

Gender expectations

Year Learning Activity

Description

Students examine how diversity and gender are often represented in the media and the impact this has on personal identities.

Learning focus

Our identities are influenced by how gender is often represented in the media.

Key understandings

- Gender is often stereotyped in the media.
- Media and societal expectations can influence personal identities.

Materials

1. Internet access
2. Teaching Resource: *Gender expectations signs* [one set]

Teaching and Learning Activities

Before you get started

- Some teachers may experience difficulties dealing with the polarised attitudes of students during these activities. It is essential that teachers address inappropriate comments that may arise when discussing values or ethical issues. Successful strategies can be found in the [Discrimination](#) and [Gender diversity](#) Guides.
- If possible, have students work in mixed gender groups for the group activities. This will encourage opposing views to be discussed and result in more meaningful conversations.
- Self-esteem and confidence of some students may also be an issue during this activity. Be reassuring and supportive.
- Teachers should know and understand the [protective interrupting](#) technique and what, why, when and how it is needed and used before facilitating this activity.

Whole Class

Students explore their own personal values and beliefs regarding gender expectations and stereotypes.

1. Prior to the commencement of the lesson, attach the gender expectations signs (Teaching Resource: *Gender expectations signs*) along a wall in the classroom to create a 'values line'.
2. Read out the following questions to the students (it is also useful to have these questions written on a PowerPoint or large pieces of paper so they can consider them silently while moving along the line).

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- *Is it okay for guys to clean the house and take on household responsibilities?*
- *Is it okay for girls to take on the gardening responsibilities?*
- *Is it okay for girls to play footy?*
- *Is it okay for guys to cry?*
- *Is it okay for guys to do ballet?*
- *Is it okay for girls to run global companies?*
- *Is it okay for guys to do hairdressing and fashion design?*
- *Is it okay for girls to say no to sex?*
- *Is it okay for guys to stay at home and look after their children?*
- *Is it okay for a girl to have sex at 16?*
- *Is it okay for a boy to have sex at 16?*
- *Is it okay for boys to put pressure on other boys to have sex with girls?*
- *Is it okay for girls to put pressure on other girls to have sex with boys?*
- *Is it okay for girls to say no to sex?*
- *Is it okay for boys to say no to sex?*

3. Ask students to stand on the values line according to their personal views on the topic.

- Have groups (Yes, No, Maybe) discuss and justify their decisions, then ask a volunteer from each group to explain their reasoning.

4. Highlight the definition of a stereotype and societal expectations of being either a male or female. This will be explored further in the small group activity.

Ask:

- *Where do we get our ideas about gender from?*
- *Do these ideas of gender roles change over time?*
- *Do you think there are double standards for sexual behaviour for boys and girls amongst your friends or in your community?*
- *Do you think that boys are often permitted and sometimes pressured to be sexually active where girls are often discouraged from being sexually active? Is this fair?*

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- *Do you think gender equality is a matter of human rights?*
- *How might gender equality reduce unwanted pregnancies?*
- *How might gender equality reduce the rates of STI/BBV in our community?*

5. Use the teaching strategy [think-pair-share](#) to identify some things that are expected of students because of their gender and some things they expect of other people because of their gender.

Independent or Small Group

Using their prior knowledge regarding gender stereotyping, students analyse historical advertisements and make comparisons of gender expectations from the 1900s to today.

1. Explore advertisements from the 1930s to the 1970s using the list of [advertising clips](#) from the SeeMe website.
2. Select one advertisement from your exploration and answer the following questions:
 - *What is the advertisement about?*
 - *How are men and women represented?*
 - Think about the setting (kitchen, laundry, workplace, etc.), the activities they are engaged in, the language that is used by, and about, men and women, etc.
 - *Who is represented and who is omitted?*
 - *How do you feel about the advertisement?*
 - *What is the literal and implied message of the advertisement?*
 - *Who is it aimed at?*
 - *How would this advertisement be received today?*
 - *What does this tell us about how ideas about gender change over time?*
3. Using the internet, research current advertisements and identify whether it highlights stereotypical views about gender and whether it highlights sexuality that affirms diversity.
 - *How is the advertisement achieving this? Consider the roles of the males and females; what do they say, what are they wearing, what is the product promoting?*
4. After exploring these advertisements, and thinking about the advertisements you see around you today in the media, discuss the following question in a small group.

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- *To what extent has advertising about boys and girls, and men and women, changed over time?*

For additional information go to the [SeeMe: The media, my world and me](#) website. This site promotes positive body image and tackles the impact of young people's internalisation of idealised media portrayals of beauty and gender stereotypes.

Reflection

1. Groups share and discuss their findings using the focus questions from the previous activity with the whole class.
2. Identify similarities and differences and discuss any misconceptions they have as a result of these findings.
3. Discuss the impact the media (e.g. magazines, TV ads) has on our perceptions of gender and our expectations about how to behave in society (e.g. because I am female I need to wash the clothes).
4. Discuss the influence of the media and gender expectations on shaping identities. Use the focus questions and comments from the above activity to guide the discussion. Guide students to consider how the advertisements impacted on them personally. How did the advertisement encourage them to participate in something new or different?

[The practical guide to love, sex and relationships](#)

A teaching resource from the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University.

Year 7/8

[Topic 3: Freedom fighters](#) (Gender)

- Social expectations and gender expectations: Is it ok for a girl to ask a boy out? Would a girl be called a slut if she had lots of boyfriends? What happens to a boy who is 'different'?

[Inclusive Education WA](#)

Inclusive Education WA help schools to ensure that they are inclusive for everyone including same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse students, staff and families.

- [Posters](#) to promote safe spaces for LGBTI students (E.g [This is a safe space](#))

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- [Parent information](#)
- [Supporting student to affirm or transition gender identity at school](#)
- [5 Things trans and gender diverse students want school staff to know](#)

Related assets (links to sections within GDHR site)

Teaching Note

[Discrimination](#)

[Protective interrupting](#)

Background Note

[Gender diversity](#)

Teaching Resources

[Gender expectations signs](#)

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