

# Position Statement on Misogyny and Gender Bias and Their Adverse Effects on the Health of Women

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“Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees. . . These are . . . position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects. . .” – *APA Operations Manual*

### Issue:

Women frequently experience gender bias and misogyny in contemporary society, whose institutions and social power structures are still disproportionately controlled and occupied by men. Gender bias is often a factor in the negative intersectionality experienced by women of color, transgender women, sexual minority women, and women in other marginalized and disadvantaged groups. The effects of gender bias and misogyny are evident in the striking epidemiology of sexual assault and other acts of violence and harassment, and throughout the economic, legal, and social spheres of society. These effects combine to restrict the autonomy and opportunities available to women, increase economic and other hardships, and negatively impact physical and mental health. Though women represent a numeric majority, they remain under-represented in important social sectors and institutions, especially in positions of leadership; the negative effects described in minority stress theory can be experienced as a result. When psychiatric and other health care services are offered without awareness of both gender dynamics and the individual experience of gender bias/misogyny (including sexual trauma and intimate partner violence) they are often experienced as inappropriately pathologizing and non-therapeutic.

### APA Position:

#### Therefore, the American Psychiatric Association:

- 1. Condemns all acts of misogyny and the abuse of women.**
- 2. Opposes all forms of gender bias and discrimination in health care and other social institutions.**
- 3. Recognizes the negative effects of misogyny and discrimination on the physical and mental health of women and supports policies and laws that reduce this burden.**
- 4. Commits to considering the effects of any proposed APA policy or official action on women and members of other genders, and to making decisions consistent with a commitment to equity and justice.**
- 5. Commits to promoting psychiatric educational policies that contextualize experiences of psychological distress, reduce stigma, and eliminate the pathologizing of women.**

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