

a GINA-inspired guide to
feminism

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chapter 1
introduction to
feminism



lets talk about the **f** word



belief in and advocacy of the **political,
economic, and social equality of the
sexes expressed especially through
organized activity on behalf of **women's
rights and interests.****



- feminism defined by merriam webster dictionary



our message to you

feminism wants equality for all, and we at **GINA want equality for all. we want to challenge sexism, misogyny, oppression in our patriarchal society. this impacts sexual violence and abuse, and disproportionately affects women and girls.**

this resource has been carefully designed for you. at **GINA, we believe being feminists is important for our everyday lives and for individuals who have been subjected to sexual abuse and violence.**



your loving sister,

GINA

GINA's feminism

here at GINA, we stand with you. we believe in your truth; you are never alone. we celebrate individuality, rebellion and connection. we hope you navigate through this resource knowing you have all our love and support.

feminism and GINA come hand in hand. feminism believes how sexual violence and abuse is based in misogyny, gender inequality and a patriarchy society. fundamentally, through a feminist standpoint, we can challenge how society around us operates, thinks, and behaves.

GINA is a predominately women-based organisation. however we recognise any individual can be subjected to sexual violence and abuse. we welcome you. we want our feminism to be accessible and approachable, we welcome all those who have been subjected, we welcome all genders. this mirrors our feminism.



GINA's standpoint is that under a **feminist approach**, we recognise that women and girls are disproportionately impacted by sexual violence and abuse due to the **oppression, sexism, and misogyny** that is at play within our patriarchal society.

feminism and you

let us take time to **reflect** on our views. write honestly and openly about your **personal experiences**, when you're ready answer some questions or write your thoughts down on the following page. this page is yours and yours alone.

do you consider yourself a feminist?



why is feminism important to your life?

why is feminism particularly key to challenge sexual violence and abuse ?

what is feminism to you?

extra thoughts

a space for more
reflections...





chapter 2
misconceptions of
feminism



misconceptions of feminism

feminism has **many misconceptions and myths** that circulate in both whispers and booming voices. even friends and family can give you some strange looks when you talk about the subject. it can feel awkward, especially if you're **outnumbered or have your voice ignored**. misconceptions of feminism can often make it seem **less approachable, inclusive, and diverse**. in fact, feminism is disruptive and continually changing when we acknowledge how things can be wrong. we have come up with a little way to explain misconceptions and to offer food for thought to anyone who may have doubts or queries.

"I tend to hear all about the evil of feminism and the bad feminists: how "they" hate men; how "they" want to go against nature- and god; how "they are all lesbians; how "they" want to go against nature and god; how "they" are taking all the jobs and making the world hard for white men, who do not stand a chance".

bell hooks (Feminism is for everybody, 2000)



common misconceptions: part 1

feminists hate men...

feminism is **not a war against men**. however, it sees no place for misogyny or sexism, which is often socially rooted and linked with male views. there is a **need for co-operation** with men for all, but a fundamental part is the acknowledgment from men the sexism and misogyny in society and the **lived experiences** of women. **men are valuable allies in feminism**.

...feminism works alongside men

feminism only benefits women...

feminism brings **awareness** to issues affecting women primarily. throughout history, men have had greater rights than women, both in **legalisation and in real life**. as such, feminism is about wanting this equality, about having the same social, economic and political rights as anyone else - **not being a step behind, not being a step in front, but on the same path**. this is particularly prevalent in sexual violence abuse, and gender violence where women and girls are disproportionately impacted. feminism therefore does benefit men, it benefits society.

...feminism is equal rights



key notes

toxic masculinity is not inherent but is created and shaped by our societal and cultural norms. from childhood, we are taught about traditional gender roles. for example, the idea that boys should not show emotion or should act tough. but men should be open about their feeling without thinking this detracts 'manhood'. harbouring toxic ideas can impact how men view women and society. this can therefore impact feminism.

misandry means prejudice or hatred towards men. it is often thought to be the same as misogyny, but it is its counterpart. this has been a controversial topic within feminism, especially with men's rights activists.

"If a guy is put off by you being a feminist, you need to ask yourself how put off you are by someone who doesn't believe in equality for women."

— Laura Bates (*Girl Up*, 2016)

common misconceptions: part 2

key notes

our body is important to us. women's bodies have been subjected to sexualisation, degradation and desire simply for just existing. we have been told how to look, how thin to be, how to style ourselves, how to loose weight. let it be clear here for you: **you are beautiful, your body is beautiful and uniquely you. you do not owe anyone anything.**

model and actress, Emily Ratajkowski, recently wrote her first book: *My body, dealing with beauty, feminism, sexuality and the body*. it explains and reaffirms how **women feel shame about their body, sex, and sexuality due to misogynistic views on our body**. views are placed onto our body, without our consent and we often accept it as the norm. but our body it our own.

Emily acknowledges how she capitalised on her body being seen as a sex symbol, allowed it to influence her growth and her life. yet reflecting upon now, emily talks about how the commodification of her own body led to her to negate and dismiss experience she was having, for what her body was providing her. **our bodies are all special and important.**

all feminists are lesbians...

any gender and any sexuality can be a feminist. there is no limitation to who can be a feminist. feminists, in the same way as being stereotyped as hating men, have been **misconstrued as all being lesbians or undeserving of male love**. this misconception has been due to a rejection of heteronormativity and sexual desire for men in many queer women who are feminists. **you can be a feminist no matter your gender or sexuality. your sexuality does not make you any less of a feminist or deserving of love.**

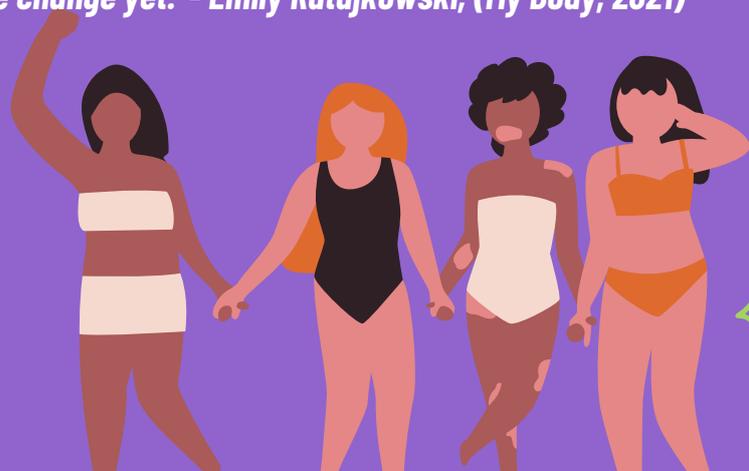
...feminism is for all no matter gender or sexuality

feminists don't shave...

body hair is a natural part of everyone's body, and importantly on every single woman's body. it is often a taboo topic. **armpit hair, leg hair, arm hair, belly hair, butt hair, pubic hair is all great!** the association with feminists not shaving is rooted in idealised beauty and societal expectations of 'womanhood'. our society regulates our actions both consciously and unknowingly especially through the media. a key tenet of feminism is the reclamation of your body, natural body hair is one part. body hair and pubic hair is completely normal, it is hygienic, it is your hair, and your choice.

...body hair is natural

"On a good day, I'd call people sexist who condemned a woman for capitalizing on her body. On a bad day, I'd hate myself and my body, and every decision I'd made in my life seemed like a glaring mistake. Mostly, though, I knew I was a whole, complex person with thoughts and ideas and things I wanted to make and say. I wanted so desperately to prove them all wrong. I just hadn't gotten the change yet." - Emily Ratajkowski, (My Body, 2021)



common misconceptions: part 3

all feminists agree..

feminism is not going to be the same for everyone. you can go on YouTube and find debates from women who identify as feminists and the range of views encompassed as feminism. in fact, **feminism is disruptive and continually changing** when we acknowledge how things can be wrong within it. points of debate within have been its racism, ableism, classism and homophobia. it is through disagreements in feminism, or in our everyday discussions about feminism with family, friends or strangers that feminism can adapt and change for the better. feminism is not a singular issue but is a spectrum that mirrors experience.

...feminism is a spectrum

feminism is elitist...

privilege is a very real thing in society and also throughout history. equally elitism and classism come hand in hand with privilege. we are all conditions of our environment, yet it is our responsibility to acknowledge privilege and see **how we can change**. intersectionality in feminism is therefore crucial and a necessity. having **diverse voices and representations** enables feminism to be accessible for all and not for the few. elitism in all manners of society does not cater for the whole population, it causes divide, upset, and a structure which helps to fuel inequality. feminism cannot be for the few, it is for everyone.

...feminism is for everyone



key notes

feminism is for everybody. some really useful terms to know are: **privilege, ageism,** and **ableism**. there is no space for these in feminism.

ageism means discriminating based on age. anyone can be a feminist regardless of age or generation.

ableism means discriminating towards non-abled bodied persons.

privilege, means having social advantages in society. for example **white privilege**, meaning increased opportunities or experiences due to race.

YouTube channels such as VICE or Jubilee have great debate videos. **debates on feminism** really highlight how inclusive and diverse feminism can be based on personal views or lived experiences.

"There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives."

- Audre Lorde (Learning from the 1960s, 1982)

thoughts, reflections & observations are welcome here...



3 misconceptions you might have

- _____
- _____
- _____

are there any other misconceptions you can think of? how have misconceptions effected your personal experience with feminism?

ask 3 people if they have any misconceptions

- _____
- _____
- _____

what can we do to solve these misconceptions?



chapter 3
a little history of
feminism



early beginnings of feminism

feminism has been developed, and changed throughout our history. feminism in all its forms can be seen across the global since very early beginnings. before we look at feminism now, lets look at the history of feminism. **the fight for women's equality has been long lasting and still is not ending.**



as early as **ancient Greece**, feminism was rumbling. in 400 BC, **Agnodice** was seen as one of the **first female gynaecologists**, and even faced the death penalty for practicing medicine.

in **11th century Norway**, some viking women were thought to be warriors or priests. one example is the **'Oseberg Queen'**, a highly decorated grave, filled with treasure and goods of a **highly respected Viking Woman**, possibly a queen.



in colonial Mexico, **Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz** in 1691 advocated for **women's rights for education**. Cruz has been described as latin america's first feminist, as a self taught poet, writer she published **poems and literature** which challenged the dominating **patriarchal and colonial society**.



"You foolish men who lay the guilt on women, not seeing you're the cause of the very thing you blame; if you invite their disdain with measureless desire why wish they well behave."

- Sor Juana Inés da le Cruz (You Foolish Men)

Mary Wollstonecraft, in her 1792 book *The Vindication of the Rights of Women*, **advocated for women to be able to access education**, as equally as men. she argued how women were treated inferior, a structure that did not benefit society. she is also the **mother of Mary Shelley**, author of *Frankenstein*.



"I do not wish [women] to have power over men; but over themselves."

- Wollenstonecraft (*The Vindication of the Rights of Women*, 1792)

the term 'waves' has been used to describe periods of feminism. it is a helpful way to talk about the different kind of activism or goals of feminism throughout our recent history. this connotation is also strongly associated with western feminism of the UK and USA.



first wave feminism

the 'First wave' of feminism is often drawn closely to women wanting **suffrage, equal voting rights as men**. Emmeline Pankhurst, leader of the WSPU, and Millicent Garrett Fawcett, leader of the NUWSS, were two prominent groups which fought for women's suffrage in the early twentieth century. with the imminence of the First World War, many women chose to help the **war effort** in the Homefront. the vote in England was passed in 1918 (with restrictions only women only 30 could vote), and 10 years later in 1928, voting became available to all women.

second wave feminism

second wave feminism broke away from having one single issue. one of the groups most prominent was called 'The Women's Liberation Movement' the type of activism involved in this movement were: protesting about **beauty contests, equal pay for women, reproductive rights, abortion rights and sexual health awareness, campaigns against violence against women, workers' rights, creation of nurseries, educational rights, race inequality, women in academic and in business** this movement also saw the birth of grass-root activist groups and grass-root publications.

third wave feminism

third wave feminism is noted to start in the 1990s. this movement sought to take inspiration from its predecessors yet make feminism **more inclusive**, most prominently using **Kimberlee Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality**. taking up on issues such as **sexual harassment, reproductive rights, women in media and culture, sex positivity and inclusivity**. activist groups such as **Guerrilla Girls**, and members of the **Riot Grrrl** movement heavily utilised the media in order to spread their message. this wave however still was not inclusive to transgender women.

fourth wave feminism

fourth wave feminism is what we are living in now. the development of **intersectionality** has strongly grown, to encompass the continued experiences of racism and transphobia. in particular activism against **the structural way society seeks to disadvantage women of colour and transgender women**. social movements have carved out much of this wave. activism against sexual abuse and violence has gained prominence with corresponding **social media movements** such as MeToo which has been propelled by online visibility.



before, we get into our feminism now, let's have a look at some key moments of feminism through the globe in this timeline. reminder- this is only a select few.



- 1851 • Ain't I A Woman' speech by Sojourner Truth at women's rights convention in Akron, Ohio.
- 1888 • International Council of Women created.
- 1911 • First International Women's Day! Founding of Japanese all- women's journal Seitō.
- 1923 • Egyptian Feminist league created.
- 1928 • Full Suffrage Achieved for women in the UK.
- 1929 • Aba women's riot in Nigeria.
- 1945 • Lucila Godoy Alcayaga, first Latin American, Chilean, woman to win a noble prize for literature.
- 1961 • Introduction of contraceptive pill, later abortion becomes legalised in the UK in 1967.
- 1973 • Brixton's Black Women's Group is formed. Rape Crisis Founded in the UK.
- 1976 • Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Act
- 1981 • Greenham Common Peace Camp created in the UK.
- 1983 • Women of colour finally are allowed to vote in South Africa.
- 1997 • Unity Dow beomes the first woman to be appointed as the High Court Judge in Bostwana.
- 2006 • Formation of the Gulabi Gang, formed by Sampat Pal Devi in the Banda District of Uttar Pradesh in Northern India.
- 2018 • Hyehwa Station riot in South Korea, protesting against use of spy cameras in women's bathrooms.
- 2021 • Protest for the memory of Sara Everard, Clapham Common.



now we hand this over to you! add moments, events, people who you think should be on this on the left hand side. it is now your turn to make sure history is remembered.



a look back to Birmingham

as GINA is a Birmingham based company, how was feminism of the 1970s happening in Birmingham, a time where feminism was thriving with the Women's Liberation Movement ?



in the wider city

in **Balsall Heath**, a **Women's Liberation Playgroup** utilised feminist beliefs to teach children; historian Catherine Hall was one of the women who led this important group.

many **pubs in the city centre** held meetings for feminists, **queer feminists** utilised gay male's communities as well as joined feminist meetings. **Gay Birmingham Remembered**, is a fantastic LGBTQ project which recorded the experiences of gay men and women in Birmingham's history.

the fight for **abortion rights** was strong in Birmingham having one of the highest refusal of abortions by doctors in the country.

Birmingham was and still is home to organisations for feminist, gendered violence, sexual abuse and violence. this includes **our sister RSVP**, Women's Aid and a Rape Crisis Centre.

in particular, Birmingham was a centre for **counter culture groups** and **zine print** productions, which all aided feminist art and print to be materialised.

want to know more about Birmingham? check out these links:

Activist Selly Oak

Gay Birmingham Remembered

Sisterhood and After Project

S. Guru, Birmingham Black Sisters (Critical Social Policy, 2020).



feminism at the Uiveristy of Birmingham

one of the major campaigns at the University of Birmingham was towards '**Carnival Rag Queen**', a form of sexist beauty pageant. in protest, feminists rallied outside the event often with **pickets**. the activism against Carnival Queen was even documented in Redbrick, the **student newspaper**. as well as campaigning against sexist events on campus, feminist students were involved in setting up a **nursery on campus**, **lobbying for equal pay** as well as **free abortion**.

feminism now at the university

actively participating in campaigns, students at the University of Birmingham have rallied for '**Reclaim the Night**' **marches** and joined in on **staff strikes to support staff for gender inequality**. redbrick recently has **published accounts of sexual harassment**, following the murders of Sara Everard and Sabina Nessa, to showcase how 97% of all women have received sexual harassment. check out Redbrick newspaper on the university website for latest news on feminist activism at the university.

spotlight on the Birmingham Black Sisters

leading from Organisation of Women of Asian and African Descent, Birmingham Black Sisters focused on **antiracism**, **anti-colonialism** and **anti-sexism** with a mix of working class black and Asian women, founded in 1982.

BBS worked towards not only issues of feminism but issues which encompasses class related politics such as **occupation**, **pay** and **trade unions**. as well the group fought against **unlawful deportation cases**, particularly with West Midlands Anti-Deportation Campaign.



your local feminist history

now you have learnt a bit about Birmingham's local history why not find out about your own feminist history or something which particularly interests you. this could be where you live, where you go to university, a group or person! this is a way to put the importance of feminism into a local or personal context of our local and everyday lives.

investigate away!



activism against sexual violence and abuse

with the emergence of feminism, in particular second wave feminism starting in the 1960s, sexual abuse and violence was being challenged, addressed, and framed with feminist work. feminists called for the women's voice to be heard, putting women at the forefront. feminism wants to give individuals a voice, in particular individuals subjected to sexual violence and abuse. campaigns against violence and sexual violence of women was one of the main issues of second wave feminism and continues to be one of the most pressing issues today.

STAND & FIGHT
STAND & FIGHT
STAND & FIGHT
STAND & FIGHT
STAND & FIGHT

GINA's standpoint is that under a feminist approach, we recognise how women and girls are disproportionately impacted by sexual violence and abuse due to the oppression, sexism, misogyny that is at play within our patriarchal society. we love and support you.

key notes

the first **rape crisis** organisation was established in **1973** and is a feminist organisation, which promotes awareness of sexual violence and abuse and call for its elimination. the organisation is a women-only space for women and girls. these networks particularly **worked alongside Southall Black Sister's and Shakti Women's Aid**, which were led by ethnic minorities. Rape Crisis now is a group of centres networked across the uk, helping women and men.

Women's Aid, national charity, was set up to help end domestic violence and abuse in **1974**.

our **sister, RSVP** (rape and sexual violence project) is a large, specialist sexual violence and abuse charity, which was **established in 1978 starting in Birmingham**, operating in Birmingham, Solihull and in the West Midlands.

organisations such as **SurvivorsUk** are critical to help **male individuals subjected to sexual abuse and violence**.



what is sexual violence and abuse?

sexual violence is a term that is used to describe unwanted, non-consented sexual activity. rape occurs and happens when someone did not give their consent for sex. similar to the definition of sexual violence, sexual abuse is the term used to describe unwanted and non-consented sexual activity. this can also be image-based sexual abuse, 'up-skirting', distribution of nudes and sexual images, and revenge porn. This can be experienced by any gender and sexuality.

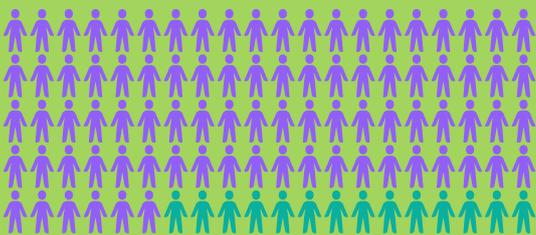
how does feminism work with these campaigns?

sexual violence and abuse disproportionately effects women and girls. gender-based violence, assault, abuse and violence is intrinsically linked to how women and girls face inequality in day to day life. Improving the social and economic equal will help us fight sexism, sexual violence and abuse together. here is feminism is crucial. feminism wants to end this inequality.

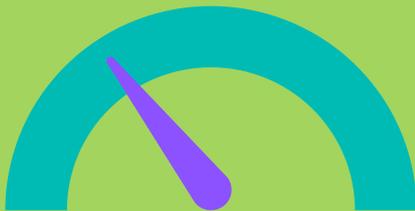
the importance of myth busting

there are harmful and dangerous stereotypes attached to sex, sexual abuse and violence, just like how there are misconceptions and myths of feminism. here at GINA, we reject these myths that are harmful to individuals subjected to sexual abuse and violence, we challenge all forms of victim blaming, misconceptions and myths. misinformation damages individuals and society. check out our resources attached.

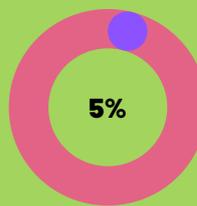
here are some statistics to gage the impact of sexual abuse and violence on women. data is from rapecrisis.



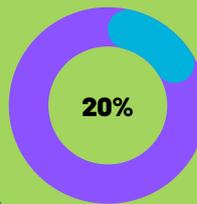
86% of women who experience rape or assault by penetration (or attempts) as an adult know the perpetrator. The same is true for 60% of men



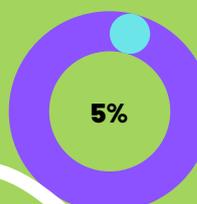
31% of young women aged 18-24 report having experienced sexual abuse in childhood.



1 in 20 children in the UK as a whole have experienced sexual abuse involving physical contact.



1 in 5 (20%) of women have been subjected to sexual abuse and violence as adults.

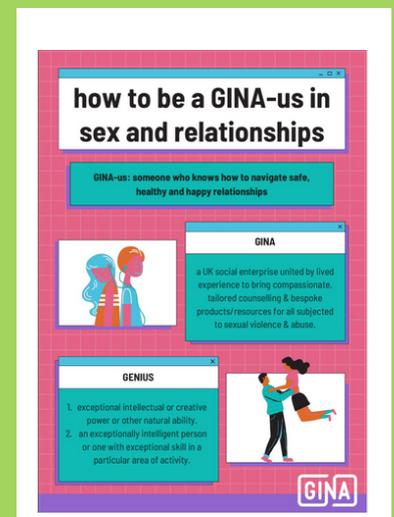


1 in 20 (5%) men have been subjected to sexual abuse and violence as adults.

our sister RSVP, have a brilliant resource on myths on sexual abuse and violence. likewise, our own GINA resources has a excellent information guide to sex and relationships. we hope that along with our feminist resources, these can help you.



Breaking The Myths About Sexual Abuse





Kindly printed through the

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**COMMUNITY
PRINT PROJECT**

**thank you for reading
a GINA-inspired guide to
feminism**

