



Commission for Gender Equality

Public Education and Information on Mental Health Awareness by the Commission for Gender Equality

Did you know July is Mental Health Awareness Month? According to the South African Society of Psychiatrists, South Africa is ranked tenth in the world for suicide rates, as the month comes to an end, we must reflect on the mental health issues that arise from gender inequalities and systemic injustices. Mental health is shaped by the conditions in which we live, work, and relate to others. When people face challenges such as unfair treatment, abuse, or poverty, it can lead to deep emotional distress. However, these struggles do not affect everyone in the same way. Women and girls often carry heavy emotional burdens due to violence and unequal treatment in many of the spaces they move through, including in their own homes. At the same time, it is important to recognise that people of all genders experience emotional burdens, but how they carry or express that pain can differ. Many people do not speak out about their feelings because they fear being judged, humiliated, or further victimised, especially men and the LGBTQIA+ individuals. In South Africa, men are four to five times more likely to die by suicide than women, while women report nearly twice as many suicide attempts. This reflects a serious gap in how humans respond to mental health challenges across gender lines. That is why Mental Health Awareness Month matters. It is a reminder that speaking about mental health does not make one weak. It makes us human. Feelings like sadness, fear, or confusion are natural responses to the pressures of life. We must support one another and ensure that no one feels shame, discrimination, or judgment for who they are or what they are going through. Open conversations and non-judgmental listening can help more than we realise. Have you been treated unfairly because of your gender or sexuality? Lodge a complaint at Gender-Enquiries@cge.org.za, download the complaint form from www.cge.org.za, or visit or call the CGE office in your province. For more information on the CGE, follow us on X: @CGE_ZA, Instagram: @cgelive,

and Facebook: Commission for Gender Equality. **Developed by:** Mihlemihle Zwane (KZN Intern) and Tracey Gumede (Education Officer in KwaZulu-Natal)

Reviewed and approved by:



31 July 2025

Koketso Sekhu

Acting Deputy Director: PEI



31 July 2025

Philisiwe Gabela

Head of Department: PEI