

Gendered behavior is best understood as a product of social roles within a society. For example, consider men's and women's roles in Westernized societies—men are still more likely than women to be employed outside the home, and women are more likely to be caretakers of children. These gender roles or sex-typed expectations, influence men's and women's psychology through social interactions, self-regulation, and hormonal fluctuations.

Communication Styles

Deborah Tannen's studies found these gender differences in communication styles

- Men tend to talk more than women in public situations, but women tend to talk more than men at home.
- Women are more inclined to face each other and make eye contact when talking, while men are more likely to look away from each other.
- Men tend to jump from topic to topic, but women tend to talk at length about one topic.
- When listening, women make more noises such as "mm-hmm" and "uh-huh", while men are more likely to listen silently.
- Women are inclined to express agreement and support, while men are more inclined to debate.

Characteristics Related to Helping and Caring

Altruism

Altruism means providing unselfish help to others who are in need, without anticipating any reward for the assistance (Schoeder et al., 1995). Research has not uncovered consistent, overall gender differences in altruism with either children or adults (N. Eisenberg et al., 1996). One meta-analysis of 182 gender comparison yielded an overall effect size of only 0.13; men were only slightly more helpful (Eagly & Crowley, 1986). A more refined examination of these data showed that, compared to women, men were substantially more likely to help if the task was perceived to be dangerous to women. For example, men were much more likely to give ride to a tourist, but men and women were equally likely to place a stamped letter (presumably lost) in a mailbox, men were substantially more likely than women to help on tasks for which they had greater experience, such as changing a tire. In other words, men and women probably do not differ in terms of their general helpfulness, however gender differences emerge on tasks that are dangerous or require expertise (Fiala et al., 1999; M.C. Hamilton, 2001)

Nurturance

Nurturance is a kind of helping in which someone gives care to another person, usually someone who is younger or less competent. The stereotype suggests that women are more nurturant than men. In fact, women actually do rate themselves higher than men do (Feingold, 1994; P.J. Watson et al., 1994). However, researchers often find gender similarities.

According to Deaux and Major ((1987), gender similarities are found when the situation requires an obvious helpful response. For example, both men and women will quickly respond to the screams of a child who is clearly in pain. However, gender differences may emerge when the situation is more ambiguous, for example, when a child begins to whimper (cry) softly.

Empathy

(The capacity to recognize and, to some extent, share feelings (such as sadness or happiness) that are being experienced by another)

You show empathy when you understand the emotion that another person is feeling and when you experience that same emotion (P.W. Garner & Estep, 2001). An empathic person who watches someone lose a contest can experience the same feelings of anger, frustration, embarrassment, and disappointment that the loser feels. According to the stereotype, women are more empathic than men, however, researchers typically find substantial gender differences only when the results are based on self-reports (N. Eisenberg et al., 1989, 1996; N. Eisenberg & Lennon, 1983, P.W. Garner & Estep, 2001). The findings are following:

1. Females and males are equally empathic when the operational definition requires physiological measures. Specifically, measures such as heart rate, pulse, skin conductance and blood pressure typically show no gender differences in empathy.
2. Females and males are equally empathic when the operational definition requires nonverbal measures. For example, some studies have measured empathy in terms of the observer's facial, vocal and gestural measures.
3. Females are more empathic than males when the operational definition is based on self-report.

Friendship

We find gender similarities when we assess what friends do when they get together. Specifically, both female friends and male friends ~~and male friends~~ are most likely to just talk. They are somewhat less likely to work on a specific task or project together. And they rarely meet for the purpose of working on some problem that has arisen in their friendship (Duck & Wright, 1993; P.H. Wright, 1998). Another gender similarity is that females and males report the same degree of satisfaction with their same gender friendships (Crick & Rose, 2000).

Women usually make a deep commitment to their female friends and their friendships usually cover a broad spectrum, while men's friendships tend to be segmented and centered around particular activities (Gouldner & Strong, 1987; Lenz & Myerhoff, 1985; McGill, 1985; Pogrebin, 1987).

Both women and men also emphasize emotional expressiveness, communication skills, unconditional support and trust (Monosour, 1992; P.H. Wright, 1998). However, females also emphasized physical contact with the friend, whereas no surprise males mentioned this less often.

Gender Differences in Aggression

- Men are much more likely to engage in *Physical Aggression*
- Men and women are equally likely to engage in *Verbal Aggression*.
- Men and Women experience aggression differently:
- Cambell & Muncer (1987): Women view their aggression as often coming from excessive stress and a loss of self-control.
- Males often view aggressive acts as an exercise in control over others, brought on by a challenge to their self-esteem or integrity.
- Men are more likely to view their aggressive acts as positive (instrumental aggression)
- Women feel more guilt and concern after being aggressive than men.
- Recently, researchers have also considered *indirect aggression*: Gossiping, spreading false rumors, revealing someone's secrets without their permission.
- Research in Finland showed adolescent girls are much more likely to engage in indirect aggression than teenage boys.(Bjorkqvist, Lagerspatz, & Kaukainen, 1992)

Gender Differences in Leadership

Leadership is based on a social interaction between leaders and their peers, supervisors and subordinates. Oftentimes men and women use different processes for decision making and leadership. Here are some common ways that men and women differ.

1. *Attitude towards tasks vs. relationships.* Women tend to be more relationship oriented and accomplish tasks by building relationships first. They then know who to ask and are comfortable asking others to get things done. Men tend to be more task oriented and go straight to the task. They build their relationships when they are in the task or project.
2. *Way of Processing Information.* When women have to make a decision they will often process and look at options out loud while men tend to process internally until they come up with a solution. Women often think that the man is being unresponsive to suggestions because of this and men often think that women are looking for approval when they process out loud or don't know what they are doing. Some men think that a woman's way of processing is a sign of weakness.
3. *Leadership Style.* Because women are more relationship oriented, they tend to lead by consensus. Men tend to be more hierarchical and include only the people closest to them at their level in the decision making process when they think it is necessary.
4. *Communication Styles.* In non-verbal behavior women will nod their head to show that they are listening. Men leave the conversation thinking that a head nod means agreement and will be surprised to find out that the woman didn't agree at all. When a woman is speaking to a man and he does not say anything and stays in neutral body language to show that he is listening. a woman will interpret that as the man being bored or not understanding what she is saying. This can lead the woman to become very uncomfortable and repeat what she is saying or ask the man each time if he understands what she is saying. The man then interprets that as insecurity, or talking to much and which then lead him to think she is not assertive or confident to be a leader. Women will actually use more direct eye contact in conversation to create relationship and connection while many men take that as a challenge to their power or position. Women will also approach a man from the front while men often approach from the side at an angle, which is how each of them tends to stand or sit when talking to others. Men interpret the face to face as too personal, or aggressive and women will interpret the talking side to side as though he is not being upfront or even hiding something from her.
5. *Talk time.* Men take up more time and space at meetings, while women try to make sure there is more equality in the room. Despite stereotypes to the contrary studies have shown that men talk more than women. Men interrupt women and talk over them much more than women interrupt men. All of this can lead to the type of miscommunication based on assumptions of why member of the other sex are using certain verbal and non-verbal behaviors. These miscommunications can result in team breakdown, people not listening to each other and loss of good ideas.