

A Critical Examination of Gender-Based Violence and its Mental Health Impacts

The evidence is unequivocal that gender-based violence (GBV) (including domestic violence, rape, and sexual assault) is a major public health issue. Women's health is disproportionately impacted by GBV. Our research focuses on the associations between gender-based violence, trauma, social factors and common mental disorders, PTSD, suicide, and poor functioning. Our work examines prevalence, risk and protective factors, mechanisms linking exposure to disorders, and interventions to prevent GBV. GBV is indeed a preventable public health issue, and yet gender inequality, the most cited foundation for GBV, remains the last bastion of change. Gender inequality and inequity are often referred to without a critical examination of what they mean in practice in the GBV and mental health context. Without a critical examination of the components of gender inequality, how will we most efficiently make changes to protect women from men's violence? In this presentation we reflect on research evidence and dissect key issues of importance to GBV prevention and intervention principles. We focus on notions of empowerment, silencing, coercive control, power and patriarchy and men's trauma and the perpetration of violence.

The School of Public Health
and Community Medicine

SPHCM Seminar Invitation

Wednesday 22nd July

12:00 - 1:00 pm

[Seminar is available by
Teams Meeting Link](#)

Venue: Seminar is available by [Teams Meeting Link](#)

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Recorded Seminars are available on the [SPHCM website](#)

Organisation: Seminars organised by Professor Robyn Richmond. Higher Degree student seminars organised by Poshan Thapa School of Public Health and Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, UNSW Sydney, NSW 2052, Australia |

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About the presenters

Susan Rees is an Associate Professor and full-time academic in the School of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, University of New South Wales, Australia. Her research focus is the mental health of conflict and disaster affected populations and gender-based violence. She has previously worked as an advocate and practitioner in the domestic violence sector, and in government and policy roles related to domestic violence, women's health, and service development. She has strong connections with community and government agencies. She leads domestic violence research projects in Timor-Leste and Tanzania, and NHMRC-funded Australian projects including a cohort study examining mental health and domestic violence in conflict-affected and Australian born women and an empowerment and mental health intervention with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and Adolescents. She is a member of the Faculty of Medicine Gender Equity Interest Group, and a member of the UNSW Gender Violence Research Network.



Ruth Wells is a Research Fellow in the Trauma and Mental Health Unit, School of Psychiatry, UNSW, and a Clinical Psychology Registrar. She works with Susan Rees on her cohort study with women examining mental health and domestic violence. Their research focuses on understanding the social and cultural processes that shape individual and community responses to trauma, conflict and displacement. Ruth brings an intersectional feminist framework to both clinical and research practice. This framework seeks to challenge the gendered, racist and colonising principles that have historically underpinned the fields of psychiatry and psychology. She conducts participatory research with displaced communities in Australia, Turkey, Jordan, Iraq and Bangladesh with a focus on how gendered social roles are impacted by trauma and the role this plays in domestic violence. She is on the editorial board of *The Activist Practitioner*, a publication for mental health practitioners which seeks to bring critical feminist and decolonising frameworks into everyday clinical practice.

