



WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

Girlguiding

Breaking Free leaders' guidance

All the tools you'll need to support your *Breaking Free* session.

Welcome to the *Breaking Free* leaders' guidance. These pages will help support your upcoming *Breaking Free* session, by giving you information about the topic, explaining your role during the session, and giving you some handy answers to questions we've found young people asked during or after an activity.

What is *Breaking Free*?

Breaking Free is Girlguiding's new peer education resource on challenging gender stereotypes. This resource is all about empowering young people to enjoy their hobbies, gain the skills they're interested in and help bring about a world where nobody feels trapped by gender stereotypes.

Why did we choose this topic?

Every peer education resource and topic is chosen by peer educators. They voted in summer 2016 on the issue that they felt most passionate about: gender stereotypes. And our [2017 Girls' Attitudes Survey](#) shows us why - this research tells us that:

- 47% of girls aged 7-21 say gender stereotypes affect how much they participate in class.
- 51% of girls aged 7-21 say gender stereotypes affect what sport and exercise they do.
- 55% of girls aged 7-21 say gender stereotypes affect their ability to say what they think.
- 57% of girls aged 7-21 say gender stereotypes affect what they wear.
- 24% of girls aged 7-21 say gender stereotypes make them less confident.

And we know that stereotypes don't just affect girls and women - every person is affected by them.

Young people are telling us that they need support to challenge gender stereotypes, so we created *Breaking Free* to help.

How does the session work?

Like all peer education sessions, the peer educator will come prepared to deliver a series of activities to help your unit gain the skills they need to engage with this topic.

The aim of this resource is to encourage young people to be true to themselves - by enjoying the hobbies they enjoy, pursuing the jobs they want, and learning the skills they need so that eventually we have a world without harmful stereotypes.

It's a way to create a world which doesn't generalise or judge; where we respect and value everyone as an individual and encourage them to be who they really are.

We do this through the following steps:

a) What is gender?

In this section, we define the differences between 'sex' and 'gender'. This helps everyone get on the same page and clarifies that gender is not the same as gender stereotypes.

b) What is a stereotype and why is it a problem?

This section is all about the impact of gender stereotypes in our lives and how they cause problems in society.

c) Identifying and challenging stereotypes

In this step the group will think about how to recognise stereotypes in the media and in how we talk to one another. We also practise standing up to stereotypes in fun, assertive and safe ways.

d) Breaking free from stereotypes

This step is all about doing something about the stereotypes we've spotted - what can the participants do themselves to make change in their own lives and wider society?

Young people gain loads of skills from this session, including:

- Media literacy
- Assertiveness
- Cultural awareness
- Awareness of themselves

What is the leader's role during this session? What do I need to do?

Leaders are key in peer education sessions - you'll work alongside the peer educator as soon as you ask her to come. You'll have the **pre-session leader conversation** and together you'll choose the activities and think about how to adapt the session. You might be asked to sign a **leader agreement form**, which outlines your roles and responsibilities.

During the session you'll remain in charge of [safety and safeguarding](#) including taking forward any concerns the peer educator shares with you to our safeguarding team (for information about how to do this, please see the *A Safe Space* guidance).

After the session, you'll have the **post-session conversation**, where you will debrief with the peer educator. You'll also be key in **evaluating** the session - we use pre- and post- session questionnaires and the peer educators often need leaders to help collect this data. We use this to make sure our resources are effective, and make the next topics even better.

If you do the **Breaking free from stereotypes** activity, you should continue to help your unit do this social action after the session has ended. You can find this activity available to download on girlguiding.org.uk/breakingfree for reference.

What sorts of questions might my unit have after this workshop?

We've had a few things come up repeatedly while testing with over 600 girls, so we've given the peer educators some answers in the resource. Here's the same information for you:

Why does Girlguiding define gender and sex in this way?

'Gender' and 'sex' are contested terms and there is a global conversation going on around them, which means that not everybody will agree with the definitions outlined in *Breaking Free*. When we talk about 'gender' and 'sex' we use the legal definitions, but we've asked an organisation called Gendered Intelligence, which specialises in training people about gender, to help us explain them in a way which is accessible to young people. It's okay if someone disagrees with this in a *Breaking Free* workshop - they're been explained so everyone is on the same page, which will help them see why stereotypes are such a problem. They can believe something different (and you can tell them that!), but having an agreed set of definitions helps to minimise confusion.

Why is Girlguiding just for girls?

Here are the reasons we give for being only for self-defining girls:

- Most importantly, our young members have repeatedly told us that being girl-only is one of the things they like best about guiding.
- We give girls a safe, non-judgemental space where they can be themselves with other girls and share the experience of growing up as a girl.
- So, we strongly believe this space is vital to girls and young women in today's world, where they face a unique and unprecedented set of issues and pressures.

Where can I get more info about gender issues for young people?

Here are some helpful links to check out at your leisure:

- [Girlguiding's inclusion policies](#) also give extra resources for leaders
- Gendered Intelligence has tons of useful information about gender on their website, at genderedintelligence.co.uk
- If you like infographics then itspronouncedmetrosexual.com is for you.

What training does a peer educator need on this topic?

Peer educators have to watch the videos on girlguiding.org.uk/breakingfree, complete the online quiz and attend a face-to-face training before they get a copy of the resource and can come to your unit and deliver a workshop. We do this to make sure our experienced trainers can make sure every peer educator will run sessions which really make a difference to your unit.

I'm not keen on this topic, what else can a peer educator do?

Depending on their training, peer educators could deliver *Think Resilient*, which is all about developing resilience in young people. Or *Free Being Me*, our resource all about body confidence and self-esteem.

You can find out more at girlguiding.org.uk/thinkresilient or girlguiding.org.uk/freebeingme

What if one of my young people decides that they are trans or non-binary? What should I do then?

Then it's great that the young person feels able to share this with you as their leader! All the guidance you need for supporting trans and non-binary young people can be found here:

<https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/making-guiding-happen/policies/girlguiding-policies/equality-and-diversity-policy/transgender-gender-reassignment/>

Any questions not covered here?

Drop a line to 4peereducation@girlguiding.org.uk and we'll answer them for you.

Thanks for taking the time to read this guidance. We hope you have a really brilliant *Breaking Free* session.