



TOXIC FEMININITY - WHAT IT IS AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT.



We hear a lot about toxic masculinity, but have you ever heard of toxic femininity?



It's not as widely discussed, but it's **just as important.**

Toxic femininity refers to the **pressures placed on women to fit outdated gender roles that can actually be harmful.**

It affects not just women but everyone around them. **Let's break it down in a way that makes sense.**



WHAT IS TOXIC FEMININITY?

Toxic femininity is when women are expected to act in ways that society considers “traditionally feminine,” even when it’s not good for them.

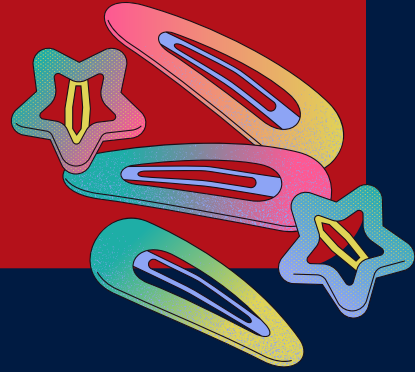
It can show up in different ways, such as:

- **The “Perfect Woman” Pressure:** Feeling like you always have to be sweet, selfless, and put others first, even when it’s exhausting.
- **Judging Women for Their Choices:** Whether it’s about career, relationships, or motherhood, women who don’t follow the “expected” path often face criticism.
- **Using Femininity as a Weapon:** Playing helpless or overly fragile to get what you want reinforces negative stereotypes about women.
- **Girl vs. Girl Mentality:** Gossiping, tearing other women down, and competing instead of supporting each other.
- **Unrealistic Beauty Standards:** The pressure to always look perfect, whether it’s through filters, dieting, or cosmetic procedures, can take a toll on self-esteem.





HOW BARBIE EXPOSES TOXIC FEMININITY



One of the most recent and powerful pop culture moments to highlight toxic femininity is the **Barbie movie starring Margot Robbie.**

While **Barbie** has long **been associated with unrealistic beauty standards**, the film cleverly flips this narrative by exploring how societal pressures shape both women and men.





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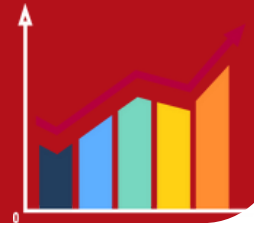
Barbie's Existential Crisis: In the movie, Barbie starts off in a “perfect” world where everything is pink, fun, and idealistic. But when she steps into the real world, she quickly realizes how impossible it is to live up to the expectations placed on women—whether it’s about looks, behavior, or success.

The Pressure to Be Everything: The film highlights how women are often expected to be smart but not intimidating, beautiful but not vain, successful but humble—a balance that’s exhausting and unattainable.

Female Competition: The tension between different versions of Barbie and how they interact reflects real-life struggles among women—whether it’s about beauty, status, or personal choices. Instead of uplifting each other, women are sometimes pushed to compete or judge one another.

Ken's Role & Gender Expectations: The movie also flips the script on gender roles, showing how toxic masculinity and toxic femininity go hand in hand. Just as women feel pressured to be perfect, men like Ken feel pressured to be dominant or powerful, revealing that gender expectations harm everyone.

LET'S LOOK AT THE STATISTICS:



TO CREATE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE IMPACT TOXIC FEMININITY HAS ON SOCIETY, WE HAVE GATHERED SOME STATISTICS:



Research on Irish men reveals that **2 in 5** hold ‘**traditionalist**’ views.

Key findings include:

- **52%** agree or are unsure that “men who don’t dominate in relationships aren’t real men.”
- **54%** believe “a man’s worth is measured by power and control over others.”
- **46%** think “real men shouldn’t care about women’s opinions or feelings.”
- Among these ‘Traditionalist’ men, **70%** feel women’s issues are exaggerated.
- ‘Traditionalists’ are more likely to be younger men, with **67%** being in their twenties.
- **1 in 5 young women** in Ireland have been subjected to intimate relationship abuse
- **51%** of young women affected experienced the abuse under the age of 18
- **9 in 10 of the young women** who were abused experienced emotional abuse

HOW CAN WE CHANGE

IT?



**THE GOOD NEWS? WE DON'T HAVE TO FOLLOW THESE
OUTDATED EXPECTATIONS. HERE'S HOW WE CAN PUSH
BACK:**

Be Yourself: You don't have to fit into a mold—whether you're soft and nurturing or bold and independent, your identity is yours to define.

Support Other Women: There's room for everyone to succeed! Let's build each other up instead of competing.

Challenge Beauty Standards: No one looks like an Instagram filter in real life, and that's okay.

Speak Up: If you see someone shaming a woman for her choices, call it out.



Toxic femininity is something we can change by being aware of it and choosing to live in ways that are true to us—not based on outdated expectations.

Have you ever felt pressured to act a certain way because of your gender?

What did you think of the Barbie movie's take on these issues?

Drop a comment below and let's start the conversation!



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