

SRHR AND GOAL 5:

5

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

- 5.1** End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- 5.2** Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- 5.3** Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation
- 5.5** Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
- 5.6** Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the review conferences

Achievement of Goal 5's mission requires sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) to be recognised as a crucial enabler of gender equality. Studies have clearly demonstrated the causal link between SRHR and gender equality, primarily achieved through the empowerment of women and girls.^{i,ii,iii}



Gender equality should not be thought of as a 'women's issue'. Governments and policy makers should invest in women and girls, promote of respectful relationships for all based on consent and provide women and girls with the same opportunities as men and boys.

Gender bias is not experienced equally, nor in the same way, by all women and men. Intersections of identity such as sexuality, disability, race, geography and culture can influence an individual's experiences of gender inequality. Lesbian, bisexual and transgender women can experience multiple forms of discrimination and violence due to their intersecting LGBTIQ status and gender.

Countering gender-based violence and harmful gender norms requires a systematic and partnership-based approach that takes a whole of community approach to address gender stereotypes. All people, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity, have the right to access to sexual and reproductive health services and to be free from violence and discrimination in order to have a full and effective participation in civic life.

SRHR are intrinsically linked with a range of human rights. The impact of domestic and family violence and reproductive coercion constitutes a violation of those rights. To realise these rights, women must be treated as equals and be allowed to make choices about their reproductive health, such as planning if and when they become pregnant.

There are known links between domestic violence and sexual and reproductive ill-health. Women experiencing domestic violence, including reproductive coercion, require access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services including contraceptive methods that can be used discreetly without a partner's knowledge, such as an intrauterine device (IUD), contraceptive injection and safe abortion care. Access to timely and affordable emergency contraception is essential for women experiencing domestic and/or sexual violence.

To reduce the need for emergency contraception, increased access to long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs), such as implants and IUDs, can reduce rates of unintended pregnancy and abortion.

ⁱ Grose RG, Chen JS, Roof KA, Rachel S, Yount KM. Sexual and Reproductive Health Outcomes of Violence Against Women and Girls in Lower-Income Countries: A Review of Reviews. *The Journal of Sex Research*. 2021;58(1):1-20.

ⁱⁱ George AS, Amin A, de Abreu Lopes CM, Ravindran TKS. Structural determinants of gender inequality: why they matter for adolescent girls' sexual and reproductive health. *BMJ*. 2020;368:l6985.

ⁱⁱⁱ Hartmann M, Khosla R, Krishnan S, George A, Gruskin S, Amin A. How Are Gender Equality and Human Rights Interventions Included in Sexual and Reproductive Health Programmes and Policies: A Systematic Review of Existing Research Foci and Gaps. *PLOS ONE*. 2016;11(12):e0167542.

Actions

- Develop and disseminate a consumer-focused campaign to drive demand for sexual and reproductive health services
- Upskill doctors and nurses in best practice ways to sensitively address and respond to family, domestic and sexual violence, including reproductive coercion, within clinical settings
- Invest in training, information and resources for clinicians that addresses clinical presentations of female genital mutilation/cutting and appropriate responses
- Implement consistent approaches to the collection of data on family domestic and sexual violence, and reproductive coercion routine data collection and reporting
- Ensure all young people have access to comprehensive sexuality education curriculum that is aligned with the 2018 UNESCO technical guidelines



FURTHER INFORMATION

[Family Planning NSW's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and the Sustainable Development Goals Reports](#)

[Getting to Equal: Engaging Men and Boys in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and Gender Equality](#)

[United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 5 Factsheet](#)

