

Daily acts of sexism go unnoticed by men, women

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Nearly everyone can recognize the stereotypical scene of construction workers catcalling women as being sexist, but both men and women tend to overlook the more subtle daily acts of sexism they encounter, according to a recent study from *Psychology of Women Quarterly* (published by SAGE on behalf of the Society for the Psychology of Women, Division 35 of the American Psychological Association).

Things such as calling women "girls" but not calling men "boys" or referring to a collective group as "guys" are forms of subtle [sexism](#) that creep into daily interactions. The study helps not only identify which forms of sexism are most overlooked by which sex, but also how noticing these acts can change people's [attitudes](#).

"Women endorse sexist beliefs, at least in part, because they do not attend to subtle, aggregate forms of sexism in their personal lives," wrote authors Julia C. Becker and Janet K. Swim. "Many men not only lack attention to such incidents but also are less likely to perceive sexist incidents as being discriminatory and potentially harmful for women."

The study goes on to differentiate the way men and women's beliefs change once they become aware of subtle sexism. Women need to "see the unseen," the authors note, to make corrections, whereas men need not only to be aware of the sexist behavior or comments, but also to feel [empathy](#) for the women targeted. These results are consistent with other studies which found that empathy is an effective method for reducing racial and ethnic prejudice.

More information: The article "Seeing the Unseen: Attention to Daily Encounters with Sexism as Way to Reduce Sexist Beliefs" in Psychology of Women Quarterly is available free for a limited time at:

pwq.sagepub.com/content/35/2/227.full.pdf+html

Provided by SAGE Publications

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