

Gender stereotypes

Duration: 45 minutes

Learning objective:

To critically assess and challenge gender stereotypes and understand how these can be harmful in relationships

Learning outcomes:

- I can explain what gender stereotypes are and how they can be harmful
- I can describe the effect gender stereotypes can have on relationships
- I can evaluate ways of challenging gender stereotypes

Resources:

- Ask-it-basket
- Slides: Gender stereotypes
- Handout: Gender stereotypes symbols (optional communication tool to support additional learning needs)

Before using this resource, it is your responsibility to ensure that:

- You have read all of the advice in the '*Respecting me, you, us* introduction and guidance' document.
- You have considered adapting the content to meet the needs and characteristics of individuals, or the class as a whole. We recommend using:
 - **Key vocabulary** lists and **alternative activities** to support young people with different learning needs.
 - **Extension activities** and **optional homework** to support young people who finish the activities quickly, or need further challenge.
 - **Editable worksheets** and **slides** to make content changes for young people with special educational needs or difficulties.
(Further information can be found on [page 4-6](#) of the introduction document)
- You are following your organisation's policies and procedures for safeguarding and delivering Relationships and Sex Education.



- The designated person responsible for safeguarding in your setting is aware that you are delivering this resource.

Key vocabulary

Gender stereotypes: gender stereotypes are ideas about how males and females 'should' behave.

Stereotype: a fixed belief or idea about a particular type of person or thing.

Behaviour: the way someone acts.

Appearance: the way someone or something looks.

Emotion: a strong feeling.

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

Slide 2. Introduce the learning objectives and outcomes for this lesson. Explain that the lesson is about gender stereotypes. Explain that:

- Gender stereotypes are ideas about how people 'should' behave based on their gender.
- People do not always identify with binary genders (for example, boy or girl), but stereotypes of boys and girls can be harmful for everyone.

Slide 3. Share the ground rules, adding any additional rules that are relevant.

Introduce the **Ask-it-basket**. Explain that young people can write questions anonymously and then put them in the box at any time throughout the lesson or as exit cards. Let young people know when you will answer important questions (this could be at the end of the lesson or at another point over the next week. For example, schools may wish to answer these during form time). Remind young people that the ground rules also apply to the use of the Ask-it-basket.

2. Baseline activity – Gender expectations (10 minutes)

Slide 4. Ask young people to create a mind map about the different expectations boys and girls might have placed on them. Young people may wish to use the prompt questions on the slide to help them.

Explain that it is ok if they can't think of what to put or are unsure of their answers, as this will be revisited at the end of the lesson.



Ask young people to share their ideas about the different gender expectations that exist. Responses might include potentially harmful stereotypes such as:

- Behaviour – girls should be quieter, less outspoken and exhibit more caring behaviours. Boys should be more outspoken, aggressive and dominant, and engage in more physical activities.
- Relationships – girls are expected to be more clingy and romantic. Boys shouldn't be sappy or romantic. Boys should make the first move.
- Appearance – girls should care more about their appearance, wear make-up and wear dresses/skirts. Boys should care less about their appearance, should have visible muscles, and wear the 'right' clothing brands.
- Feelings and emotions – girls are expected to express feelings more freely and are generally expected to be more emotional. Boys should hide their emotions and 'man up'.

3. Harms of gender stereotypes (5 minutes)

Slide 5. Explain that:

Expectations about how boys and girls 'should' be are often called gender stereotypes.

Gender stereotypes can be harmful to everyone, even when they might look to be fine or positive on the surface. This is because:

- They can stop people being and expressing themselves.
- Lots of people go along with them without questioning or challenging them.
- They can cause problems in relationships.

Slide 6. Using their answers from the baseline activity mind map, ask young people to share how they think these gender stereotypes could harm people's relationships. Discussion may cover the ways that gender stereotypes can cause an imbalance in relationships, such as:

- Boys feel that they always have to pay for dates
- Boys feel that they can't be share their feelings and be vulnerable with their partner
- Girls feel like they can't make the first move
- Girls don't want to express how they feel about the other person as they fear being judged as 'clingy'



4. Film - Gender stereotypes in relationships (15 minutes)

Slide 7. Play the 'Gender stereotypes' film. The film depicts Finn struggling to express his feelings to his girlfriend Zara.

At the pause points, ask young people to discuss answers to the questions (possible responses shown under each question):

Pause point 1 - What do you think is stopping Finn telling Zara how he feels?

- He doesn't want her to worry
- He thinks he 'should' be able to manage his stress alone
- He doesn't think he should show his emotions

Pause point 2 - What gender stereotypes are shown here?

- Boys should 'man up' and not speak about their emotions
- Girls gossip
- Girls are clingy and emotional

Feedback thoughts as a class before playing the remaining sections of the video.

Slide 8. When the film has finished, ask the class to share their views on the following question: *How have Finn and Zara benefitted from talking to each other about how they feel?*

- Finn realises that his friends were wrong and the best thing is to talk honestly with Zara about how he feels.
- Zara is relieved that Finn is being honest about how he feels.
- They can support each other through the stress of exams and Finn doesn't have to manage his stress alone.

5. Challenging gender stereotypes (5 minutes)

Slide 9. Explain that Finn's actions and behaviours showed that, initially, he was negatively influenced by gender stereotypes.

Explain that it can often be difficult to challenge gender stereotypes due to:

- Continually seeing and hearing messages that tell people to think and act that way (These might be at home, at school, online or on TV)
- People feeling (or knowing) that they'll be teased or bullied for going against them
- People thinking that everyone else buys into or believes them



Slide 10. Ask young people to think about what could help people to challenge gender stereotypes in themselves or others. Create a whole class list and discuss answers as a class.

Slide 11. Summarise some key ways people can challenge gender stereotypes, including:

- Talking about them with friends and family – what do other people really think?
- Recognising and challenging their own thoughts or behaviour
- Calling out gender stereotypical behaviour (when it is safe to do so)
- Thinking critically about social media and TV programmes or films that communicate these messages (Asking themselves what they think about it. Is that true or real?)

6. Responding to gender stereotypes (5 mins)

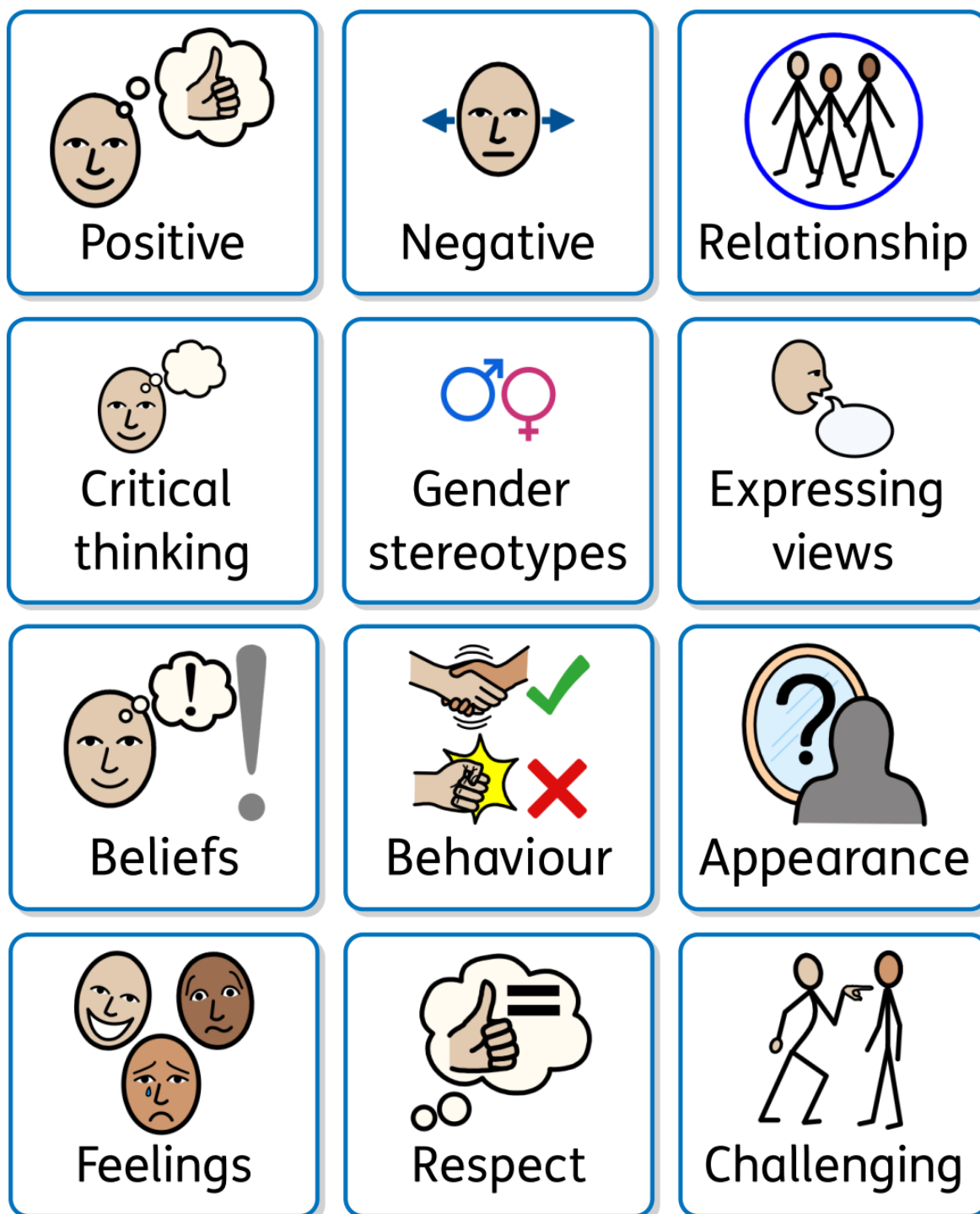
Slide 12. Finn's friends displayed harmful attitudes about how boys should act in relationships, this is shown in the messages on the slide.

Ask young people to write a new text reply showing how Finn's friends should have responded once he expressed his feelings. This message should show that they understand how Finn might be feeling and letting him know that there are many places he can go to for help if he needs it.

Slide 13. Explain that there are sources of support available to young people who are worried about something that's happened to them or others.



Handout: Gender stereotypes symbols (optional)



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