

Once you label me you negate me

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Good, Better, Best



Level 2



8 to 20



60 to 90
minutes



Complexity: Level 2

Group size: 8 to 20

Time: 60 to 90 minutes

Overview: This activity looks at how gender stereotypes affect the lives of young people, and at the value society places on “feminine” and “masculine” qualities. Participants use sets of cards to discuss which qualities are more commonly regarded as masculine or feminine.

Objectives:

- To learn how people become socialised to regard certain qualities as feminine and others as masculine
- To understand why society considers certain qualities to be “positive” or “desirable”, while other characteristics are considered to be “negative” or “undesirable”
- To discover how the widely adopted binary approach affects non-binary people

Materials:

- Two sets of cards with adjectives (see preparation and handouts)
- Instructions for each group
- 2 envelopes and sheets of A3 paper

Preparation:

- Make 2 copies of the set of cards at the end of this activity. Cut out the cards and shuffle them (keeping each set separate). Put one set of cards (20 cards) into each envelope.
- Prepare one sheet of A3 paper for group A: divide it into two columns, one labelled ‘Feminine’ and the other ‘Masculine’.
- Prepare another sheet of paper divided into two columns for group B. The labels should read ‘Positive / Desirable’ and ‘Negative / Undesirable’.

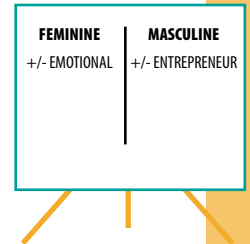


Instructions

- 1) Explain that this activity is about exploring how gender stereotypes work in society. Form two groups with equal numbers of participants (Group A and Group B). Ask people to sit in their groups, at opposite corners of the room. Give each group an envelope with a set of cards, a sheet of A3 paper and a worksheet with the appropriate instructions.
- 2) Tell participants to read the instructions on their worksheet and work as quickly as they can to carry out the task. They need to place each card on the A3 paper in the appropriate column. For group A, they will place the cards according to whether they think each one is "masculine" or "feminine", and for Group B, according to whether society tends to regard the quality as "Positive / Desirable" or "Negative / Undesirable".

Allow the groups 10 to 15 minutes to complete the task according to the instructions on the worksheet.

- 3) When they are ready, gather the whole group together again. Divide a piece of flipchart paper into two columns, and write 'Feminine' at the top of one, and 'Masculine' at the top of the other. Ask Group A to list the qualities they put into the "Feminine" column, and after each adjective, ask Group B if they placed that adjective in the Positive/ Desirable or the Negative/Undesirable column. Record this information beside each adjective using a plus (+) or minus (-) sign. Repeat the procedure for the "Masculine" column.



- 4) When Group A has listed all the adjectives, continue with the debriefing and evaluation.

Debriefing and evaluation

Ask participants some of the following questions:

- How did you feel during the activity? Looking at the flipchart paper, how do you feel about what you see?
- Does anything about the results surprise you? Explain why.
- In which column – feminine or masculine – are there more (-) signs next to the qualities? What does this tell you?
- Why are some (feminine or masculine) qualities less desirable? How do you think this comes about?
- Do you consider this characterisation of "masculine" and "feminine" qualities to be an accurate classification, which would be true for all time and for all places?
- How do we learn gender stereotypes?
- In your opinion, how do gender stereotypes affect our behaviour, and how do they affect the way we treat or judge other people?



- What are some of the consequences of gender stereotypes for women, for men, and for non-binary people? Can you give examples from real life?
- How are gender stereotypes linked to discrimination, violence and hate speech? Can you think of examples of gender-based discrimination, violence or hate speech? What impact do these phenomena have on gender equality and the enjoyment of human rights?
- What can be done to avoid gender stereotyping? What can be done to avoid the negative consequences of stereotyping?



Tips for facilitators

By way of introducing the conclusion to the debriefing, you could inform participants that research has found that children as young as 5 or 6 years of age use gender related stereotypes.

The debriefing could also look at the fact that groups with “undesirable” characteristics are generally regarded as being less valuable, and they tend to have a lower status in society. This usually means that they are more often exposed to prejudice and to verbal or physical violence. You could ask participants to identify groups who have been affected by such problems in their local area and how they think these can be overcome. Try to link this with human rights and ask the group to identify human rights issues related to gender-based violence.



Suggestions for follow-up

If participants are interested in the topic, they may wish to raise awareness about gender stereotypes and gender-based violence and to prepare guidelines for their school or youth club. For this, you could use the activity “No violence in here”.



Ideas for action

Support participants to carry out a research project about stereotyping in everyday life. If the members of your group attend school, discuss how they could research and document stereotyping in school over a period of time. On the basis of the results, your group could propose recommendations to the school authorities on how to address stereotyping, and the group could be involved as peer educators to raise awareness among other pupils. The same could be done in the youth club / organisation.

Developed by: Marietta Gargya, hotline worker at NANE Hotline for battered women and children, Hungary, on the basis of a research study by Broverman, I., Vogel, S. R. Broverman, D.M., Clarkson, F.E. and Rosenkrantz, P.S. (1972). ‘Sex Role Stereotypes: A current appraisal’. *Journal of Social Issues*, 28. Blackwell. pp 59-78.

**Set of cards:**

DEPENDENT	INDEPENDENT
EMOTIONAL	RATIONAL
OBJECTIVE	SUBJECTIVE
SUBMISSIVE	DOMINANT
PASSIVE	ACTIVE
GOOD BUSINESS SKILLS	POOR BUSINESS SKILLS
COMPETENT	INCOMPETENT
UNDECISIVE	DECISIVE
AMBITIOUS	UNAMBITIOUS
DIPLOMATIC	UNDIPLOMATIC



Instructions for Group A

Headings: Feminine - Masculine

FEMININE	MASCULINE

Certain characteristics are considered to be more feminine, while others are thought to be more masculine. Place the cards in the column where you think they belong. Work as quickly as you can, without thinking about it too much.

Instruction for Group B

Headings: Positive/Desirable - Negative/Undesirable

POSITIVE/DESIRABLE	NEGATIVE/UNDESIRABLE

Certain characteristics are considered to be more positive and desirable, while others are thought to be negative and not desirable. Place the cards in the column where you think they belong. Work as quickly as you can, without thinking about it too much.