

Sport GVP: Preventing Gender Based Violence in and through Sport

Conceptualising Gender and Gender Equality in Sports



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Training Package for Sport Professionals, Staff, and Executives



Conceptualising Gender and Gender Equality in Sports

Purpose: To explore how societal norms and barriers limit opportunities for all in sports.

Key Topics:

- Gender, intersectionality and gender identity
- Gender equality in sports
- Historical and contemporary barriers to gender equality in sports
- Gender diversity in sports leadership and coaching

Target Audience: Sport professionals, sports administrators, coaches, advocates for gender equality.



Defining Gender

- **Definition of Gender:** Gender refers to the roles, behaviours, expectations, and norms that societies associate with individuals based on their perceived biological sex. It is a social construct that varies across cultures and time periods.

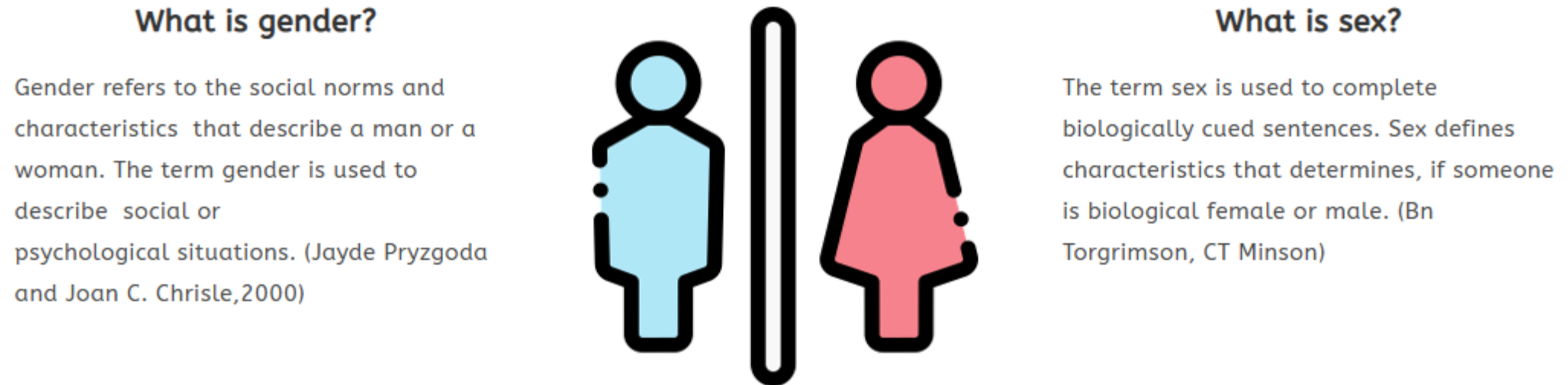


Figure 1. Understanding the difference between gender and sex. Source: <https://cgbvbasket.eu/>

Defining Intersectionality, and Identity

- **Definition of Intersectionality:** Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality describes how different aspects of identity (e.g., gender, race, class) intersect to create unique experiences of discrimination or disadvantage.
- **Example:** A female athlete from a marginalised ethnic group may face both gender and racial discrimination, affecting her access to opportunities and support in sports.
- **Importance in Sports:** Recognising diverse identities ensures fair treatment and inclusivity for all athletes.



Gender Equality in Sports

- **Definition:** Gender equality in sports means that all individuals have equal access to resources, opportunities, and participation, regardless of gender.
- **Current Statistics:**
 - In 2023, less than **22%** of top decision-making positions in EU sports federations were held by women.
 - In Europe, only **31%** of sports coaches are women, with significant disparities between countries—ranging from just **9%** in Portugal to **77%** in Montenegro. (EPRS, 2024)
- **Challenges Faced:**
 - Gender pay gaps
 - Unequal media representation
 - Limited leadership opportunities for women and non-cisgender individuals
- **Example:** The campaign for equal pay in women's football highlights disparities in earnings despite similar achievements to men's teams.

Barriers to Gender Diversity in Sports

- **Historical Exclusion:** Women were initially prohibited from participating in the Olympic Games and other major competitions.
- **Cultural Stereotypes:**
 - Sports like football and weightlifting are considered "masculine," discouraging female participation.
 - Male athletes in traditionally "feminine" sports like gymnastics may face discrimination.
- **Systemic Bias:** Transgender athletes often encounter not just policy barriers but also pervasive social stigma, while intersex athletes face forced medical interventions to fit binary categories.



Promoting Inclusivity in Coaching and Leadership

- **Need for Diverse Leadership:**
 - Women and non-binary individuals remain underrepresented in coaching and executive roles.
 - Greater diversity leads to better decision-making and inclusive environments.
- **Strategies for Inclusion:**
 - Establishing mentorship programmes for underrepresented coaches.
 - Implementing gender quotas in sports governance.
 - Raising awareness about unconscious bias in hiring and promotion.
- **Example:** The rise of female referees in international football and the NBA showcases progress in gender inclusivity.

Reflection and Discussion

- Key Questions
 - *How has gender inequality affected sports participation?*
 - *What policies can improve gender diversity in leadership?*
 - *How can sports professionals advocate for equality?*



Conclusion

Summary of Key Takeaways

- Gender equality improves fairness and competitiveness in sports.
- Intersectionality helps address multiple layers of discrimination.
- Leadership diversity benefits the entire sporting ecosystem.



Questions?



THANK YOU



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