

Internalized Misogyny Signs Handout

What is internalized misogyny?

Internalized misogyny is the subconscious adoption of sexist ideas and attitudes by women, often shaped by societal expectations and patriarchal norms. It manifests in behaviors and beliefs that reinforce gender stereotypes and limit women's empowerment.



Signs of internalized misogyny

1. Judging other women:

Criticizing other women's choices, behaviors, or appearances based on societal standards rather than individual merit.

- Example: Critiquing women for assertiveness while valuing the same trait in men.

2. Distrust of empowered women:

Feeling uncomfortable with ambitious or confident women and perceiving them as unlikeable or threatening.

- Example: Viewing female colleagues in leadership roles with skepticism while trusting male bosses more readily.

3. Reinforcing gender stereotypes:

Upholding societal expectations for other girls or women to conform to traditional gender roles.

- Example: Encouraging young girls to prioritize appearance over ambition.

4. Devaluing one's own gender:

Minimizing the achievements or capabilities of oneself or other women compared to men.

5. Supporting male authority over women:

Placing more trust or value in male leaders, colleagues, or mentors over female counterparts.

Impact of internalized misogyny

- **Psychological distress:** Contributes to low self-esteem, anxiety, and mental health challenges.
 - **Reinforcement of toxic masculinity:** Perpetuates patriarchal norms that suppress equity and emotional openness.
 - **Hindrance to gender equality:** Undermines collective progress by dividing and devaluing women.
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How to challenge internalized misogyny

1. Self-reflection:

- Acknowledge that internalized misogyny exists within you, often manifesting as negative self-talk or judgment towards other women.
- Ask yourself why certain thoughts arise and whether they stem from societal conditioning or personal experiences.

2. Practice mindfulness:

- When negative thoughts about yourself or other women arise, pause to assess them and consider whether they reflect societal norms rather than your true feelings.

3. Confront stereotypes:

- Confront stereotypes when you encounter them, whether in conversations or media representations. For instance, challenge the notion that femininity is synonymous with weakness, and embrace diverse expressions of womanhood.

4. Education and awareness:

- Learn about the origins of internalized misogyny and the impact of patriarchal society on beliefs.
- Use tools like the Internalized Misogyny Scale to assess personal biases.

5. Support and empower women:

- Celebrate the achievements of other women.
- Reject societal expectations that pit women against one another.

6. Challenge stereotypes:

- Question norms that limit women's roles or behaviors.
- Encourage young girls to embrace diverse aspirations.

7. Promote gender equality:

- Advocate for equitable treatment in personal, professional, and societal contexts.



References

- Constantinescu, S.-A. (2021). How does the internalization of misogyny operate: A theoretical approach with European examples. *Research in Social Change*, 13(1), 120–128. <https://doi.org/10.2478/rsc-2021-0013>
- Einhorn, S. (2021). From a woman's point of view. How internalized misogyny affects relationships between women. *Group Analysis*, 54(4), 053331642110383. <https://doi.org/10.1177/05333164211038310>