

At-A-Glance: Gender-Based Violence and SHIP System-Wide Recommendations

Advancing Gender Equity as part of a Policy, Systems and Environmental Approach for improving Delaware Health

Gender-based violence is a widespread and complex problem that impacts more than 52.2 million victims each year in the U.S (Frye, 2019). Gender-based violence is not equally distributed within Delaware. Women experienced higher gender-based violence rates than men for all types of gender-based violence (NCADV, 2020). In fact, from 2014 to 2018, there were 39 domestic violence homicides in Delaware (NCADV, 2020). In 2018, 80% of these victims were females (NCADV, 2020). Additionally, transgender individuals and communities experience high rates of violence and discrimination (VAWNET, 2020). According to the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey, nearly half (47%) of respondents were sexually assaulted at some point in their lifetime and one in ten were sexually assaulted in the past year (VAWNET, 2020). Furthermore, in transgender communities of color, these numbers are higher: 53% of Black respondents were sexually assaulted in their lifetime and 13% were sexually assaulted in the last year (VAWNET, 2020). Moreover, according to research, 44 percent of lesbians and 61 percent of bisexual women experience rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner, compared to 35 percent of straight women (HRC, 2021).

Gender-based violence refers to damaging acts directed at an individual based on their gender identity or their biological sex. It is rooted in gender inequality, the dynamics of power and control, and harmful gender norms.

Gender-based violence includes sexual, physical, psychological and economic harm inflicted in public or in private. Threats of violence, coercion and manipulation are also manifestations of gender-based violence.

Source: Center for the Study and Prevention of Gender-Based Violence, University of Delaware

Gender-based violence and discrimination work to uphold societal power dynamics.

However, it is important to note that gender discrimination can converge with race, sexuality, socio-economic class, ability, and other factors to shape an individual or community's experiences of violence, marginalization, and oppression (Gender & Development Network, 2019). For example, women of color face a significantly larger pay gap as compared to their white female counterparts (Delaware Pay Equity, 2020). While white women earn 83% of white men's earnings, Black women only earn 69% (Delaware Pay Equity, 2020). Therefore, SHIP stakeholders in Delaware must work to promote gender equity using an intersectional lens, recognizing that gender-based violence differs between groups because the violence people experience isn't just based on their gender (Womankind Worldwide, 2019).

Strategies

A policy, systems, and environmental change approach, as recommended in the Delaware State Health Improvement Plan, can be a critical tool to improve equity and health outcomes (Delaware SHIP Report, 2020). PSE approaches aim to modify the environment to make the right to health a reality for all community members (UIC, 2018). Toward this end, an effective PSE approach will authentically engage and share power with those residents most impacted by health inequities (Wolff et al., 2017).

The opportunity for all Delawareans to reach their optimal health begins with addressing the root causes of health inequities like structural oppression that drive the unfair distribution of poor health outcomes (Lucn, 2020). Utilizing this approach will allow stakeholders to implement policies or programs that will have far-reaching public health impacts. It will improve health outcomes at the population level as opposed to the individual level. The PSE approach can also allow stakeholders to advance legal protections through policy change (Lucn, 2020). A PSE approach explicitly addressing structural oppression can ensure that effective laws, policies, strategies, accountability mechanisms, and inclusive, accessible places and spaces work to eliminate health inequities and allow all community members the opportunity to thrive (Lucn, 2020).

For example, the World Bank's Handbook for Gender-Inclusive Urban Planning and Design helps planners and groups employing PSE approaches consider areas in the built environment that combine with gender inequity, "to constrain, inconvenience, and even endanger women, girls, and sexual and gender minorities of all ages and abilities." (Terraza et al., 2020). The guide promotes a participatory and inclusive design process to create spaces and places where all residents can move about safely, easily, and affordably, and be free from real and perceived danger in public and private spheres (Lucn, 2020). Essentially, informed by the public health ethos of social justice and equity, PSE changes can address laws, rules, and environments so that all people have the opportunity to thrive.



Call to action

Lastly, SHIP stakeholders who care about improving gender equity within our State can learn more about the PSE approach noted in the SHIP 2020 Annual Report and implement it in their works. For technical assistance on integrating a focus on structural oppression and gender-based violence in PSE approaches, contact the [Center for the Prevention and Study of Gender-Based Violence](#) at the University of Delaware.

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