



Feminist Allyship Terminology Sheet

by the Feminist Men Project

Ally (feminist ally)	<p>The active, consistent and uncomfortable process of unlearning and re-evaluating, in which a man (for example), leverages their privilege in order to work in solidarity with women and non-binary people.</p> <p>[A verb rather than a noun. Learning to be an ally is a continuous process, and calling yourself an ally doesn't make you one]</p>
Cis (cisgender)	<p>Cisgender is a term to describe someone whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth. e.g. someone who identifies as a man and was assigned male at birth is a cis man. It is the opposite of transgender.</p>
Emotional labour (also referred to as emotional work)	<p>Men benefit from the fact that women are socialised to take on the burden of emotional labour, particularly in their (romantic and platonic) relationships with men. The term 'emotional labour' describes the gendered (and classed and racialised) division of labour in terms of emotions and feelings.</p> <p>These include expectations on women to smile, laugh at jokes, be friendly, remember birthdays, fake sexual pleasure, listen kindly to people's problems, be helpful, make tea or coffee, etc. This labour tends to be invisible when women do it, and more visible when men do it (or women <i>don't</i> do it). The term is also used to describe the mental and physical work of keeping a household running such as organising bills, shopping, planning meals, cooking, cleaning, etc.</p> <p>Emotional labour was first formally coined by academic Arlie Hochschild in 1983 to describe the labour expected of workers in service industries (e.g. domestic workers, waiting staff).</p>
Femme	<p>Originally used to refer to an identity in 1950s lesbian bar culture (femme/butch partnerships), femme is often used today to describe a feminine identity/the expression of femininity for people of any gender (e.g. violence against women and femmes).</p>
Femmephobia	<p>Femmephobia is the denigration or hatred of femininity or things associated with femininity. It is connected to homophobia against gay men and transphobia against trans women.</p>
Gaslighting	<p>A form of manipulation which aims to undermine someone's self-confidence and sense of reality. This happens through lying, denial,</p>



	<p>questioning. Often present in abusive relationships (e.g. ‘What are you talking about? That never happened! You’re going crazy...’)</p> <p>Term comes from the 1938 play Gas Light.</p>
Gender Binary	The historical, colonial imposition of gender into two mutually exclusive categories, male and female, man and women. Intersex, trans and gender variant people have always existed.
Hegemonic masculinity	The ‘ideal’ masculine norm that men are often measured against. This ‘ideal’ man is presented as white, straight, cis, middle-class, able-bodied, attractive, wealthy, strong, tough, competitive and autonomous.
Heteronormativity	<p>Describes a structure of sexuality (and gender) where heterosexuality is the taken-for-granted, ‘normal’ and ‘natural’ sexuality. A ‘heteronormative’ relationship may refer to traditional gender roles in a relationship.</p> <p>Straight people don’t have to ‘come out’ in heteronormative society.</p>
In/visible	<p>‘Men’ as a gender identity is normalised in our society so it is invisible as a gender category (e.g. the use of ‘guys’ and men/masculine pronouns to mean everyone).</p> <p>(White) men in Western society are viewed as ‘normal’ rather than the ‘other’.</p>
Male entitlement	<p>Men expecting sex, time, attention, resources or emotional labour (normally from women and femmes), on the basis of a superiority complex developed from male privilege.</p> <p>This includes men believing it is OK to harass and objectify women.</p>
Male fragility/ Fragile masculinity	<p>This describes the anger or defensiveness that men may express when sexist behaviour is pointed out. Common responses include defending men as a gender (e.g. ‘Not All Men’) which serves to re-centre men’s feelings.</p> <p>The expectation that men’s egos should be protected is connected to emotional labour. Women and femmes tend to be socialised to cater to male fragility but may also feel pressure to protect men’s egos because of the fear of possible violence from men (e.g. in saying no to someone’s advances).</p>
Male gaze	<p>The male gaze normalises the sexual objectification of women, and relates to the male entitlement that women are there for men to look at. This has been critiqued in art, cinema, literature, academia, etc.</p> <p>First coined by film critic Laura Mulvey in 1975.</p>
Male privilege	The invisible/specific privileges and status granted to men under patriarchy.



Mansplaining	When a man unnecessarily explains something, often in a condescending or patronising manner.
Manspreading / Taking Up Space	<p>A sense of entitlement to other people’s space in public. It normally describes men sitting with their knees far apart on public transport.</p> <p>It connects to men ‘taking up space’ in other ways, such as: pushing in front of other people, expecting people to move out of your way, interrupting/talking over someone, or talking for a long time in meetings/conversations, etc.</p> <p>(this behaviour is also racialised - in Western/white-dominated contexts, white people tend to do this more)</p>
Masculinity	<p>Qualities or attributes that are characteristically associated with men.</p> <p>Although masculinity is often seen as the ‘natural’ property of men, it is better understood as describing a group of gestures, clothing, mannerisms, etc. that are not a property of men or restricted to male bodies.</p> <p>For example, masculinity may be more ‘visible’ on women performing as drag kings (or vice versa, femininity on drag queens).</p>
Misogynoir	<p>A word to describe the convergence of misogyny and anti-blackness that black women face. This includes the objectification, violence, mistreatment and erasure experienced by black women at the hands of men (and white women). Also refers to tropes projected onto black women, e.g. the ‘hypersexual jezebel’ or ‘angry black woman’.</p> <p>Coined by queer Black feminist Moya Bailey.</p>
Misogyny	The hatred, dislike or mistrust of women, and disgust or disdain of women’s bodies (e.g. vaginas, menstruation, body hair).
Objectification	<p>Treating someone as an object, as if they don’t have feelings, opinions or rights of their own, and reducing them to their bodies or appearance.</p> <p>This can be explicit (e.g. sexual harassment on the street) or implicit (e.g. the influence of porn on sexual relationships/interactions).</p>
Patriarchy	<p>The system of power where men maintain dominance through the oppression of women (and gender variant people), and predominantly control the political and economic resources, power and authority in a society.</p> <p>To describe the system holistically, patriarchy can be a better term to refer to sexism.</p>
Sexism	Prejudice, stereotyping or discrimination on the basis of sex or gender, typically against women.



Sexualisation	<p>When someone (normally a young person) is regarded as a sex object and evaluated in terms of their physical characteristics and 'sexiness', for example the sexualisation of young children (and young girls in particular) in the media.</p> <p>Women and young girls tend to be sexualised in a way that men and young boys aren't. This process is also racialised - black men and women tend to be hypersexualised.</p>
Tokenism	<p>When a person/group or organisation utilises a woman for economic gain, artistic exploitation or to demonstrate 'they are not sexist'.</p>
Tone policing	<p>When someone's response to violent behaviour is criticised for not being pleasant. E.g. when a man demands that sexism is pointed out in a 'nice' way or accuses someone of 'overreacting', 'misunderstanding' or 'making a big deal out of nothing'.</p> <p>This is criticised as a silencing and derailing tactic which shifts the focus back to men's needs.</p> <p>[See also male fragility, male entitlement].</p>
Toxic masculinity	<p>Toxic masculinity is one of the ways men commonly internalise patriarchy. It describes a group of attitudes and behaviours within socially-constructed masculine norms, including: aggression, homophobia, sexual entitlement, not being allowed to display vulnerability, etc.</p>
Transmisogynoir	<p>Transmisogynoir describes the violence, erasure and mistreatment experienced by black trans women.</p>
Transmisogyny	<p>Transmisogyny is misogyny directed towards trans women and trans feminine people.</p>