

# Gender Respect Project

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For further information see:  
<http://www.decsy.org.uk>  
OR  
<http://genderrespect2013.wordpress.com>

## Addressing Gender Stereotypes

**Age group:** KS3/4 (ages 11-16)

**Format:** series of lessons

**Main curriculum / subject area:** PHSE

**Other curriculum links:** Media, History, Art

## Objectives:

### General Objectives:

- To understand what is meant by a 'stereotype'
- To identify and describe common stereotypes of men and women in the media
- To evaluate the impact of stereotypes on young people's attitudes about gender and the effect on self esteem
- To develop skills of philosophical enquiry to explore what is meant by 'respect'

## Teaching activities:

### **Lesson One**

1. Introduce the lesson and learning objectives. Establish ground rules for discussion to create a safe learning environment.
2. Ask students what is meant by a stereotype. Discuss examples such as 'all blondes are dumb', 'all male actors are gay' and give examples of how this isn't true.
3. As a class build up a picture on the board of a caricature of a stereotype (we used stereotypes of dogs and cats and annotated pictures on the board but students struggled to recognise the stereotypical views about dogs and cats. It might be better to choose a different example but try and avoid using gendered stereotypes to avoid influencing students for the independent activity later in the lesson).
4. Split students into groups. We used single-sex groups but this activity could also be done in mixed gender groups. Students then built up a picture of the stereotypes about men and women in the media by drawing and annotating their own stereotypical man or woman on a large piece of paper. They used magazines to help build up their picture, using adverts, headlines from stories or the front cover and pictures to show how men and women are represented in the magazines. We arranged this so that boys built up a stereotypical man and girls made a stereotypical woman. Ask students to share their work with the class and encourage discussion.

What were the main messages given about each gender in the magazines?  
What ideas or products were the magazines trying to sell?  
Do they agree with the representation?  
Were there any minority groups featured in the magazine?  
(LGBT, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, different religions etc.)

**Plenary activity.** Based on the images portrayed in the magazines, students come up with a comedy set of 'rules' for each gender. For example 'men must work out and be muscly' 'women must have long flowing hair' to expose the stereotypes. This could be done as a drama activity to have someone act out what should be done to be a 'real' man or woman.



## Lesson Two

The second activity is based around a philosophical enquiry session. Remind students of the ground rules for discussion and introduce the steps involved in a P4C session (stimulus, generating questions, voting on a question and exploring the question).

I wanted to encourage the students to explore what is meant by 'respect' and so chose as our stimulus the River Island 'nag gag' that was removed from sale after complaints that it was offensive. I also showed students a picture of a 17th Century Scold's Bridle to draw a parallel.

Place students in groups and ask them to generate questions in response to the image. Encourage students to think of 'big' questions to which there is not necessarily a right or wrong answer. Ask each group to decide which is their best question to share with the class. Each group shares their best question with the class. Record the questions on the board or a large flipchart of paper. Ask the class to vote on which question they would like to discuss further.

Facilitate a discussion about the image, encourage more questions and for students to respond to each other's comments. Finish with a closing round of something they will take away from the discussion.

## Learning outcomes and assessment:

- Students are able to give examples of stereotypes
- Students are able to describe stereotypes of men and women in the media
- Students are able to give their own opinions with explanations about whether they agree with the stereotypes of men and women
- Students are able to discuss the impact of stereotypes in the media on young men and women and attitudes towards gender and self-esteem as a result of the expectations on young people to conform to stereotypes

## Resources

Selection of magazines aimed at young men/ women. Large sheets of paper and marker pens. Photo stimulus of a scold's bridle and River Island 'Nag Gag'.