

# UNDERSTANDING STEREOTYPES



A stereotype is 'a set idea that people have about what someone or something is like, especially an idea that is wrong' (Cambridge Dictionary).

Stereotypes are placed on different groups of people, for example, we may experience stereotyping due to our gender, race or sexuality.

## WHY ARE STEREOTYPES HARMFUL?

Stereotypes are harmful because they are unfair presumptions and not based on facts. We should get to know people as individuals before we develop beliefs about what that person is like. Not all members of one group will behave in the same way because we are all individuals who make our own choices and have our own interests. People are complex and often stereotypes reduce us to just one small part of our complex identity.

It is possible for stereotypes to be positive as well as negative but even positive stereotypes negatively affect us because they could place unfair expectations on us, especially when we are growing up or pursuing our education.

## HOW CAN WE TACKLE STEREOTYPES IN OUR SCHOOL?

### CELEBRATING DIVERSITY \_

As Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, you can play an important role in tackling harmful stereotypes. You can use awareness months like Black History Month or Pride to educate students in your school about different identities, cultures and people.

Here is a list of dates you might want to use:

- October – Black History Month
- 10th October – World Mental Health Day
- November – Islamophobia Awareness Month
- February – LGBT History Month
- 2nd April – World Autism Awareness Day
- 12th July – Disability Awareness Day

On days like these, you can run assemblies or workshops where you highlight key misconceptions about certain groups of people and encourage everyone in school to avoid spreading those misconceptions or accepting stereotypes about those groups.

## ROLE MODELS

One way to counteract the negative impact of stereotyping is to access role models. You can find opportunities to celebrate people who are successful in the stereotyped field. For example, girls in school could really value female role models in computer science. You could use display boards, speaker visits or videos in assemblies. Always make sure the examples you choose are representative.

## DISCUSSION WORKSHOPS

As part of your diversity and inclusion work as Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, you could run discussion-based sessions on topics including stereotypes.

Discussion prompts could include the following ideas:

- How can stereotypes encourage us to treat other unfairly?
- Have you ever experienced stereotyping? If so, how did it make you feel? If not, how do you think it might make you feel if you did experience it?
- As Upstanders, how can we react when we hear stereotypes being used? What is a helpful response to stereotyping and how can we tackle them in our school?

**We hope these ideas will help you tackle the negative impact of stereotyping on students in your school. Remember that as Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, you should promote the message that we are all individuals and to show respect to others, we should treat them as such and celebrate our similarities and differences from others!**

### MORE RESOURCES \_

Check out our Resource Centre for more resources that aim to help you create an inclusive school environment: [www.antibullyingpro.com/resources](http://www.antibullyingpro.com/resources)

We're proud to be the only charity set up in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales, and her belief that young people have the power to change the world. It's a big mission but there are two things within it that we focus our charity's efforts on – young people and change.

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Throughout all of our programmes and initiatives, 'change' for and by young people is central, including our anti-bullying work which encourages change in attitudes and behaviours.

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We hope you found this resource useful and wish you all the best in your anti-bullying journey. If you would like to help us create more resources and train even more Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, you can make a £5 donation by texting CHANGE 5 to 70470 or visit [diana-award.org.uk/donate](https://diana-award.org.uk/donate)

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