In pairs, pick one person and list at least two intersecting social positions (e.g., profession × class, gender × migration history). Discuss how a "single story" might erase those intersections.

4. Final Reflection.

   Based on this comparison, reflect on how your initial image was formed and what you would now revise.

   a. How has your perception of refugees changed as a result of this comparison?

   b. Can you move beyond your initial perception to develop a more nuanced understanding of who a 'refugee' can be?

   Optional creative close: Write a six-word story or rewrite a headline that presents a non-stereotypical narrative.

4. Gender

Gender is continually painted and repainted through social rituals and norms, shaping both how we perceive ourselves and how the world perceives us

The Dictionary of Psychology published by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2026) defines gender as:

> The socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for different genders. In a human context, the distinction between gender and sex reflects the usage of these terms: Sex refers to the biological status of being male, female, or intersex, whereas gender implies the psychological, behavioral, social, and cultural aspects of gender (i.e., masculinity, femininity, nonbinary, nonconforming, or other gender).

The legendary phrase by the writer, philosopher, and activist Simone de Beauvoir encapsulates this idea: "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." In her 1949 book *The Second Sex,* Simone de Beauvoir's iconic statement advances the idea that gender is a social construct, a performative and learned role, rather than an innate, biologically determined destiny.

For decades, gender has functioned as a useful analytical category for understanding social reality; however, it cannot be conceived as static or universal, since what is considered feminine or masculine varies across historical periods and cultural contexts (Marugán, 2020). Moreover, gender frequently operates as a universal system of classification and social organization that transforms sexual difference into social inequality.

From diverse theoretical perspectives, the contributions of authors such as Kate Millett, Gayle Rubin, Judith Butler, Donna Haraway, Paul B. Preciado, Celia Amorós, Amelia Valcárcel, and Nuria Varela, among others, have examined and further developed this line of analysis.

Judith Butler on Gender

SIMPLY PUT

- Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours and identities of female, male and gender-diverse people. Gender is a social construction, a performative and learned role, rather than an innate, biologically determined destiny.
- Gender is usually incorrectly conceptualized as a binary (female/male) factor. In reality, there is a spectrum of gender identities and expressions defining how individuals identify themselves and express their gender.

CORE IDEA

Sex is biological (chromosomes, anatomy), while gender is behavioural and cultural. Gender is how individuals understand and express themselves in relation to social expectations of masculinity and femininity.

4.1. Cognitive gender biases

Cognitive gender bias refers to the unconscious or unintentional patterns of thought and belief that result in differential

treatment or misperceptions of individuals based on their gender, often rooted in stereotypes and societal prejudices. These biases function as cognitive heuristics, leading individuals to interpret and process information in ways that reinforce existing gender norms rather than objective reality (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). Such biases have demonstrable effects across domains including recruitment and hiring, scientific research, and everyday social interactions (Heilman, 2012; Moss-Racusin et al., 2012).

Some of the consequences of gender bias include the systematic tendencies to favor or disadvantage individuals based on their gender (Myers, 2019). These biases may be explicit or implicit and can shape perceptions, decision-making, and behaviour across both social and professional domains. Socialization is the process through which individuals acquire gendered behaviours, norms, and practices that shape how they perceive themselves and are perceived by others, in accordance with identification as female or male (DeLamater & Ward, 2006). Consequently, gender is learned and internalized through socialization. Often, even prior to birth, gender socialization assigns distinctive characteristics to newborns based on their genitalia, marking the initial stages of gendered socialization. As the child grows, becoming a boy or a girl, these differences in treatment are further reinforced by the adult environment. For example, boys are often treated in a more vigorous and energetic manner than girls, reflecting and perpetuating socially constructed gender expectations.

It is a pervasive phenomenon that permeates nearly every aspect of society, manifesting as the differential treatment

of individuals based on their gender. Such biases can distort judgment and compromise the objective evaluation of situations, individuals, and potential risks.

Girl toys vs boy toys: The experiment – BBC Stories

In the sciences, gender bias can influence research methodology, the interpretation of findings, and even funding decisions, often resulting in the misrepresentation of experiences. Within psychological research, gender biases can shape the formulation of research questions, the analysis and interpretation of data, and the development of theories and clinical practices, frequently reinforcing gender stereotypes and marginalizing certain groups.

Gender Bias in Psychology: The Ugly Truth Behind the Research | A-level Psychology

According to Hare-Mustin and Marecek (1988), gender bias in psychology can take several distinct forms:

- Alpha bias exaggerates perceived gender differences. For instance, it assumes that women and men are inherently distinct in their abilities or psychological functioning, thereby reinforcing essentialist notions of gender.
- Beta bias minimizes or disregards gender differences by applying psychological theories universally, without evaluating whether they accurately reflect the

experiences of both men and women. This often leads to the systematic underestimation of the unique experiences of women and other marginalized groups.

- Androcentrism reflects a male-centered worldview, in which male behaviour is treated as the norm and serves as the standard against which the behaviours and experiences of other genders are assessed (De Beauvoir, 1949/2011; Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1988).

Furthermore, when a theory is described as "universal," it is presumed to apply to all people regardless of gender or culture. This assumption itself may reflect an underlying form of gender bias, as it risks overlooking the specific experiences and perspectives of non-dominant groups.

Gender Bias

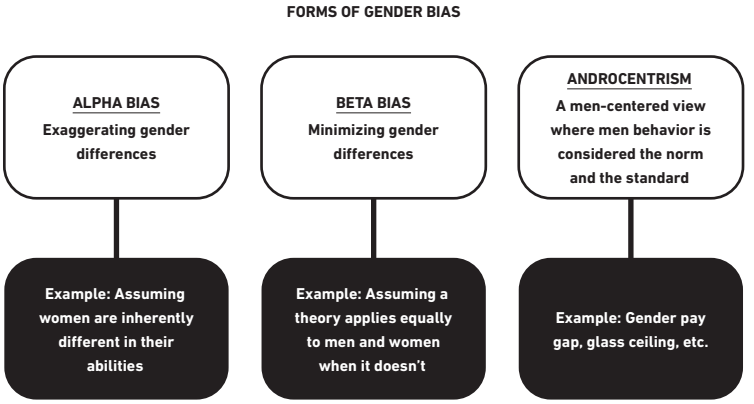


Figure 2. Forms of gender bias. Author's own elaboration based on Hare-Mustin & Marecek (1988)

SIMPLY PUT

- Gender bias is a pervasive issue that affects nearly every aspect of our society and refers to the more favorable or less favorable treatment given to a person based on their gender.
- Gender bias refers to prejudiced actions or judgments based on the assumption that one gender is inferior to another in rights, competence, or social value.

CORE IDEA

Cognitive gender bias is a form of automatic, stereotype-driven processing that skews attention and judgment by gender. This produces unequal evaluations even when fairness is intended. It functions as heuristics and manifests as alpha bias, beta bias and androcentrism.

PEDAGOGICAL TASK

"Mind the Gap: Sex and Gender in Science and Sport"

Purpose: This activity raises awareness of gender inequalities in science and sport. It invites students to research concrete examples of gender bias in academia, psychology and research, and to reflect on the impact of overlooking sex and gender differences on study design, implementation, reporting and science communication. The activity concludes with an open, hopeful conversation that centers on intersectionality.

1. Anchor & Initial Inquiry.

   Use the GenderSci Lab video "Gender Inequities in Sports and ACL Injury Risk" (GenderSci Lab, YouTube, 2026) as the starting point for discussion.

a. Did you know that women suffer more sports injuries than men?

b. After watching the video, research gender bias in academia, psychology and research, and find real-world examples of it.

2. Possible Research Themes.

Consider the following "Did you know…" prompts as starting points (choose one or more to investigate):

Women underdiagnosed in diabetes, heart disease, endometriosis, cancer, etc.

a. Identify at least one example and a credible source.

b. Briefly note the implications (e.g., for diagnosis, treatment, participation, communication).

3. Do You Think…?

Reflect on the following:

a. Do you think that sex and gender differences are often overlooked in the design of research studies, their implementation and scientific reporting, and in general science communication?

b. Support your view with examples from your research.

4. Final Reflection & Open Conversation.

Close with a critical reflection and open dialogue around these prompts:

a. In what ways can we be optimistic about gender bias in science?

b. Why do we need women in science?

c. What can an intersectional approach do to address the issue of underdiagnosed women?

LINKS

"Gender Inequities in Sports and ACL Injury Risk" (GenderSci Lab, YouTube, 2026)

BMJ Journals

4.2. Gender stereotyping

According to the American Psychological Association (2025), a gender stereotype is defined as a relatively fixed and oversimplified set of beliefs regarding the attitudes and behaviours deemed normative and appropriate for particular genders; such as male, female, transgender, nonbinary, or other gender identities; within a given cultural context. Gender stereotypes frequently reinforce the social construction and maintenance of gender roles and sex-role stereotypes, which consist of rigid and reductionist assumptions about the social roles considered suitable for individuals based on their sex assigned at birth. Similarly, gender roles are conceptualized as culturally specific patterns of behaviour, personality traits, and attitudes that serve to define and differentiate genders within a society. They are often understood as the external expression of an individual's internalized gender identity; however, these two dimensions are not invariably aligned.

The concepts of gender stereotype, gender role, and sex-role stereotype are closely related but they present minimal differences. In essence, gender stereotypes concern what people believe about genders. Gender roles concern how individuals are expected to behave and how they perform gender within social structures. Sex-role stereotypes concern what individuals are supposed to do socially because of their assigned sex.

Concept	Primary Focus	Level	Example
Gender stereotype	Beliefs about traits	Cognitive	Women are emotional
Gender role	Socially enacted expectations	Behavioural/Social	Women perfoming caregiving labor
Sex role stereotype	Prescribed roles based on biological sex	Normative Role-based	Men should be breadwinners

Table 1. Key Distinctions Between Gender Stereotypes, Gender Roles, and Sex-Role Stereotypes. Elaboration based on Alice H. Eagly (1987) & Kay Deaux and Laurie L. Lewis (1984)

When analyzing stereotypes, it is essential to distinguish between their descriptive and prescriptive functions (Manzi et al., 2024). In the context of gender, this distinction is fundamental to understanding gender dynamics. Descriptive gender stereotypes refer to the characteristics that are commonly attributed to men and women, reflecting beliefs about how members of each gender typically are. They are observable characteristics. In contrast, prescriptive gender stereotypes delineate the traits and behaviours that men and women are expected to exhibit, thereby establishing normative standards of conduct. Failure to conform to these prescriptive expectations may result in social penalties and discrimination, as individuals who deviate from stereotypical norms are often perceived negatively (López-Sàez & Lisbona, 2009).

Gender stereotypes have been shown to function as mechanisms that reinforce the social construction and perpetuation of gender roles. The coexistence of descriptive and prescriptive gender stereotypes can give rise to biased evaluations and discriminatory practices. These dynamics may, in turn, hinder the professional advancement of women and individuals in marginalized positions, albeit through distinct yet interrelated mechanisms.

Gender stereotypes
and education

In psychological and organizational research, stereotyping has been associated with the systematic underestimation of women's competence in leadership and technical domains, as well as with the assumption that men possess innate superiority in mathematics and spatial reasoning, whereas women are presumed to excel in verbal abilities and caregiving skills (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Fiske et al., 2002). Such biases manifest across a wide range of professional and academic contexts.

For example, hiring committees may unconsciously devalue the qualifications of female candidates based on the assumption that women are less committed to highly demanding roles, particularly when motherhood is presumed (Correll et al., 2007). Similarly, faculty members have been shown to evaluate male applicants as more competent and more deserving of higher salaries than identically qualified female applicants (Moss-Racusin et al., 2012).

These findings illustrate how cognitive gender biases contribute to the reproduction of structural inequalities that are social in origin rather than biologically determined.

Psychological research and professional practice concerning gender stereotypes constitute socially sensitive domains that must be approached with methodological rigor and ethical responsibility. Adopting an intersectional perspective, grounded in the theoretical contributions of Kimberlé Crenshaw in the late 1980s, can substantially enrich the field

by moving beyond the analysis of gender as an isolated variable and recognizing how interlocking social categories, such as race, social class, and sexual orientation, intersect to produce distinct experiences of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination.

In summary, critical awareness of one's own stereotypes and implicit biases—as well as those embedded in informational sources—constitutes a necessary precondition for mitigating their influence. The ability to identify and critically examine bias in both everyday life and professional practice is essential. Information should therefore be approached with intellectual rigor, neutrality, and reflective skepticism.

Furthermore, integrating intersectionality into processes of self-reflection and professional engagement facilitates recognition of social complexity, affirms the fundamental reality of human diversity, and promotes the interrogation of implicit prejudices. Such an approach entails sustained attentiveness to structural inequalities and forms of discrimination, particularly those that remain obscured or insufficiently visible within dominant social narratives.

"Can prejudice ever be a good thing?" (Paul Bloom, TED Talk, 2014)

SIMPLY PUT

- A gender stereotype is a preconceived notion of someone based upon their gender. They often lead to prejudices and biases that unfairly change how you perceive and interact with people.

- They often result in discrimination.
- Society tends to have gender stereotypes based on the dominant forms of masculinity and femininity within a culture. Some gender stereotypes can be based on biological fact while others are culturally constructed ideas about the ideal male and female archetypes.

CORE IDEA

We should not have pre-judgements (or prejudices) about people based on their gender identity. Instead, we should assess people's aptitudes based on our experiences with them.

PEDAGOGICAL TASK I

"Gender Stereotypes: Schematic Reflection (Gabriella Haug's TED Talk)"

Purpose: This activity invites students to use a schematic summary to distill key ideas from Gabriella Haug's "Gender Stereotype" (TED Talk, 2020), then reflect on which points stood out and why, fostering critical thinking and self-reflection.

1. Anchor & Initial Viewing.

   Watch "Gender Stereotype" by Gabriella Haug (TED Talk, 2020). Use it as the starting point for discussion.

2. Schematic Summary.

   Create a concise, schematic summary of Gabriella's reflections. Choose one format:

   Essential points/words (6–10). You can use mentimeter.

   Mind map/concept map (central idea + branches)

   5-sentence abstract (problem → insights → implications)

   Guiding (use as helpful):

a. What are the main claims Gabriella makes about gender stereotypes?
b. Which examples or experiences does she use to illustrate them?
c. What consequences of stereotypes does she highlight (for individuals, learning, work, or society)?
d. What questions, challenges, or calls to action does she leave the audience with?

3. Final Reflection & Application.

Based on your summary and discussion, reflect on the following:

a. What is one practical change you would make (e.g., in communication, classroom practice, research design, or media consumption) to reduce the impact of gender stereotypes?
b. Where do you notice opportunities to interrupt or reframe stereotypes in your context (school, workplace, community, media)?

LINK

"Gender Stereotype" (Gabriella Haug, TED Talk, 2020)

PEDAGOGICAL TASK II

"Nona Gaprindashvili: Gender, Power, and the Politics of Storytelling"

Purpose: This activity uses the history of women in chess and contemporary media to explore gender stereotypes,

tokenism, and the power of narrative. Students will consider how stories shape identity and recognition, focusing on Nona Gaprindashvili's case and the importance of challenging misrepresentation.

1. Opening Provocation.

   Begin by reading these statements aloud to the class:
   - *Nigel Short blamed biology.*
   - *Bobby Fischer said women were "terrible."*
   - *Garry Kasparov claimed chess "didn't fit women properly."*

   Use these to launch an initial conversation.

   a. What gender stereotypes are suggested here?

   b. How do such statements shape expectations and opportunities for women and girls in logic-based activities like chess?

2. Anchor & Conversation Starter.

   Watch the video "The Women Who Changed Chess Forever | From Vera Menchik to Judit Polgár" (World Chess, YouTube, 2026). Use it to introduce the discussion around these themes:

   a. How are women represented in this overview of chess history?

   b. Why are women so often portrayed as "exceptions"? Discuss tokenism and its effects, both on public perception and on the individuals labelled as "the first" or "the only."

3. When Frames Change, Beliefs Change.

   Watch the two videos about Bobby Fischer, "Bobby Fischer sobre las mujeres" (BlindBishop, YouTube, 2023)

and "Nona Gaprindashvili - Bobby Fischer appreciated world women chess champion & living legend - Bobby voice" (GamerAbyzz, YouTube, 2005), and relate them to the moment in the previous video "The Women Who Changed Chess Forever" when Garry Kasparov changed his mind.

Continue the reflection by considering how women like Judit Polgár or Nona Gaprindashvili introduce disconfirming evidence and contribute to a reframing process, creating salient counterexamples that illustrate belief revision.

a. What do you think about the comments made by some grandmasters?
b. Why do you think they change their narratives?
c. What role does context play here

Conduct a brief search and identify at least one example of a belief that changed over time after being originally grounded in gender stereotypes. Reflect on how, as evidence against the belief accumulates (for example, Judit Polgár's victory over Kasparov in 2002) and as norms and data evolve, people update or recalibrate their opinions.

4. Case Study: Nona Gaprindashvili vs. Netflix.

Watch the video "Netflix sued over misinformation in 'Queen's Gambit'." Continue reflecting on the figure of Nona Gaprindashvili, the first woman to receive the Grandmaster title. Consider why it matters that she took Netflix to court for defamation at the age of 80, arguing that the series diminished her legacy, ultimately

winning the case in response to a line in *The Queen's Gambit* (2020):

The only unusual thing about her, really, is her sex. And even that's not unique in Russia. There's Nona Gaprindashvili, but she's the female world champion and has never faced men.

That single line sparked a lawsuit and reportedly led to a $5 million settlement.

a. Was it all just about a TV show? About ego? Was the reaction disproportionate?

b. Why does this case matter in terms of gender recognition and the politics of storytelling?

5. Final Reflection & Application.

Conclude with a brief open discussion and personal reflection:

a. What, specifically, has this case changed in how you think about gender, expertise, and credit?

b. Where else (fields, disciplines, media genres) do you see similar narrative patterns, and how might they be challenged?

LINKS

"The Women Who Changed Chess Forever | From Vera Menchik to Judit Polgár" (World Chess, YouTube, 2026)

"Rare interview – Bobby Fischer on women" (BlindBishop, YouTube, 2023)

"Nona Gaprindashvili – Bobby Fischer appreciated world women chess champion & living legend - Bobby voice" (GamerAbyzz, YouTube, 2025)

"Netflix sued over misinformation in 'Queen's Gambit'" (TRT World, YouTube, 2021)

PEDAGOGICAL TASK III

"Gender Stereotypes: Have You Ever Considered…?"

Retrieve the table displayed in this section of the Toolkit. Read the following sentences and classify them by writing their corresponding number in the table according to their concept, primary focus, and level. Then, reflect on these aspects and propose one additional example for each level under the "(new one)" category.

Number 1: Women are expected to care for their families.

Number 2: Girls are expected to be polite.

Number 3: Men are expected to serve as the primary financial providers for their families.

Number 4: Men are expected to be vigorous and courageous.

Number 5: Women are expected to be talkative.

Number 6: Married women are expected to have children.

Concept	Primary Focus	Level	Example
Gender stereotype	Beliefs about traits	Cognitive	-Number ___ -Number ___ -(new one)
Gender role	Socially enacted expectations	Behavioural/Social	-Number ___ -Number ___ -(new one)
Sex-role stereotype	Prescribed roles based on biological sex	Normative/ Role-based	-Number ___ -Number ___ -(new one)

Table 2

4.3. Gender discrimination

The presence of stereotypes can give rise to preconceived notions that evaluate individuals based on their group membership. These opinions or attitudes are typically negative and are referred to as prejudices. On a continuum,

prejudices often precede acts of discrimination and can ultimately escalate into hate speech, the extreme expression of which may manifest as physical aggression or even murder. Applied to gender, this refers to any form of discrimination based on the social construction of being male, female, or identifying as a non-binary person. This form of discrimination is defined as sexism.

Individual instances of discrimination, based on gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, or other identity markers, may appear minor or inconsequential in isolation; however, they are often frequent, pervasive, and cumulative over time. Everyday sexism, for example, encompasses subtle, routine forms of devaluation and micro-invalidations that, although seemingly insignificant when considered individually, accumulate to heighten stress and adversely affect psychological well-being (Swim et al., 2001).

Currently, the term "hate speech" requires careful analysis of its ultimate purpose, particularly when its use is justified under appeals to freedom of expression (Risso Ferrand, 2020). While hatred as an emotion is not subject to moral or legal condemnation, the expression of hatred with the intent to discriminate, humiliate, or maliciously threaten the integrity of an individual or vulnerable group warrants a legal framework that protects the human rights of the oppressed (Kaufman, 2015). In recent years, factors such as the democratization of the internet and the political legitimization of hate speech have amplified its reach, making anonymity, or even the use of pseudonyms, no longer necessary (Emcke, 2017). Furthermore, such intergroup antagonism is sustained not only by actual conflicts of interest between groups,

as posited by Sherif (1961) Realistic Conflict Theory, but also by the strengthening of in-group identity that emerges as a result of the conflict itself (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). An example of this type of hate speech taken to the extreme and rooted in gender-based discrimination is the manosphere ideology.

On a smaller scale, and preceding overt hate speech, cognitive discrimination biases emerge, which, when applied to gender, can intersect with affinity. For instance, the preference for individuals who share similar backgrounds, interests, or demographic characteristics, known as affinity bias, often advantages male candidates in male-dominated fields or leadership positions (Rivera, 2012). In other words, it reflects the tendency to hire or promote individuals who resemble oneself.

Similarly, confirmation biases contribute to discriminatory processes. This occurs when individuals selectively seek, interpret, or recall evidence in ways that confirm pre-existing beliefs, including gender stereotypes. For example, evaluators may notice behaviours that appear to support assumptions that women are less committed to their careers while ignoring evidence to the contrary (Nickerson, 1998).

We should all be feminists. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

SIMPLY PUT

- Stereotypes are not "harmless opinions." They lead to sexism, which causes harm. When stereotypes about women, men, or non-binary people are treated as truth, they harden into sexism, a bias that fuels prejudice,

justifies discriminatory decisions, and can escalate into hate speech or even violence.

- Small slights can have a big impact on wellbeing. Microaggressions in everyday life, such as subtle jokes, dismissive comments and uneven attention, may look trivial one by one, but their cumulative effect is real, producing stress and eroding performance and well-being over time.
- The bias is hidden in the word "fit." Affinity bias (favoring people who are similar to us) and confirmation bias (interpreting information in a way that confirms our existing beliefs) can have a significant impact on hiring, promotion, grading and leadership pipelines without anyone noticing.
- These biases can systematically disadvantage women and gender-diverse individuals, particularly in male-dominated fields.
- Free speech does not equate to a free pass to dehumanize. The line is crossed when expression is used to intimidate, degrade or threaten targeted groups.

CORE IDEA

Gender discrimination is unfair and actionable treatment based on biases. While bias is an attitude or belief, discrimination is the action that creates obstacles to participation.

PEDAGOGICAL TASK

"Beyond the Surface: Hidden Forms of Gender Discrimination"
Purpose: To identify key forms of gender inequality and evaluate the institutional mechanisms that allow them to persist.

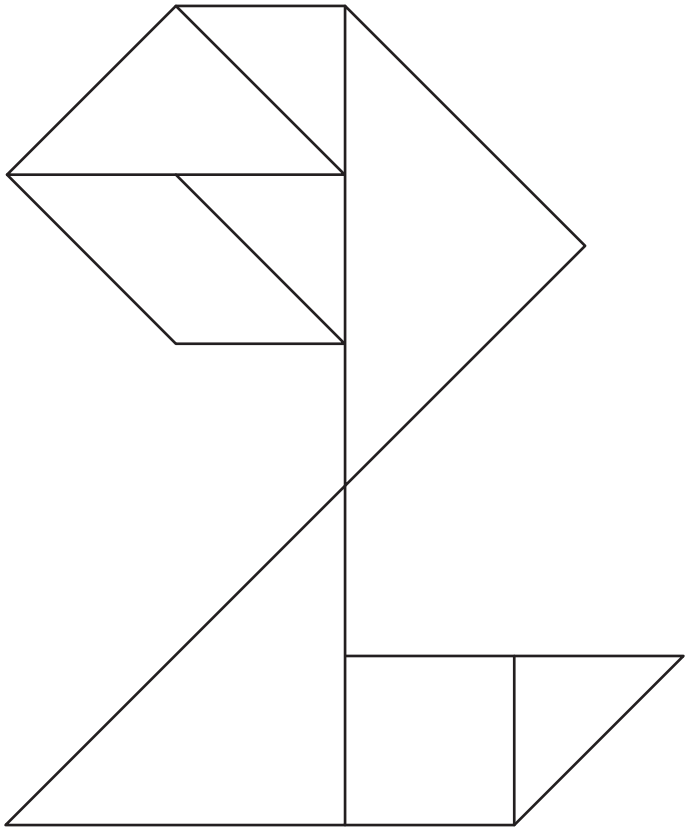
Review the following concepts: Pay Gap, Leaky Pipeline, Glass Cliff, Glass Ceiling, Wage Gap, Microaggressions, Sticky Floor, and Misogyny.

Next, access the provided link and complete the flashcard activity. Each flashcard presents a statement related to one of the concepts listed above. Your task is to carefully determine which concept each statement corresponds to and match them accurately.

These topics may prompt reflection on experiences from your professional and/or personal life. It is essential to examine them through an intersectional lens. Therefore, you are required to compose a 500-word critical reflection analyzing at least three of the eight concepts. Your reflection should move beyond simple definitions and instead critically evaluate the institutional, structural, and systemic dynamics that sustain and reproduce these phenomena.

LINK

Flashcards



SECTION II

5. Contributions of intersectionality theory to Psychology: Gender approaches

Theory provides the starting point for transforming reality

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of incorporating intersectional theory across a wide range of academic disciplines. Naturally, the field of psychology cannot remain indifferent to this important and compelling challenge. Implementing an intersectional and gender-sensitive approach in psychology education requires conceptual clarity regarding the key terms that underpin both analysis and practice. However, theory alone is insufficient; it is necessary to translate these insights into concrete action. In this second section of the toolkit, the theoretical origins of intersectionality are examined, along with its influence on related theoretical frameworks and its practical applications within the field of psychology.

For the purposes of this work, feminism will be adopted as the primary analytical framework. According to the American Psychological Association (2025), feminism encompasses a range of perspectives that focus on the problems and experiences of women, as well as the nature of biological and social phenomena related to gender. Historically, feminism emerged as a predominantly political movement in the nineteenth century, particularly in the United States and in some European countries, advocating for women's suffrage and expanded political and economic opportunities. Over time, it has evolved into a broader and more comprehensive set of academic,

philosophical, and social movements. While certain feminist perspectives continue to emphasize fairness and the pursuit of equal rights, others highlight the inherent and systemic nature of gender inequities in Western societies (Varela, 2019). Within psychology, feminism has drawn attention to the origins and characteristics of gender differences in psychological processes, providing a critical lens for understanding the interplay of social, cultural, and biological factors.

Why psychological theories are incomplete IN FULL. Carol Gillian

How moral laws fail feminism. An interview with Carol Gillian

SIMPLY PUT

- Implementing an intersectional and gender approach in the field of Psychology is a complex issue. If you want to do it properly it is crucial to study and reflect about the theoretical aspects.
- To develop a deeper understanding of the role of social, cultural and biological aspects in lived experiences, both intersectional and feminist frameworks need to be critically adopted.

CORE IDEA

In order to avoid using intersectionality as a buzzword, it must be integrated into daily practice and applied beyond theory. If we accept that knowledge can change behaviour, we must also recognize that our actions must change accordingly.

5.1. Black feminism and its relation to intersectionality

Intersectionality emerged from Black feminism and Critical Race Theory in the United States during the late twentieth century (Crenshaw, 1989). Understanding the historical roots of intersectionality requires recognition that the framework did not originate solely within academia. Even before the term was formally coined, Black women were writing about and theorizing these intersecting systems of oppression. It was, however, in the late 1980s that intersectionality was formally introduced into academic discourse by Kimberlé Crenshaw. Developed within Black feminist legal theory, intersectionality was designed to demonstrate how race, gender, and other social categories interact to shape legal and social outcomes that single-axis frameworks fail to capture.

Black activists and feminists, along with Latina, post-colonial, queer, and Indigenous scholars, have produced extensive work highlighting the complex factors and intersecting processes that shape human lives (Bunjun, 2010; Collins, 1990; Dabiri, 2019; Davis, 1981; Valdes, 1997; Van Herk et al., 2011).

APeoplesJourney: African American Women and the Struggle for Equality

SIMPLY PUT

- The idea of intersectionality first appeared in civil and popular movements led by the most disadvantaged populations outside of academia.
- Intersectionality was first introduced to academia by Kimberlé Crenshaw in the late 1980s, within the field of

law. It rejects the idea of a single, universal experience for all women and emphasizes that oppression is simultaneous and inseparable.

- Black feminism forced a more inclusive approach, shifting mainstream feminism away from a monolithic, white middle-class focus to a more holistic, anti-racist, and class-conscious, internationalist framework.

CORE IDEA

Social categories, including race, are neither chosen nor hidden; marginalization is the result of many factors. Black feminism highlights injustice by giving a voice to those who are often unheard and underrepresented.

5.2. Feminist Psychology and its relation to intersectionality

Feminist Psychology critically challenges androcentric biases in psychological research and practice, emphasizing the centrality of gender as a fundamental analytical category. It has significantly contributed to the understanding of power relations, gender-based violence, and the ways in which traditional psychology has historically pathologized women's experiences (Morawski, 2007; Riger, 1992; Scarborough & Furumoto, 1987). By centering gendered experiences and revealing associated inequalities, feminist psychology has moved the discipline beyond ostensibly neutral or universal models. This perspective has enabled the field to extend beyond a purely individualistic focus, highlighting how psychological well-being and identity are shaped by broader social and structural systems of power.

At the same time, the concept of intersectionality is essential, as it highlights the distinctions between what is often described in the literature as Western feminism and what is theorized as decolonial feminism. Western feminist frameworks, particularly within psychology, have historically prioritized the perspectives of white, middle-class women, frequently overlooking how gender oppression intersects with colonialism, racism, and global inequalities (Mohanty, 2003; Razack, 2002). In contrast, decolonial feminism explicitly addresses these entanglements (Lugones, 2016; Tlostanova et al., 2019), centering the knowledge, experiences, and struggles of marginalized, indigenous, and racialized women. It also critiques the Eurocentric modes of knowledge production that continue to dominate the discipline of psychology. By doing so, decolonial feminism emphasizes that gender justice cannot be separated from anticolonial and intersectional struggles, offering a critical corrective to the limitations of neoliberal and Western feminist approaches (Ali-Faisal, 2020; Macleod et al., 2020).

Angela David: Frameworks For Radical Feminism

Kimberle Williams Crenshaw: What is Intersectional Feminism?

SIMPLY PUT

- Gender is a fundamental analytical category that helps us understand the complexities of women's identities. It is indeed a key social determinant of mental health, but not the only one.

- Feminist psychology extends beyond a purely individualistic focus, highlighting how psychological well-being and identity are shaped by broader social and structural systems of power that often result in experiences of discrimination and oppression.
- It highlights concepts as Patriarchy, Decolonial feminism, Androcentrism, Eurocentrism encouraging us to dismantle these perspectives particularly in psychology.
- It is not possible to achieve gender justice while there are individuals experiencing oppression.

CORE IDEA

Feminism reclaims new narratives while acknowledging that the world is not homogeneous. We need to develop perception and analytical habits that acknowledge the inadequacies of the conceptual tools we rely on.

5.3. Critical Psychology and its relation to intersectionality

Critical psychology emerged as a distinct movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, primarily in Europe and North America, as a response to the perceived limitations of mainstream psychology (Billing, 2019). It developed alongside broader social, political, and cultural movements, including civil rights, feminist, anti-colonial, and student activism, which questioned dominant power structures and the role of psychology in maintaining social inequalities.

Critical psychology interrogates the political and social dimensions of psychological knowledge production (Parker, 2015). It critiques mainstream approaches for neglecting

issues of inequality and advocates for practices that promote social justice, empowerment, and reflexivity (Fox et al., 2009).The theoretical foundation of this approach is rooted in critical theory and provides a comprehensive overview of the manner in which white supremacy, racism and colonialism have exerted a profound influence on the domain of psychology and human suffering.

This perspective is closely aligned with intersectionality, encouraging psychology educators to challenge established assumptions and voice criticism of the prevailing status quo within and outside the discipline of psychology itself. Given the diversity in commitments, there is no one unified critical psychology, and this diversity is a notable strength, allowing a multiplicity of approaches to understanding and addressing oppression and distress (Lafrance & Wigginton, 2019).

Understanding Ourselves and Others. Critical Social Psychology

SIMPLY PUT

- In traditional psychological practice, we further subdivide and then look at one small element. Incorporating Critical Psychology helps us to overcome these limitations by adopting a completely different approach that is more closely aligned with intersectionality.
- Questioning dominant power structures and the role of psychology in maintaining social inequalities is a necessary reflection, especially in today's world where social and psychological well-being are inextricably linked.

- In critical psychology, asking better questions, challenging established assumptions, and criticizing the existing status quo are all key to achieving social justice, empowerment, and reflexivity.

CORE IDEA

There is no such thing as a unified critical psychology. One stream of critical psychology involves critiquing psychology from a variety of perspectives.

5.4. Intersectional health approach to mental health

Recent studies have emphasized the ways in which health outcomes, including psychological well-being, are shaped by intersecting systems of inequality, highlighting the cumulative effects of social positioning (Guarch-Rubio & Manzanero, 2017; Hankivsky & Cormier, 2011). These vulnerabilities are further exacerbated when prior experiences of violence compound the trauma of marginalized populations who have limited or inadequate access to healthcare, such as asylum seekers and refugees (Guarch-Rubio et al., 2020, 2025a, 2025b; Simancas et al., 2022).

These approaches underscore the importance of analyzing mental health disparities from an intersectional perspective, as students and future professionals must recognize that vulnerability to stress, depression, and access to healthcare vary according to intersecting social identities. Such multifaceted frameworks enable researchers and health professionals to identify and address inequalities that one, dimensional analyses often overlook, for instance, how caregiving responsibilities may differentially affect the

psychological well-being of women across racial or migration backgrounds, or how low socioeconomic status amplifies risk factors for chronic disease in marginalized communities (Guarch-Rubio, 2023; Hoang & Wong, 2022). In this context, numerous studies demonstrate how social determinants profoundly influence an individual's health outcomes (Marmot et al., 2013). Nevertheless, even today, relatively few studies incorporate factors such as disability or LGBTQ+ status, and even fewer account for multiple intersecting social identities throughout both the design and evaluation phases of research (Bauer et al., 2022).

Furthermore, intersectional approaches to health underscore the significance of power, structural context, and reflexivity in both research and practice. Recent evidence indicates that even universal welfare systems may perpetuate inequalities when intersectional dimensions are neglected (Holman et al., 2021; Wemrell et al., 2021). Similarly, studies examining discriminatory practices in mental healthcare across Europe demonstrate that overlapping stigmas, such as those related to gender, migration status, and mental illness, can lead to differential treatment and restricted access, even when clinical needs are equivalent (Faissner et al., 2024). Perspectives from policy and practice professionals suggest that intersectionality has yet to achieve substantial progress in challenging individualistic frameworks and fostering approaches that are attentive to subgroup-specific inequalities and the processes that produce them. Recognizing the multifaceted needs of individuals is therefore essential for the development of inclusive and equitable mental healthcare services.

Intersectionality and health explained

SIMPLY PUT

- Intersectionality health moves from isolated treatment from traditional models to more inclusive practices addressing the intersectional factors that shape the individual mental health.
- Without intersectionality Psychology risks falling into the silo effect, studying social categories in isolation, as if they don't interact.
- It explains how diverse challenges faced by individuals from various backgrounds, maybe of the same gender (or not), do not require the same effort. It's not about discipline. What extra weight am I carrying that others don't see?

CORE IDEA

The brain is not a mirror of reality, it is a prediction machine. It creates a unique internal version of the world, which can sometimes cause "isms," "phobias," biases and inequality. This can lead to discomfort, stress, and mental health issues. It can also leave emotional scars. Adopting an intersectional health approach allows you to recognize the framework, map the levels, and design care that interrupts bias and promotes equity.

6. Potential applications of an intersectional approach in Psychology

Psychology's longstanding focus on isolated variables, such as "gender differences," risks oversimplifying complex social realities by neglecting how race, class, disability, and other axes of inequality intersect to shape both phenomena and their explanations (Cole, 2009). Empirical evidence increasingly demonstrates that analyzing gender in isolation obscures significant within-group heterogeneity and reproduces normative assumptions about whose experiences count as representative (Warner, 2008). Intersectional paradigms in research design, measurement, and interpretation are thus essential for producing findings that better capture lived realities and inform socially just interventions (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016).

Recent empirical research across Europe demonstrates the practical value of intersectional analyses for identifying population subgroups with disproportionate health and well-being risks (Faissner et al., 2024; Lahelma & Rahkonen, 2022; Wemrell et al., 2021). In this vein, limitations of universalist models encourage a more reflexive stance in psychological science, where researchers acknowledge how knowledge production itself is shaped by unequal power relations (Collins & Bilge, 2016).

From a pedagogical and pragmatic standpoint in educational setting (Psychology Bachelor´s Degree), intersectionality may be integrated both as curricular content and as a contextual theoretical framework. For instance, developing an intersectional awareness enables students to recognize

that gender inequalities intersect with race, class, sexual orientation, disability, migration status, and age, thereby helping them understand why mental health disparities exist across different groups.

6.1. Before starting... What is and what is not intersectionality in Psychology

The term "intersectionality" has entered the social sciences with significant impact. However, it is important to remember that it originated in the legal field, where terms must be clear, simple, unambiguous and concrete in order to administer justice. It is a complex term to give a voice to, and provide context for, those who are rarely heard, those who live on the margins, and to make the invisible visible. To this end, it is important to clarify what intersectionality is and is not and how to apply it to Psychology.

A common misconception is the conceptualization of intersectionality as the sum of different oppressions. As Crenshaw (1989) argues, the intersectional experience cannot be understood as simply the sum of racism and sexism. As such, one person is not limited to the consideration of belonginess to multiple social categories, but also encompasses the analysis of their interactions with the structures of power.

In terms of research and teaching, this means that the diversity of social groups deserves special attention. It is important to note that individuals possess not only a sexual identity, but also an age, religious affiliation (or lack of), and gender. It is imperative to acknowledge that these multidimensions of diversity, otherwise referred to as structural categories, cannot be contemplated in isolation. Furthermore,

they cannot be added or subtracted in an inclusive or exclusive manner. Moreover, experiences of discrimination and privilege are complex and multi-faceted, defying simplistic, one-dimensional analysis. Therefore, it is not possible to predetermine the importance of any given category.

Incorporating an intersectional approach is vitally to recognize that each individual experiences intersect with other social categories and identities.

Intersectionality Is...	Intersectionality Is Not...
A critical framework for conceptualizing human experience, particularly power and inequality.	Celebrating diversity, promoting inclusion.
An approach for understanding multiple social identities and these how they function in contextualized systems of inequality.	A scientific theory of identity that that is falsifiable; an ahistorical social theory aims to describe universal processes.
An analogy that exposes the complexity of social life, including the simultaneity of oppression and privilege for all social actor.	A purposefully limited paradigm that is applicable to the study of Black women in the U.S. right now.
A way of connecting or linking scholarship and activism: how can we change the systems we study? How can the systems and people we study change the (academic) institutions in which we work?	A descriptive and explanatory framework that is not invested in social transformation; only applicable to the study of oppression, not social change or resistance.

Table 3. Intersectionality: What it is and what it is not. Adapted from Grzanka (2020)

SIMPLY PUT

- As the term "intersectionality" becomes more mainstream, there is an increased risk of misinterpretation. It is therefore essential to establish what intersectionality is and is not before considering how it can be applied in the field of psychology.

- No category or identity is more important than any other, so they all need to be studied in a global context.
- It is crucial to consider the interplay between multiple social categories and structures of power, as well as how these aspects may change over time.

CORE IDEA

Intersectionality is a critical framework that helps us to understand the complexity of human beings and our contextualized and changing experiences in relation to power throughout our lives. It is also a call to action for social transformation, not just an academic theory.

6.2. Some ideas about curricular integration across Psychology subfields

Incorporating intersectional theory into the psychology curriculum remains a challenge. Therefore, some examples are provided below to offer guidance to Professors seeking to broaden intersectional awareness. Although psychology encompasses multiple areas of practice, only the most prominent ones have been selected for these examples.

6.2.1. Clinical Psychology

Clinical Psychology is the branch of psychology that specializes in the research, assessment, diagnosis, evaluation, prevention, and treatment of emotional and behavioural disorders (American Psychological Association, 2026).

1. Example: A case study on depression in women can be enriched by analyzing how socioeconomic status, ethnic

background, and gender identity interact to shape symptoms and access to care.

1. Learning outcome: Students understand that effective diagnosis and intervention require attention to structural barriers, such as cultural stigma and healthcare accessibility.

2. Example: A therapist works collaboratively with patients to understand the unique intersection of patients' multiple identity aspects.

2. Learning outcome: Students recognize that the intersection of gender and ethnicity may influence the presentation and diagnosis of mental health disorders; for instance, depression in Black women may be underdiagnosed due to stereotypes.

6.2.2. Social Psychology

Social Psychology is the study of how an individual's thoughts, feelings, and actions are affected by the actual, imagined, or symbolically represented presence of other people (American Psychological Association, 2026).

1. Example: When teaching about prejudice and stereotypes, instructors can highlight how intersecting identities (e.g., Black lesbian women) lead to unique experiences of discrimination that cannot be reduced to racism or sexism alone.

1. Learning outcome: Students develop the ability to critically analyze research that overlooks intersectional dynamics, fostering more nuanced scientific inquiry.

2. Example: A researcher examines the implementation of public policies and the equitable allocation of resources and aid within public administration.

2. Learning outcome: Students analyze how multiple identities shape experiences of discrimination—for example, an LGBTQ+ Black migrant man seeking employment.

6.2.3. Educational Psychology

Educational Psychology is a branch of psychology dealing with the application of psychological principles and theories to a broad spectrum of teaching, training, and learning issues in educational settings. Educational psychology also addresses psychological problems that can arise in educational systems (American Psychological Association, 2026).

1. Example: When discussing learning difficulties, Professors can address how gendered expectations and socioeconomic disadvantages interact to shape academic performance.

1. Learning outcome: Students reflect on systemic barriers in education and propose inclusive interventions.

2. Example: An educational psychologist works within an institution to provide guidance to families and students, implement educational improvements, and promote inclusion.

2. Learning outcome: Students recognize how gender stereotypes impact learning outcomes, particularly for non-binary and transgender students. For example, a bisexual Roma woman attending a public university.

6.2.4. Organizational or work Psychology

Organizational or work Psychology is the branch of psychology that studies human behaviour in the work environment and applies general psychological principles to work-related issues and problems, notably in such areas as personnel

selection, personnel training, employee evaluation, working conditions, accident prevention, job analysis, job satisfaction, leadership, team effectiveness, and work motivation (American Psychological Association, 2026).

1. Example: Training in workplace motivation can incorporate analysis of how gender norms and migration status affect career opportunities and job satisfaction.

1. Learning outcome: Students learn to design policies and interventions that promote equity and well-being in organizational contexts.

2. Example: A head of Human Resources in a multinational company.

2. Learning outcome: Students explore how identity factors influence leadership access, pay equity, and workplace harassment—for example, a mid-forties Asian woman with two daughters working in a tech company.

Complementing the initiatives described above, the TInGLE Project has developed a series of podcasts designed as innovative pedagogical resources to integrate an intersectional approach into university teaching. Their purpose is to incorporate into the Academy the perspective of civil society through various NGOs and associations that address the concept of intersectionality with a gender-oriented approach. These materials can be accessed by scanning the QR code provided below.

TInGLE Academia

6.3. Building research competency

Research grounded in an intersectional perspective requires a methodological framework that explicitly acknowledges systems of oppression, relationality, complexity, contextual embeddedness, and processes of deconstruction (Heidari et al., 2016). Such an approach moves beyond the examination of singular identity categories and instead analyses the dynamic and mutually constitutive interplay among multiple social positions.

Moreover, intersectional research must center the voices and experiences of marginalized communities and be intentionally designed to interrogate and challenge entrenched power structures, thereby contributing to the advancement of social justice. In this regard, Cole (2009) argued that psychologists should broaden their research questions to account for heterogeneity within social categories and to examine how relations of power and inequality actively construct and sustain these categories.

The following examples illustrate how researchers may reconceptualize their analytical frameworks in order to generate more nuanced interpretations and produce knowledge that more adequately reflects complex social realities.

Example: When conducting research informed by an intersectional framework, sampling strategies, measurement instruments, and analytical procedures should be designed to capture the complex experiences that emerge from the intersection of multiple social identities (e.g., gender, race, socioeconomic position, migration status).

Learning outcome: Students should be able to design sampling plans that allow for meaningful disaggregation,

including stratified sampling strategies in which relevant subgroups (e.g., gender × race categories) are adequately represented and analytically visible.

Measurement: Research instruments should reflect gender diversity (including non-binary and gender-diverse options), socioeconomic position, migration background, and other dimensions of lived experience relevant to the phenomenon under study. Measures must be conceptually aligned with an understanding of identity as multidimensional and socially situated.

Analysis: Analytical strategies should move beyond the mere inclusion of additive covariates. Instead, they should incorporate interaction terms, stratified analyses, and qualitative or mixed-method approaches capable of elucidating underlying mechanisms rather than simply identifying mean differences between groups. Intersectionality should be treated as a guiding epistemological framework rather than as a statistical adjustment.

In cultivating these research competencies, it is essential that psychology students receive systematic training in the integration of intersectional approaches across quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods designs (Else-Quest et al., 2016).

From a quantitative perspective, students should be introduced to the use of disaggregated datasets and trained to examine interaction effects (e.g., gender × socioeconomic status) within statistical models. For example, they might analyze whether educational attainment predicts mental health outcomes differently for low-income men and

women, thereby learning to identify patterns that would remain obscured within single-variable or additive models.

From a qualitative standpoint, students should engage in intersectional narrative analysis, examining personal accounts that reflect the simultaneous influence of multiple identity markers, such as ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation. A representative exercise may involve coding interview transcripts to explore how overlapping identities shape experiences of inclusion and exclusion within university contexts.

Adopting a mixed-methods perspective further enables students to triangulate these insights by integrating statistical patterns with lived-experience narratives, thereby constructing a more comprehensive and non-reductive account of complex social phenomena.

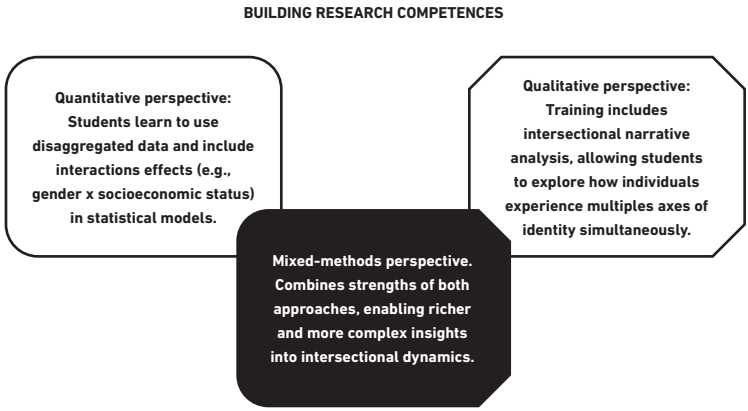


Figure 3. Building research competences. Author's own elaboration based on Else-Quest et al. (2016)

The intended learning outcomes include the development of methodological reflexivity, the capacity to recognise and mitigate epistemic bias, and the ability to generate research that foregrounds diversity rather than reproducing hegemonic assumptions. Collectively, these competencies equip future psychologists with the analytical tools necessary to produce knowledge that is both empirically rigorous and socially responsive.

SIMPLY PUT

- A responsive and intentional approach and framework are required to foster intersectional research competency and produce more nuanced, empirically rigorous and socially responsive knowledge.
- To achieve this, it is important to move beyond examining singular identity categories, center the voices and experiences of marginalized communities and interrogate and challenge established power structures.
- This can be done by broadening research questions and reconceptualizing analytical frameworks and strategies.

CORE IDEA

Research instruments must reflect an understanding of identity as both multidimensional and socially situated. Additionally, systematic training in integrating intersectional approaches into quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods designs is essential. Furthermore, developing methodological reflexivity is crucial for recognizing and mitigating epistemic biases, and for generating research that considers diversity.

7. Where should be heading?

Higher education bears an inescapable responsibility in advancing the transition toward more just and equitable societies. An intersectional and gender-inclusive perspective should not be treated as a supplementary or optional component of the curriculum; rather, it must constitute a foundational principle that permeates all disciplines and levels of instruction.

To this end, intersectionality should be incorporated as a comprehensive and cross-cutting theoretical framework, capable of illuminating structural inequalities and identifying forms of discrimination that might otherwise remain obscured. Attending to the plurality and specificity of lived experiences contributes to the development of more equitable and inclusive university environments.

Accordingly, intersectional and gender-inclusive education should be conceived as a core curricular commitment, systematically embedded across courses, pedagogical practices, and assessment strategies. In this regard, the Multicultural Guidelines: An Ecological Approach to Context, Identity, and Intersectionality, endorsed by the American Psychological Association (2017), provide a valuable point of departure for institutions seeking to operationalize these principles within higher education.

The implementation of this approach entails considerable challenges. It requires profound curricular transformation, sustained faculty development, and, above all, a paradigmatic shift in how the complexities and nuances of human experience are conceptualized within academic contexts. Recognizing the specificity of lived experiences is essential

to fostering genuinely inclusive pedagogical practices and institutional cultures.

Bridging the gap between theoretical commitments and pedagogical practice further demands sustained investment in faculty training and mentoring initiatives, thereby ensuring that intersectional and gender-inclusive principles are effectively translated into teaching, assessment, and institutional governance (Moore, 2018).

At TInGLE Academia, institutions are invited to embark upon this transformative process. It is hoped that this toolkit will serve as an inspiring and substantive resource for advancing more inclusive and equitable academic environments, guided by a forward-looking perspective and a firm commitment to leaving no one behind, particularly those individuals and communities in situations of heightened vulnerability.

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