

# Making Sense of Relationships

Lesson 2:  
**Gender Stereotypes**

Key stage 3

**NSPCC**

In partnership with

**PSHE**  
Association



# Lesson 2:

## Gender Stereotypes

Key stage

3

### Context

This is the second in a series of six lessons that focus on both empowering and supporting young people as they develop relationships. This lesson challenges the concept of gender stereotyping within relationships, including the pressure to conform to certain gender roles and behaviours, as well as ways to identify, manage and respond to gender-based bullying.

While PSHE education lessons should be paced, of course you want to meet the needs of your pupils. Since the activities take one hour to complete, this lesson is planned

as a minimum one-hour lesson. But pupils can gain more from a longer in depth exploration of an activity, so long as you are comfortable leading the discussion and you feel pupils are progressing towards the objectives. If you want to do this, you might want to extend the time to two lessons.

#### Note:

None of the lessons are designed to be taught in isolation. They should always form part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme.

### Learning objectives

- We are learning about gender stereotypes
- We are learning about gender-based peer influence and how to challenge or resist it

### Intended learning outcomes

- ✓ I can describe traditional gender roles, and how gender roles have changed over time
- ✓ I can give examples of expectations and peer pressure some people experience relating to gender roles
- ✓ I can explain how anyone's body image might be affected by gender stereotyping
- ✓ I can evaluate the effects of gender stereotyping and explain why it is unacceptable

### Resources required

- Box or envelope for anonymous questions
- Resource 1: *Images for baseline activity*
- Resource 2: *Terms and definitions* [optional resource for teachers and pupils]
- Resource 3: *Magazine cover analysis*

### Climate for learning

Before teaching this lesson make sure you have read the accompanying Resource Guidance. It has guidance on establishing ground rules, the limits of confidentiality, communication and handling questions effectively.

### Key words

Gender stereotyping, peer pressure, peer influence, bullying

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## Baseline activity

### Introduction 5 min

Revisit ground rules and remind pupils of the importance of keeping personal stories private. Draw attention to the anonymous question box and remind them that they can submit questions at any time, either during or after the lesson.

Next share the learning objectives and outcomes with pupils. Explain that today the class will be thinking about gender stereotyping and how it affects expectations about behaviour in relationships. Pupils will also explore how stereotyping can lead to peer influence, peer pressure and bullying.

### Baseline assessment and reconnecting activity 10 min

Recap prior learning by asking pupils to define what a healthy relationship is and to recall some of the key features of a healthy relationship. This could be discussed in pairs, jotted down in exercise books or fed back as part of whole class discussion.

Present pupils with a statement on the board:

**“In an ideal world, all people would be respected for who they are and would be free to form healthy relationships that make them happy”**

Ask pupils to reflect on this statement and decide how close they think we are as a society to achieving this ideal. Ask them to stand along a line in the classroom on a scale of 1-10, with 1 representing very close to this ideal world and 10 being very far from this ideal world. Ask questions to encourage pupils to explain their reasons for this view.

### For pupils who may need support:

Before pupils choose their stance, allow them some thinking time, and time to share and pair with the people stood nearby.

### For pupils who need a challenge:

Extend this activity by presenting pupils with a range of different images from optional resource 1. Using the images, encourage pupils to compare our society to that of other countries or other times.

## Core activities

### Reflecting on stereotyping 10 min

Ask pupils to create a mind-map of their understanding of stereotyping. To help prompt ideas, teachers may want to ask pupils some of the following questions:

- What is a stereotype?
- Where do they come from?
- Can you give any examples of gender stereotyping?
- How do these stereotypes impact the way people behave or are treated?
- What can we do to challenge stereotypes as a society or as individuals?

You could create a class mind map that demonstrates an understanding of stereotyping, simply by taking some ideas from the group. These ideas could then be discussed throughout the lesson.

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### Defying the stereotype...? 10 min

Explain to the class that scientific and social understanding about gender has developed over the last couple of decades and that many professionals have argued that sex and gender are spectrums. This means that people don't neatly fit into the stereotypes of what it means to be male or female or masculine or feminine.

To help aid this discussion, teachers should display the genderbread person on the board and discuss the differences between **gender identity** (*how a person thinks about their own gender*), **gender expression** (*how a person displays their gender identity publicly*), **biological sex** (*sex assigned at birth*) and **sexual orientation** (*who we are attracted to*):

#### genderbread.org

Present pupils with a list of gendered and stereotyped terms and ask them to place them along the gender identity and gender expression spectrums to demonstrate where they think these terms might fit:

*Tomboy, girly-girl, genderqueer, ladylike, sissy, macho, pansy, butch, camp, metrosexual, princess, non-binary.*

**NB: See the teacher guidance notes for more advice on discussing gender identity and on defining these terms. To avoid introducing pupils to unfamiliar gendered terms, and to decide which ones to use, it may be valuable to meet with pastoral staff.**

Encourage pupils to feedback their assessment of these terms and extend through questioning:

- Why are stereotypes very likely to be inaccurate?
- Why might people find some of these terms offensive or hurtful?
- How can we stop thinking about people and gender in these terms?
- How might someone feel if they didn't fit into expected stereotypes?

### Magazine review 15 min

Hand pupils the resource displaying four stereotypical magazine covers; a girl's magazine, a boy's magazine, a woman's magazine and a men's magazine. Ask them to work in pairs to annotate around the images wherever they find these:

- Gender stereotypes are being perpetuated.
- Pressure is being put on the reader to look a certain way.
- Pressure is being put on the reader to behave a certain way.

These three elements could be annotated in different colour pens.

Take some feedback as a whole class discussion and prompt the class to think about:

- What are the different pressures for the different sexes?
- How do these pressures continue or change into adulthood?
- Does one sex experience more stereotyping?
- What pressures are the same for different sexes?
- Why do magazine editors use these kinds of articles or images?
- Are there any positive stereotypes in the magazines?
- How might regularly reading these magazines affect how a person feels about themselves, their body and their gender role in society?

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### **Challenging stereotyping**      **5 min**

Ask pupils to imagine that later on today in another lesson they were to overhear a conversation between two of their peers in which one says “*She is way too butch to join the dance squad*” or “*Guys are supposed to be macho, why is he such a pansy?*”

Pupils could discuss these scenarios in pairs and then feedback, or it could be offered as part of a whole class discussion and added to the class mind map.

How would they respond if they heard this?

What would they say?

What would they do?

What responsibility would they have?

Through this feedback, you should try to encourage young people to support their friends, challenge stereotyping and refer to a trusted adult if they are concerned. You may find it useful to refer to the school's anti-bullying or equalities policy during this discussion.

## **Assessment for and of learning**

### **Assessment of and for learning**      **5 min**

Teachers should use the responses to questions throughout the lesson to gauge pupils' progress and inform future planning and teaching. As a summary of pupils' understanding of this topic, display sentence starters on the board (or print as a handout if required) and ask pupils to complete the following sentences:

*Assigned sex means...*

*Gender means...*

*Gender stereotyping is...*

*Gender stereotyping happens when...*

*The effects of gender stereotyping can be...*

*To combat gender stereotyping, we should...?*

### **Signposting support**

Inform pupils that there are a huge number of support organisations for people who identify as LGBT or who are questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity. Start by identifying members of staff in school where pupils could find further support, and also identify the following websites or organisations:

**[youngstonewall.org.uk](http://youngstonewall.org.uk)**

**[genderedintelligence.co.uk](http://genderedintelligence.co.uk)**

**[childline.org.uk](http://childline.org.uk)**

**[mermaidsuk.org.uk](http://mermaidsuk.org.uk)**

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## Extension activities and home learning

### Extension Activity 1:

This extension activity is intended for use with a whole class if time allows during the lesson. Since the materials for the activity need you to lead the discussion, it is not so easy for pupils to complete at home.

Childline has a range of videos that tackle issues about gender stereotypes. As well as considering the effects of these stereotypes on society as a whole, the videos look to individuals who do not fit within traditional gender stereotypes.

You should select the video they feel is most appropriate to the pupils in their class based on the discussions raised within the lesson.

Trans puberty myths: [youtube.com/watch?v=bEDSjd6G4Ao](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bEDSjd6G4Ao)

Gender diversity: [youtube.com/watch?v=plQv1YMfJN8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plQv1YMfJN8)

Heteronormativity: [youtube.com/watch?v=VmO0krrsOml](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VmO0krrsOml)

Ask pupils to identify:

- What concerns have the speakers identified in their discussion?
- What solutions do they suggest?
- What can society do to support individuals who do not fit the stereotype?

### Extension Activity 2:

Pupils could write a letter to a magazine editor explaining what changes they should make to the front covers of their magazine. Encourage pupils to talk about lots of points:

- What gender stereotyping is.
- The impact of gender stereotyping on individuals and society.
- The concerns raised by the magazine's current front cover.
- Alternative suggestions for cover stories and images.
- The benefits of tackling stereotyping.

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## Resource 1

### Images for baseline activity

Display images on the board sequentially, asking learners to rate in each case how close or far we are from the statement.



1950's couple in UK



LGBT couple



2010's couple in UK



Traditional Muslim wedding ceremony

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## Resource 2

### Terms and definitions

Term	Definition
<i>Tomboy</i>	An energetic female whose interests, often in sports e.g. football, clothes, look, activities (e.g. climbing trees), are considered more typical of boys
<i>Girly girl</i>	A female who dresses and behaves in a traditionally 'female' way
<i>Genderqueer</i>	Someone who considers themselves to be neither male nor female, but sees themselves as somewhere on a spectrum between male and female, often feeling that their gender identity is flexible
<i>Ladylike</i>	A female who is considered to follow traditional feminine stereotypes, often very polite, elegant and graceful
<i>Sissy</i>	A slang term used to describe a male who demonstrates female characteristics
<i>Macho</i>	A male who is considered to be strong, sometimes aggressive and traditionally in a powerful role
<i>Pansy</i>	An insult used towards gay men, to suggest they are weak, cowardly or feminine
<i>Butch</i>	An insult used towards gay women, to suggest they display male characteristics
<i>Camp</i>	An insult used towards gay men, to suggest they display female characteristics
<i>Metrosexual</i>	A word used to describe a heterosexual (straight) man who pays attention to his appearance, often dressing well or choosing to wear make up
<i>Princess</i>	A demanding woman who displays female characteristics
<i>Non-binary</i>	A person who does not believe there are only two genders (male and female) or sexualities (straight and gay) and identifies as neither male nor female

Together we can help children who've been abused to rebuild their lives. Together we can protect children at risk. And, together, we can find the best ways of preventing child abuse from ever happening.

We change the law. We visit schools across the country, helping children understand what abuse is. And, through our Childline service, we give young people a voice when no one else will listen.

But all this is only possible with your support. Every pound you raise, every petition you sign, every minute of your time, will help make sure we can fight for every childhood.

**[nspcc.org.uk](https://www.nspcc.org.uk)**

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Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is a school subject that supports pupils to be healthy, safe and prepared for modern life. The PSHE education curriculum covers a range of pressing issues facing children and young people today, including those relating to relationships, mental and physical health, staying safe and aware online, financial literacy and careers.

The PSHE Association is the national body for PSHE education. A charity and membership organisation, the Association works to improve PSHE education standards by supporting over 20,000 teachers and schools with advice, training and support. Find out more at **[pshe-association.org.uk](https://www.pshe-association.org.uk)**

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