



Step four: Breaking free of stereotypes

Breaking free from stereotypes

Create a group project to challenge the stereotypes around you.

What the unit will get out of it

- Plan and organise a social action.

Time needed

- 20 minutes.

What you'll need

- Paper and pens.
- A large sheet of paper.
- A marker pen.

What to do

1. Sit the unit in a circle. Remind the group that in certain situations different genders are sometimes treated unfairly because of stereotypes. Ask everyone to think of a situation that this might happen in. These situations should be based on a stereotype, not fair, or something you feel passionate about challenging. Examples:
 - A newspaper which talks about women's looks and men's achievements.
 - A sports centre which only offers some sports to boys and other sports to girls.
 - The same type of cotton top costing more for women than for men (even though it's basically the same).
 - A character in a TV show or movie who says that men should be strong and not show emotions, even though everyone has the right to feel their feelings!
2. Divide up these situations and get the group to sit in smaller teams. These teams should discuss:
 - ? What is the problem?
 - ? What causes this situation?
 - ? What can we do to improve this situation?
3. Ask each team to report back to the group what their ideas were.
4. As a whole group, vote on what action they would like to take (big or small).

NOTES

5. Get the group back into teams to discuss what they could do to challenge that particular stereotyped problem. Give them some time to plan this.
6. Ask each team to share their ideas and record them on a large sheet of paper.
7. Read through the suggested ideas. Ask the unit to choose the ideas they like best and plan how they can make these happen. Stress that, however big or small the actions are, they all make a difference.
8. Ask each member to make a pledge to tell someone about what they are doing to break free from stereotypes. This could be their class at school, their family, a friend, a teacher or posting on social media.
9. Ensure that everyone is clear that this is not something that is done once and then forgotten about, but something that needs to be ongoing to make real change. Once stereotypes are broken, a new set of social norms will emerge.
10. End the activity by getting the group to create a rallying cheer that will spur everyone on to go and break through all the stereotypes that hold them back.

