

FEMINIST  
**GLOSSARY**

# **Holistic and Feminist Approach of CEPAM Guayaquil.**

## **Glossary of Terms for Action and the Promotion of a Life Free from Violence.**

### **Organization: CEPAM Guayaquil.**

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### **Suggested Citation:**

CEPAM Guayaquil (2025). Holistic Approach of CEPAM Guayaquil: Glossary of Terms for Action and the Promotion of a Life Free from Violence [Authored by J. Pispira]

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# ***The power of language in the construction of concepts.***

*"If we conceptualize poorly, we politicize poorly."  
– Celia Amorós (translated from Spanish)*

Language is a powerful tool of social and political influence, capable of reinforcing relationships of domination or, conversely, promoting processes of social transformation, since it is imbued with ideological meaning (Urla, 2021; Van Dijk, 1999). Therefore, it is not a neutral means of communication, but rather acts as a space of tensions, resistances, and

negotiations in which mental representations that uphold norms and beliefs perpetuating gender-based power relations and other intersecting forms of oppression such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, migration status, sexual orientation, and age, among others are reproduced or challenged.

Consequently, a glossary is not a list of terms defined without intention; rather, it is a conscious and political organizational practice that seeks to challenge power relations through the selection and definition of terms from a critical, feminist, and decolonial perspective, as a way to contest conceptualizations that render inequality invisible or minimize it. In this sense, each term was chosen with care, rejecting positions that trivialize gender-based violence and inequality as isolated incidents, in alignment with the principles and values that have guided CEPAM Guayaquil throughout its history.

### On the Use of Gender-Inclusive Language.

At CEPAM Guayaquil, we consciously and affirmatively use gender-inclusive language, employing the Spanish pronouns "las"<sup>1</sup> and "les"<sup>2</sup> as part of our commitment to gender equity and the inclusion of diversity. This practice aims to contribute to the visibility and respect of all people in our organizational documents and communications.

### How to Use This Glossary.

This glossary has been developed with the purpose of serving as an organizational tool and can be used in the following way:

#### **Educational Resource:**

Use the glossary as an educational resource for training programs and workshops for professionals, educators, and others.

#### **Referencia para la elaboración de documentos organizacionales:**

Consulte el glosario para redactar documentos internos y externos. Esto garantiza coherencia con los valores, misión y visión de la organización.

#### **Procesos de inducción:**

Incorpore el glosario en los procesos de inducción para nuevos miembros del equipo, ya sean profesionales, voluntarios o pasantes. Esto garantiza que se familiaricen con el lenguaje organizacional, facilitando su integración en las actividades del CEPAM-G.

# Definition of Terms

## Self-Care

Self-care is a political and resistance practice against societal expectations of self-sacrifice (being-for-others), the idealization of mental and physical exhaustion, and the normalization of pain, fear, and feelings of insecurity in the body. It involves engaging in activities that promote psychological, emotional, physical, and sexual and reproductive health through the conscious practice of allowing oneself to prioritize personal needs and inhabit the body as a safe, intimate, and loving space<sup>1</sup>.

## Autonomy.

It is the capacity of individuals to make decisions and act independently in their lives, specifically with regard to their emotional, physical, sexual-reproductive, and economic well-being. In other words, it involves the right to decide about one's own body and life project without coercion or external limitations, through the full exercise of rights and freedom of choice. It is influenced by the social context, power relations, and structures that may either restrict or enable personal and collective development.

<sup>1</sup> Without self-care, collective care is weakened, since each person's ability to support and accompany others depends on their own physical, emotional, and mental well-being. This requires setting personal boundaries that allow each member to protect their holistic well-being.



## Apartidista<sup>2</sup>

The concept describes a personal or organizational stance that does not align with, affiliate with, or support any particular political party. This position is characterized by prioritizing principles, values, or objectives that go beyond partisan interests, thereby promoting a critical and coherent perspective grounded in feminist principles, the struggle for social justice, and gender equality.

## Gender Integration Continuum

Refers to the different levels or stages at which a gender perspective is incorporated into programs, policies, and/or services. This continuum ranges from harmful integration, in which gender norms and power relations are either instrumentalized or unrecognized, to gender-sensitive integration, which acknowledges gender inequalities but does not enact structural change, and finally, to transformative integration, which addresses structural roots and promotes significant and profound changes to achieve gender equality.



## Collective Care.

A political act that challenges individualistic logics and recognizes the importance of community for sharing and mutual support. It is expressed through networks of accompaniment and safety that promote psychological, emotional, physical, and sexual-reproductive health, while strengthening collective power and solidarity within the community. It does not depend on individual action but on group cooperation.



<sup>2</sup> This should not be confused with the term "apolitical," which refers to disinterest, apathy, or antipathy toward issues related to politics. It is important to clarify that it is not possible to conceive of oneself as existing outside of politics, since politics permeates power relations, individual and collective decisions, and social norms. As it is a concept that goes beyond neutrality and instead reflects an explicitly political stance grounded in broader principles; therefore, the term 'nonpartisan' cannot be used in this context.

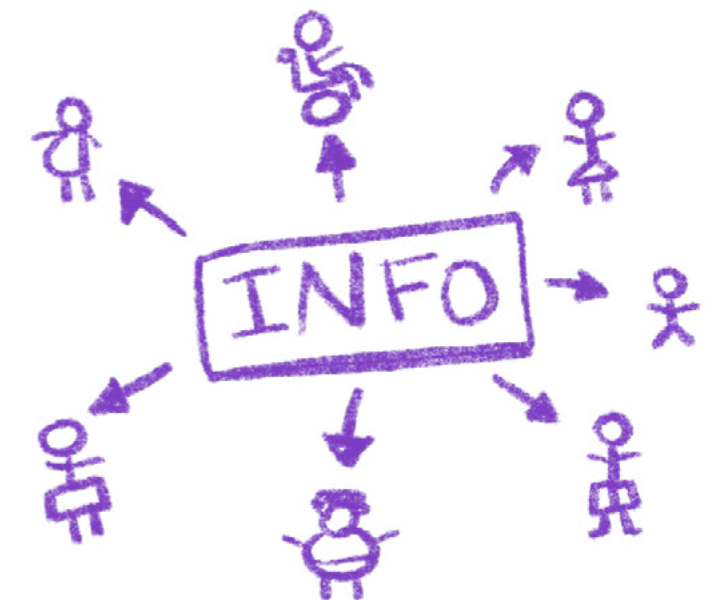
## Rape Culture.

The normalization of sexual violence within a patriarchal society, where masculinity is associated with domination and aggression, while femininity is linked to passivity and vulnerability. This creates an environment in which sexual violence is tolerated, eroticized, and justified, regulating women's behavior as a mechanism of control. Media and cultural production, including art, the educational system, and cultural practices, reinforce these social representations, consolidating a structure that denies women's desire, invalidates their consent, and undermines their sexual autonomy.



## Democratization of Knowledge<sup>3</sup>

A social process that seeks to make information and knowledge accessible to all people, as well as to foster collective participation in the dissemination and co-creation of knowledge. It relies on a cooperative learning framework that contributes to strengthening the social fabric and improving the conditions for decision-making.



## Decolonial<sup>4</sup>.

A critical approach whose purpose is to challenge and transform the structures and practices of domination produced by the legacy of colonialism. This includes not only territorial and political independence, but also the dismantling of cultural hierarchies that invalidate the knowledge, practices, and cosmologies of historically oppressed peoples. It is therefore a proposal for historical reparation, social and political resistance, and the liberation of knowledge, one that promotes the recognition of ancestral and community-based knowledge in the face of hegemonic forms of knowledge that do not emerge from our historical and contemporary realities.

<sup>3</sup> It is important to highlight that it functions both as a principle, promoting equity in knowledge, and as an approach aimed at transforming the structures of oppression that limit access to it. Consequently, it is linked to the framework of feminist pedagogy and popular education, as it conceives people not merely as recipients of information, but as active agents in generating knowledge.

<sup>4</sup> The decolonial perspective not only questions historical domination but also its ongoing consequences, both formal (e.g., legal, political, and educational systems) and informal (e.g., mental colonization through social norms). It highlights how these legacies condition the ways in which we relate to others and to ourselves across our intersecting axes of oppression (race, class, gender, etc.).

## Psychosocial Empowerment

A process that promotes the strengthening of autonomy and participation, at both the individual and/or community level, motivating people and communities to question and challenge structures of oppression. This process fosters the visibility of needs, the defense of human rights, and political participation through by actively exercising influence in decision-making. It also encourages organization, community cooperation, and collective power as key tools for social change and transformation.



## Evidence-Based Approach

A methodological approach that promotes the systematic and critical use of data, whether quantitative or qualitative, derived from research and evaluations to ensure that adopted practices, programs, or policies are supported by the best available evidence. This does not imply disregarding the importance of knowledge derived from popular or community-based experience; on the contrary, such knowledge is considered essential to contextualize scientific evidence, as it enables the study of diverse realities and enriches the understanding of different contexts and needs.

## Trauma-Informed Approach<sup>6</sup>.

An organizational and care framework that recognizes the profound implications of traumatic experiences at both individual and social levels, as well as their systemic, variable, and dynamic nature. This approach understands that responses to trauma are expected reactions, challenging the pathologization of pain and suffering caused by structures of oppression and violence. Consequently, it seeks to create safe and supportive spaces within services through principles that ensure safety, trust and transparency, peer support and collaboration, empowerment, voice and choice for both survivors and staff. It also incorporates a cultural, historical, and gendered perspective into mental health and social issues.



<sup>6</sup>: Additionally, it contributes to strengthening the resilience of survivors while promoting organizational care and self-care for professionals, recognizing that their well-being is essential for providing high-quality, compassionate care.

## Transformative Gender Approaches

These involve the development of theoretical and practical proposals based on feminist principles that aim at the collective transformation of the structural roots of gender inequality. They address both formal aspects (laws and policies) and informal aspects (social norms and power relations) by promoting critical reflection and awareness at personal and collective levels, through the acquisition of knowledge, life skills (emotional and interpersonal), and access to services. They also focus on creating safe spaces by fostering cooperative and negotiated relationships among individuals and communities.





## Femicide

The murder of a woman or girl committed by a man, motivated by hatred, contempt, pleasure, or a sense of ownership over her body, sexuality, or life, regardless of any prior relationship between them. It is the most extreme manifestation of a continuum of violence produced by a patriarchal system that perpetuates gender inequality and oppressive power relations toward women and girls.

## Femicide<sup>8</sup>

Refers not only to the perpetrator's act of murdering women and girls out of gender-based hatred, but also to the absence of effective safeguards and state actions to protect women's lives by preventing and punishing gender-based violence, as well as to the social structures that sustain the perpetuation of these crimes and the systematic impunity surrounding them. The state is complicit, whether through omission or direct action.



<sup>8</sup> Both terms, femicide and feminicide, are not antagonistic but complementary; they enhance the understanding of gender-based killing and its sociopolitical impact.

## Feminism<sup>9</sup>

A social, political, cultural, and theoretical movement that seeks equality, dignity, rights, autonomy, emancipation, and empowerment for women. It describes, questions, and resists power structures that promote male supremacy and the oppression of women throughout their lives. At the same time, it proposes social and cultural change and promotes interventions to address women's intrapersonal and interpersonal concerns.



<sup>9</sup> El feminismo no es un movimiento homogéneo ni unidimensional, sino que abarca una diversidad de corrientes feministas con enfoques, perspectivas y propuestas de cambio distintas. Aunque estas corrientes pueden diferir comparten un objetivo común: desafiar y transformar las estructuras de poder que perpetúan las desigualdades de género.

## Gender

A social construct that, through the process of socialization, assigns roles, expectations, and behaviors based on sex at birth. It imposes social expectations on people's bodies and lives, shaping how they are expected to behave and what is expected of them. This assignment is dynamic, depending on the sociocultural and historical context, and conditions the social, political, symbolic, and psychological position from which individuals relate to others and to the world. Gender therefore functions both as an analytical tool, challenging the notion of feminine or masculine "essences", and as a political tool, enabling the questioning of power relations to achieve the full realization of human rights for women, girls, boys, adolescents, and youth.

## Intersectionality

A tool for social analysis and political action that seeks to understand and expose the complex power structures that converge to place women and other marginalized groups in situations of multiple vulnerabilities, risks, and forms of violence. It considers variables such as race, social class, ethnicity, age, migratory status, sexual orientation, among other forms of domination and exclusion.



## Reproductive Justice

An approach grounded in human rights that integrates reproductive rights with social justice, defending the right of all people to exercise autonomy over their bodies and their sexual and reproductive decisions, free from economic, racial, or gender barriers. Abortion, as a right that ensures bodily autonomy and the full capacity to decide one's own life path, is understood as a legal, health, and social issue within a broader reproductive justice agenda. This agenda promotes reproductive policies that guarantee access to comprehensive sexuality education, contraceptive methods, and quality healthcare, while also recognizing the intersections of discrimination, vulnerability, and oppression that affect individuals and communities.

## Gender-Inclusive Language

A form of oral and written communication that seeks to make gender diversity visible and respected, avoiding expressions that reinforce stereotypes or discriminate. It is a political tool that promotes equality and human rights by recognizing all identities and preventing the imposition of sexist or binary language, fostering the inclusion of women, non-binary people, and other gender identities.

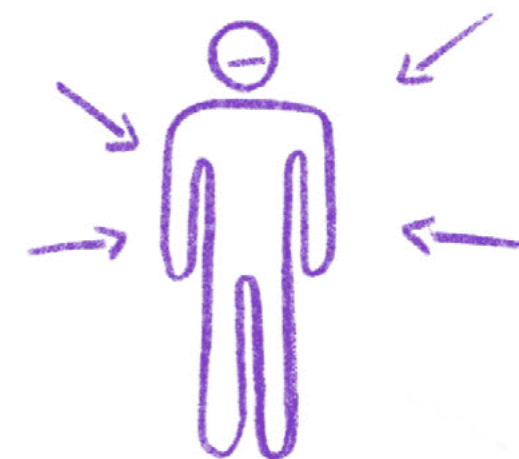
## Feminist Strategic Litigation (FSL)

A legal strategy that incorporates feminist principles to challenge systemic and institutionalized sexism, using the law as a tool for social and legal transformation from a gender perspective. Consequently, it contributes to advancing the feminist agenda, with the goal of preventing rights violations, while also acknowledging the limitations of legal science, whose epistemology and methods have been constructed within a patriarchal system.



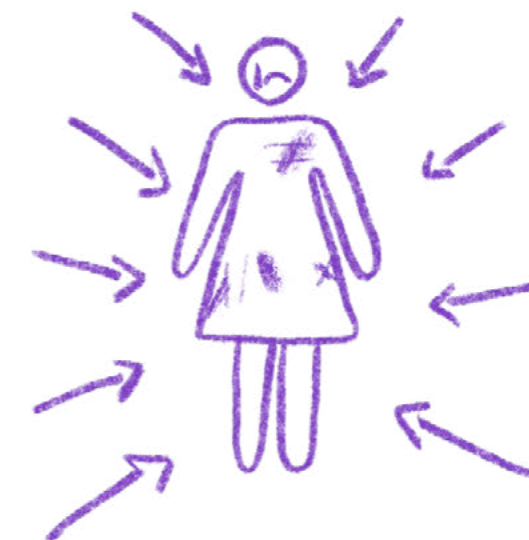
## Misandry<sup>10</sup>

Hatred, rejection, aversion, or contempt toward men and all things associated with masculinity. It is important to note that, although the term appears in certain social and academic debates, unlike misogyny, it does not correspond to a structural system of power or inequality that oppresses men as a social group, nor does it produce significant social, political, legal, or economic disadvantages compared to women.



## Misogyny

Hatred, rejection, aversion, or contempt toward women and all things associated with femininity. It manifests in social, cultural, political, and economic structures that perpetuate the subordination, exclusion, and violence against girls and women, limiting their rights and freedoms to make decisions about their lives, bodies, sexuality, and reproduction, as well as their ability to hold positions of power.



<sup>10</sup> It is important to note that, in some cases, misandry may arise as an individual response to pain, extreme violence, or traumatic experiences suffered by some women at the hands of men, but it does not constitute a structural phenomenon nor is it comparable to misogyny.

## Gender Norms

A set of unwritten, socially shared rules that define what is considered normal, correct, or acceptable behavior for individuals within a society. They influence and regulate behavior and ways of relating to others. Deeply embedded in culture, these norms are reproduced through social interaction in both private and public life, primarily affecting the autonomy of women and girls by limiting their access to resources, freedoms, power, and decision-making capacity over their bodies and lives.



## Patriarchy

A social and political system that emerges as a historical appropriation of power over women's bodies and reproduction. It establishes a symbolic order through myths, religion, and social norms that perpetuate it as a structural foundation for contemporary society, shaping all aspects of women's lives from birth to death. This system positions women in a state of social and political subordination, exposing them to greater vulnerability and risk of violence, discrimination, and limited access to resources. Consequently, it restricts their autonomy and freedom to make decisions about their bodies, sexuality, and lives.



## Feminist Popular Education

A set of educational approaches and methodologies that promote learning processes fostering collective critical awareness of the impact of oppressive power structures on people's everyday and political lives. It also recognizes personal experiences as valid sources of knowledge, encouraging engagement in the construction of meaningful, collective learning and motivating individuals to become agents of social change and transformation.



## Power

The capacity or ability to influence, change, control, or direct the behavior, actions, or thoughts of others. It manifests across different levels and contexts, and its exercise is not limited to formal settings but also extends to private and everyday life.



## Collective Power

The capacity of a group of people to influence, make decisions, and achieve common goals through mutual support and collaboration. In other words, it is based on collective action, which manifests across domestic, community, institutional, and transnational coalition contexts.

## Internal Power

Refers to the perception and sense of self-worth, self-awareness, and knowledge of one's own capacities and skills, both interpersonal and emotional. This includes personal and collective development. Although it is primarily based on self-affirmation and personal recognition, it is influenced by external factors such as access to services and economic resources.



## Psychoeducation

A tool for change aimed at promoting understanding and prevention of social and health problems through evidence-based information, dispelling myths and misconceptions. It fosters healthy behaviors at both individual and collective levels, helps reduce stigma, and improves treatment adherence by generating empathy and sensitivity among professionals, who design interventions according to each person's psychosocial and family context. Additionally, it strengthens support networks through guidance for family members or close contacts, contributing to the creation of safe spaces and providing emotional support.



## Power Relations

Social interactions and dynamics in which power is distributed, exercised, and negotiated among individuals, groups, and institutions within a society, permeating the entire social fabric. From a gender perspective, their study allows for critical analysis and reflection on how structures of domination are established and maintained in both private and public spheres, with the aim of addressing the roots of gender inequality.



## Mental Health

A state of physical, mental, emotional, and social wellness, shaped by the interaction between the individual and society. Consequently, it is influenced by the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age. Mental Health cannot be considered separately from the full exercise of human rights, autonomy, and freedom.



## Holistic Safety

Refers to the various levels and types of risks that people face, physical, psychological, economic, and social, particularly survivors of sexual- and gender-based violence, as well as human rights defenders and care professionals. It involves both preventive strategies that promote protective factors and reactive measures that minimize risk and/or harm, fostering the comprehensive care and autonomy of individuals.

## Survivor

Refers to the capacities and resilience of individuals who have experienced some form of violence, highlighting their strength to rebuild their lives beyond traumatic experiences and the violation of their rights. It involves recognizing themselves as agents of change in their own lives.



## Victim

A person who has suffered some form of harm as a result of an act or continuum of violence, highlighting their position of vulnerability. From a legal perspective, this term emphasizes the violation of their human rights and/or the responsibility of the state and society to provide integral reparations for the harm caused.

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