

## Impact of Inequality

### What Does the Impact of Inequality Look Like?

This professional learning explores the impact of inequality and how it links to wellbeing.

Unfortunately, inequality can result in a vicious cycle that causes more inequality.

This is because inequality causes stereotypes and bias, which can result in increased inequality. All of this can in turn result in societal violence which again can cause further inequality.

Inequality causes harm that can result in (this is not an exhaustive list):

- LGBT Bullying
- Gender based violence
- Racism
- Disability Discrimination
- Care Experienced Discrimination

In turn, these harms can create more inequality.

### The Impact of Inequality and Allport's Scale

This image shows Allport's scale which was created by Gordon Allport after the second world war to show how antilocution (or negative speech and propaganda) can pave the way for societal violence, and in the case of WW2, genocide. But it can be adapted to explore the impact of all forms of inequality, if we consider gender inequality as an example, Allport's scale displays how everyday gender stereotypes build towards societal violence and create excuses for it through establishing a narrative that dehumanises those that are oppressed and places people within rigid gender roles. This lays the foundation for discrimination, and harmful behaviours both on an individual and societal level.

The behaviours at the bottom of the pyramid provide a strong foundation for the behaviours at the top and allow for the progression through the stages. The most effective way to prevent the impact of inequality, in terms of gender based violence for example, is through early intervention and disrupting and deconstructing the low-level language and behaviours we see at the bottom.

### What is the impact if inequality on wellbeing?

Above are a few examples of the impact of inequality on wellbeing but there are many more that we haven't had space to include.

#### LGBT Discrimination

Stonewall and LGBT Youth Scotland identify inequality as a root cause of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. 67% of participants report experiencing homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying during their time in school. ([LiS Education Report 2023 \(lgbtyouth.org.uk\)](#))

### **Gender Based Violence**

Gender Based Violence refers to crimes such as rape, domestic abuse, stalking, and forced marriage that are overwhelmingly but not exclusively carried out by men against women. Gender Based Violence is a symptom of gender inequality.

Research shows that the root cause of gender-based violence is gender inequality and that levels of violence against women are significantly and consistently higher in societies, communities and relationships where there are more rigid distinctions between the roles of men and women. 91% of school aged girls considered sexual harassment to be a problem at their school, but a report that came out recently found that 97% of women in the UK have experienced sexual harassment. ([YWL-Report-FINAL.pdf \(parliament.scot\)](#))

### **Racism**

The mental health impacts of racism can lead to children and young people disengaging with education and feelings of alienation and isolation. Young people from racialised minorities described ways in which they were categorised and seen as 'Other' by accent, colour, faith, dress, nationality and ethnicity. Racial slurs were experienced as well as more recently recognised forms of racism such as islamophobia (anti-Muslim prejudice), anti-immigration attitudes and religious intolerance. In schools, racist comments were more common in primary and lower secondary stages. Experiencing anti-Muslim racism was also described by some participants; this was felt to be gendered as the wearing the hijab or niqab by girls was a more visible marker of being Muslim. ([Insight 16 \(2005\) 'Minority Ethnic Pupils' Experiences of School in Scotland](#)', [Guyan K 2019 The Perceptions and experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic young people in Scottish schools](#))

### **Poverty**

Children are more likely to be in poverty across all measures compared to adults. Some types of households with children are known to be at a particularly high risk of poverty. These include households with single parents, three or more children, disabled household members, of a minority ethnic background, with a child aged under one, or a mother aged under 25. Poverty can often overlap with other areas of inequality. ([Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2019-22 \(data.gov.scot\)](#))

### **Disability Discrimination**

The World Health Organisation in collaboration with the World Bank recently stated that 15% of the world's population, approximately one billion, live with some form of disability. Across the world, people with disabilities have poorer health outcomes, lower educational achievements, less economic participation and higher rates of poverty than people without disabilities. This is partly because people with disabilities experience significant barriers in accessing basic services, including health,

education and employment. Studies have highlighted that disabled children have poorer experiences of school, lower expectations in teen years and experiences of social isolation that all impact on children and young people's wellbeing.

[\(Disabled Children and the Equality Act 2010: What Early Years providers need to know and do \(councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk\), Children with disabilities are being denied equal opportunities for a quality education across the world, including in the UK | University of Cambridge](#)

### Care Experienced Discrimination

Discrimination against care experienced children and young people has a significant impact on mental health. The latest measure of the emotional and behavioural health of looked after children using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) found that 37% had scores considered a cause for concern, compared to 12% of children in the general population. Barnardo's surveyed care leavers and found that 46% were identified as having mental health needs, with 65% of them not receiving any form of statutory support ([The Care Leavers' Association, 2017](#); [Social Market Foundation, 2018](#), [Alliance For Children In Care And Care Leavers, 2017](#)).

### Further reading, resources and professional learning

- Allport's Scale lesson plan: [http://the-classroom.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Prejudice\\_And\\_Allport\\_Scale.pdf-1.pdf](http://the-classroom.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Prejudice_And_Allport_Scale.pdf-1.pdf)
- [Equally Safe at School | A whole school approach to preventing gender based violence](#)
- [The Cost of the School Day Programme, Child Poverty Action Group](#)
- [Promoting race equality and anti-racist education](#)
- [Time for Inclusive Education \(TIE\)](#)
- [Improving Gender Balance Self-evaluation Framework](#)
- [Guiding principles for developing and selecting resources that promote equality and diversity](#)
- [This short video highlights the impact of racism and the need for anti-racist education: We Are All Special: Newark Primary Against Racism - YouTube](#)
- Out of the Box - Together for Gender Equality aims to engage the viewers to understand the key concepts around gender stereotypes, violence against women and girls and gender inequality in our society: [Out of the Box - Together for Gender Equality - YouTube](#)