

Stereotypical Person

Overview: This activity establishes what a stereotype is and highlights the stereotypes that young people are aware of and how they feel about them. It is important to provide a safe and open space with no judgement. Establish a shared understanding of the expectations about respectful listening and encouraging responses and discussions.

Aim

To increase understanding of how stereotypes can put pressure on young people.

To highlight that each person is unique and difference is natural.

Links to the Curriculum

HWB

0-01a, 1-01a, 2-01a, 3-01a, 4-01a
0-09a, 1-09a, 2-09a, 3-09a, 4-09a
0-10a, 1-10a, 2-10a, 3-10a, 4-10a
0-11a, 1-11a, 2-11a, 3-11a, 4-11a

LIT

0-02a, 1-02a, 2-02a, 3-02a, 4-02a

Preparation

- Drawing materials (pencils, pens, paper etc...)
- Individually or in groups

Activity

- Split class into groups/pairs/individual and ask them to draw a stereotypical boy or girl* and leave space around the outside of their person
- It is worth considering that if given free choice often the boys will draw boys and the girls will draw girls, it is sometimes beneficial to get children to think about the opposite gender stereotypes. You could either allocate whether they will draw a boy or a girl.
- You can of course give them free choice and then do the activity again but ask them to think about the opposite gender from the previous activity
- Then ask them to do the following;
 1. Name their person
 2. Around the outside of their person can they write what their likes/dislikes are?
 3. Next to their name, write what job they will do when they are older.
 4. Finally, ask them to write what expectations might exist around appearance according to stereotypes (pressures around body image, dress, presentation, expectations on genders to look a certain way, etc.)

Discussion

- Ask the class to leave their pictures where they are and do a 'Gallery Walk'
- When back in their own seats, did they notice anything about the boys/girls? Had all the girls been given long hair? Were the boys all wearing sports clothes?

- Pick up on some of the language used to describe the people, the likes/dislikes, the jobs.
- Ask the class if they feel they fit into these stereotypes? Do they feel pressure to adhere to them? By who? What are the consequences if they do not adhere to these stereotypes?
- Is there anything the class can do to challenge these stereotypes and ensure that everyone has freedom of identity and expression?

*When asking them to choose a gender, it is better in this case to encourage them to stick to the binary (i.e. boys and girls), as most gender stereotypes are embedded in this binary notion of gender. Including stereotypes about transgender people in the first part of the activity can potentially be unsafe and exposing for transgender young people in class. Afterwards you can discuss the wider impact on people of all genders.