

Gender Inequality

By Kiaya Estes

On average, there are 321,500 victims of sexual assault a year. This doesn't include children between the ages of one and eleven. Every ninety-eight seconds, an American is sexually assaulted. The majority of the victims are women and every three out of four women have been verbally harassed. Younger people are more at risk for sexual assault. For example, over fifty percent of sexual assault victims are between the ages of eighteen and thirty-four, says 'rainn.org.' Many people blame women for being sexually assaulted by "dressing provocatively." Though women may dress a little inappropriate at times, it is not be their fault for something so traumatizing.

A survey which is based on victim respondents says seventy-seven percent of women are verbally harassed, with only thirty-four percent of men being verbally harassed. Fifty-one percent of women have experienced unwelcome sexual touching, with only seventeen percent of men experiencing the same thing. Forty-one percent of women have been victims of cyber-sexual harassment, as opposed to only twenty-two percent of men being victims. Thirty-four percent of women get physically followed, while only twelve percent of men get followed. Thirty percent of women also experience unwanted genital flashing, but only twelve percent of men experience the same thing. Overall in the survey, twenty-seven percent of women experience sexual assault and seven percent of men, says 'npr.org'.

A lot of sexual assault happens in workplaces. Most of the time it consists of women being threatened to lose their job if they don't cooperate with the employer's "needs", or women being objectified by their co-workers. Sometimes the men that decide to do this to their female co-workers end up raping or molesting them. In my opinion, women don't deserve this vile behavior from their co-workers. Overall, only forty-one percent of men get sexually abused in their lifetime compared to the eighty-one percent of women who get sexually abused. How much of this takes place at work? It occurs more often than you would think as eight percent of rapes occur while the victim is at work. It's so maddening that women go through this way more than men, yet a lot of men say "it's not that hard being a girl." These boys, or so-called "men," have no clue what women and girls go through in their lifetime. We have so many more struggles, in my opinion. Yes, boys and men go through things too and their lives aren't "the best" but less of them have to deal with this issue. Young men really don't understand that they don't have it as bad as us. Only one in seventy-one men get raped in their life compared to one in five women says 'nsvrc.org'. Not to point out the obvious or anything but I am pretty positive that there's a very large difference there. Not even every sexual harassment or assault is reported so think about all the ladies out there who are too afraid to report their abuse. They just keep it to themselves even though they feel hurt and broken on the inside because nobody ever thinks it is

going to be them. They don't think "one day I will be a victim of sexual assault" and the women who have been sexually assaulted wish it was never them, or anyone else. All of the statistics that I have included in this article show that women and men do not deal with the same realities when it comes to many things, especially sexual assault.

Take school dress code or even work dress code into consideration. Women's dress codes are way more strict than they are for men. Some businesses require women to wear makeup to attend work or they'll be sent home for the day. On the other hand, men are not required to wear makeup because they're men and "makeup is only for women". Tell that to James Charles and see what happens. Women are required to wear skirts and dresses for a lot of jobs, but what do men wear? Khakis, a button-up shirt, and occasionally a tie. At schools, dress code is worse. For girls, there are harsh rules: no "distracting" makeup, no tank tops (especially spaghetti straps), no shorts or skirts above the fingertips, no see-through clothing, no rips or holes in any clothing, no patches on clothing, no open-toed shoes, no high heels, no bandanas, no facial jewelry or jewelry that pierces and visible part of the body besides the ears, no big hoops, no accessories that cause a distraction, and no unnatural hair color. Some of those do apply to boys too but are mainly directed towards girls. It's apparent that the world is more unfair towards women and girls than it is toward men and boys.

For centuries women didn't acquire any power whatsoever. On June 4, 1919, Congress passed a law for women to be able to vote and it was ratified on August 18, 1920. Next year will be the 100th anniversary for women being given the right to vote. Women getting the right to vote was one of the first steps to equality. Although, women and men are still not equal because our economy decides to work slower on the problems we've had for centuries than problems that have just begun. Women still get paid less than men, women are still held to a higher standard, and women are still objectified. It takes women with confidence and motivation to stop gender inequality. Nothing will change if we don't do anything about it.

Nowadays, there are women empowerment movements to empower women. For ages, women were told to hide the fact that they menstruated once a month. Packaging for their products were discreet so that it wasn't obvious that they were buying the needed products. Why should women have to pay for the products they need to stay hygienic while menstruating? It's not like we get to choose to experience this wretched thing for a week straight every single month. The products we use are mandatory, there is no doubt about it. You see, I don't think anyone would mind paying if a simple box of "feminine napkins" weren't seven dollars a package! A woman pays \$18,171 dollars on products in her lifetime. They spend \$444 on panty liners, \$1,229 on midol, \$1,773 on tampons, \$2,280 on new underwear, and \$11,400 on birth control, says Huffpost. That's a lot of money considering we have to experience this.

The United States could do so much about gender inequality yet nobody does. Why is that? I believe that our government doesn't want gender equality because that means men would not have as much power and since most of our government is men they'll feel small. The government will most likely never be open to gender equality no matter what they tell us. If they really want gender equality, they would do something about it.

Women are certainly not treated equally and we can change that. There are so many things we can do, like starting petitions for workplaces to change things about their dress code and have it really enforced, starting peaceful protests, and most importantly, sharing our stories with the world. I don't know about anyone reading this, but personally, I am sick of how men and boys treat women and girls.

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