

GENDER STEREOTYPING AGE 11-14



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Negative gender stereotyping affects people's human rights and freedoms. It limits people's choices and opportunities, and can manifest into discrimination, bullying and abuse. Tackling this issue is important so young people feel confident and learn that there are a number of different factors that contribute towards a person's identity.

This session looks at gender stereotypes in society and if they're fair. Students question and break down gender-related perceptions, including their own, and discuss ways to stand up for gender equality in their school and community.

This is part of our Women's Rights and Gender Equality resource materials.

**WOMEN'S
RIGHTS
AND
GENDER
EQUALITY**

Aims

- To identify and question gender stereotypes and the harm they may cause
- To learn about rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- To consider actions that can be taken to stand up to gender inequality

You will need

Internet connection and video playback

Sticky notes

Handout: Universal Declaration of Human Rights – Summary

INTRODUCTION 10 minutes

Tell the class that you will be talking about gender and stereotypes. Can anyone define these key terms? If not, explain, do card matching or ask students to create a mind-map of their understanding.

KEY TERMS

Gender

Gender is a way of classifying people. Often expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity, gender is largely culturally determined and is assumed from the sex assigned at birth.

Gender identity

A person's innate sense of their own gender, whether male, female or non-binary (see definition below), which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth.

Gender expression

This is how someone expresses their gender. Some people still judge people on how they think their gender 'should' act.

Non-binary

An umbrella term for people whose identity falls outside of 'male' or 'female'. Some people do not identify wholly or at all with the gender they were assigned at birth. Some people have no gender at all.

Intersex

Someone born with anatomical, hormonal and/or chromosomal variations in their sex characteristics. Some intersex people self-define as trans or non-binary, others with the gender they were assigned at birth.

Transgender

A gender identity and umbrella term for people whose gender differs from, or does not sit comfortably within, the sex they were assigned at birth. A trans woman is a woman who was assigned male at birth. A trans man is a man who was assigned female at birth.

Stereotype

A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular person or thing.

Discrimination

The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, for example on the grounds of race, age or sex.

Gender stereotype

A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular gender.

Gender inequality

The inequality between men and women in terms of wealth, income and status.

Gender-neutral

Something that is not associated with either women or men – but people in general, for example gender-neutral words such as person and not he or she, and gender-neutral colours and toys.

Prompt questions:

- What is a stereotype?
- Can the class share any examples of stereotyping? For instance, boys are better at football than girls; teenagers are disrespectful; scientists are male; women like to shop and gossip.
- Do they actually believe this is true?
- Where do stereotypes come from?

**TASK 1 15 minutes****Challenging gender stereotypes**

Now explain that you will be talking about gender stereotypes – generally accepted ideas or presumptions about how people should act – and how these stereotypes affect the way people are looked upon and treated.

Work as a class or divide students into groups. Write the words Girl, Any Gender, Boy on the board in columns and ask students or groups to do the same on sticky notes.

In groups of four, ask them to write down descriptions of each, how they're supposed to act, look, feel, play. What mannerisms and hobbies would they have? What sports, subjects, careers would they be good at?

Ask the class to share their responses and compare what they wrote.

- What are the differences in the descriptions or words used?
- Why do you think this?
- What assumptions were made and why?
- Do a lot of the descriptions fit into 'Any gender'?

The purpose is to show that we make snap judgements based on how people look – and one of the most notable ways we do this is by looking at gender expression. It can be conscious or unconscious and can result in some genders being treated differently or being offered different opportunities.

Reiterate that some people are also non-binary, intersex or transgender, and don't fall into any of these categories. If necessary, repeat the definitions from above.

Personal experiences

Ask pairs to share an experience of when they have been expected to behave, dress, talk or respond a certain way because of their gender.

What happened?

Was this a usual or unusual incident?

How did it make them feel?

How did they react?

What would they change, if anything, and why?

Did anyone speak up for them? How could others have helped?

Follow up questions

Do they think that different genders are very different?

Why are gender stereotypes likely to be inaccurate?

How can they make sure that people are treated equally and avoid stereotyping? Take feedback and list actions on the board.

TASK 2 10 minutes

How we treat people

Imagine you are babysitting a three-year-old girl. What activities would you plan?

What would you do for a three-year-old boy?

Was there a difference between the plans? Why?

Watch this BBC clip *Girl toys v boy toys: The Experiment* which shows how gender affects how people treat babies (YouTube, search title, 3:25 mins).

How do you think these issues may cause people to be treated differently?

Do you think some differences between genders are due to nature or nurture? Why?

TASK 3 20 minutes

Impact on girls and women

Now students are aware of gender stereotypes, explain that the class will think about the impact these assumptions have on the rights of girls and women and what they do.

What rights do you think all people should be entitled to? Refer to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights – Summary*.

Are there any rights they think are currently denied to women or men? Are there any you think should apply only to men or women?



Eleanor Roosevelt holds up the Universal Declaration of Human Rights © UN Photo

Highlight the rights women are more likely to be denied in orange, and men in yellow.

Does the balance seem fair to you?

Explain that everywhere in the world women face abuse and discrimination because of their gender. For instance, imagine being told you can't go to school, being forced to marry someone three times your age, and not being able to make choices about your body – just because you are a girl. Is there anything girls have been told that they can't do? Is there anything the class think girls can't do?

Ask them to make a list of the rights that gender stereotyping affects.

Emphasise the link between gender stereotyping and gender inequality. Read out the statements and ask them to sort them into True or False.

Globally:

Women account for less than 7 per cent of the world's leaders

One in four seats in national parliaments is held by a woman

Women are paid 16 per cent less than men with women paid up to 35 per cent less than men in some countries

One in four managers are women

Thirty per cent of climate negotiators are women, and only 13 per cent of peace negotiators

An estimated 32 million girls of primary school age are out of school

One in every five girls is married before reaching age 18

Gender-based violence affects one in three women

Source: UN Women; United Nations Population Fund

Reveal that all of these statements are actually true. Do they think this is fair? Why? What actions can we do to ensure equal treatment of all genders?

TASK 4 10 minutes

Make a start

Make a list of ways in which gender stereotypes are promoted, for example with toys, on TV and online, in books, newspapers and songs, peer group pressure, adult expectations. Ask students to come up with five suggestions, in priority order, about how to stop such stereotyping being reinforced. For example, using neutral language choices, being mindful about colour choices, openly challenging gender discrimination.

FINALLY... 5 minutes

Watch this clip *Like a girl* (YouTube, search title, 3:18 mins)

Discuss how it makes you feel.

Now imagine you overhear someone say: 'You run like a girl' or 'Boys will be boys'.

How would you respond?

What would you say?

Through this feedback, encourage your class to assert themselves if they see unfair treatment based on gender.

EXTENSION

What small everyday actions could you and the school take to achieve gender equality?

Visit www.amnesty.org.uk/actions and take action on one of Amnesty International's current campaigns where women's rights are at risk or are being abused.

SUMMARY UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

- 1 We are born free and equal, and should treat others in the same way.
- 2 We have all these rights in the Declaration, no matter who we are, where we're from or what we believe in.
- 3 We have the right to life, and to be free and feel safe.
- 4 Nobody has any right to make us a slave. We cannot make anyone else our slave.
- 5 Nobody has any right to hurt, torture or humiliate us.
- 6 Everyone has the right to be protected by the law.
- 7 The law is the same for everyone. It must treat us all fairly.
- 8 We can all ask for the law to help us when we are not treated fairly.
- 9 Nobody has the right to put us in prison, or to send us away from our country, without good reasons.
- 10 If we are accused of breaking the law, we have the right to a fair and public trial.
- 11 Nobody should be blamed for doing something until it has been proved that they did it.
- 12 Nobody has the right to enter our home, open our letters or bother us or our families without a good reason.
- 13 We all have the right to go where we want to in our own country and to travel abroad as we wish.
- 14 If someone hurts us, we have the right to go to another country and ask for protection.
- 15 We all have the right to belong to a country.
- 16 When we are legally old enough, we have the right to marry and have a family.
- 17 Everyone has the right to own things or share them.
- 18 We all have the right to our own thoughts and to believe in any religion.
- 19 We can all think what we like, say what we think and share ideas and information with other people.
- 20 We all have the right to meet our friends and work together in peace to defend our rights. It is wrong to force someone to belong to a group.
- 21 We all have the right to take part in the government of our country. Every grown up should be allowed to vote to choose their own leaders.
- 22 The place where we live should help us to develop and to make the most of all the advantages (culture, work, social welfare) on offer. Music, art, craft and sport are for everyone to enjoy.
- 23 Every grown up has the right to a job, to a fair wage and to join a trade union.
- 24 We all have the right to rest and free time.
- 25 We all have the right to a decent living standard, including enough food, clothing, housing and medical help if we are ill. Mothers and children and people who are old, out of work or disabled have the right to be cared for.
- 26 We all have the right to education.
- 27 We have the right to share in our community's arts and sciences, and any good they do.
- 28 There must be peace and order to protect these rights and freedoms, and we can enjoy them in our country and all over the world.
- 29 We have a duty to other people, and we should protect their rights and freedoms.
- 30 Nobody can take away these rights and freedoms from us.

This version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been simplified by Amnesty International UK and is especially useful for younger people. Download a full version at www.amnesty.org.uk/universal