IMPROVING GENDER BALANCE SCOTLAND

Gender stereotypes and unconscious bias

Objectives

After this lesson, students should be able to:

- Explain the concept of unconscious bias
- Give examples of how unconscious bias may affect our judgements

Resources needed

- Pens/pencils and paper
- *Gender stereotypes and unconscious bias* slides
- Internet access (for YouTube)

Suggested structure and timings

10 mins	**Prize money giveaway**	Use the slides to introduce the activity.

Ask students to:

- Copy down the six names off the slides
- Decide which person they would like to eliminate and cross out that name from their list

Once they have chosen, move on to the next slide. Each slide reveals a bit more information about the people. Repeat for a total of five rounds, after which each student should have one person remaining on their list.

Invite the class to share their results and discuss:

- Who do they have left?
- Why might their results be different from other people in the class?
- How did they make their choices?

10 mins — Video

Show the unconscious bias video.

Discuss the characteristics that we might use to judge people (eg age, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic background or the job they do).

15 mins — Challenging gender stereotypes

Split the class into six groups and give each group one of the gender stereotypes from the slide.

In their groups ask them to:

- Discuss how the stereotype might have been formed – encourage them to think about their own experiences, as well as the influence of the media
- Think of examples that contradict the stereotype

10 mins — Feedback and plenary

End by asking each group to feed back to the class. Summarise the discussion points from the stereotype activity and discuss:

- How biases can lead to bad decisions
- How we can make sure biases don't affect our treatment of others

Additional guidance

For the activity on challenging gender stereotypes, you may want to give the groups some discussion prompts. Suggested prompts are given below.

Stereotype	Where stereotypes might come from	Challenging the stereotype
Girls are more emotional	• Do the girls/women who you know cry when they're upset? • Is it more acceptable for girls to cry than boys?	• Do you know any boys/men that do cry? • What about other emotions, like anger?
	• Are films/TV shows aimed at girls more likely to be about feelings or relationships?	• Are there films or TV shows aimed at men that are about relationships or emotions?
Men are more career-driven than women	• Do you know any women that work part time or not at all? • Do you think it would be difficult for a man who wanted to be a stay-at-home father?	• Do you know any women with important jobs? • Do you know any men who are stay-at-home dads?
	• What sort of jobs do male and female characters in films / TV shows have? • Which characters are the bosses?	• Can you think of films or TV shows that show female bosses?
Girls prefer pink	• Do you have female friends or younger sisters who like pink? • Do you think people are more likely to buy pink toys or presents for a girl?	• Do you know girls that don't like pink? • Do you know any boys that do like pink?
	• What do films, TV shows and adverts aimed at young girls look like?	• Are there adverts, films or TV shows aimed at girls that don't use pink?
Boys don't take things seriously	• Do the boys in your class mess around more than the girls? Can they get away with it more? • Do you think that some of the boys feel like they are expected to behave this way?	• Do you know girls who mess around in class? • Do you know boys who are serious? • What about grown up men and women?
	• Are there more men in comedy films/TV shows? • Are female characters more serious?	• Can you think of any female comedians? • What about films or TV shows where the men are serious and responsible?
Girls are more vain	• Do the girls/women that you know spend a lot of time on their hair, makeup or clothes? • Would a boy who spent a lot of time on his appearance be teased?	• Do you know any boys/men who spend a lot of time on their appearance? • Do you know girls/women who aren't interested in hair or makeup?
	• Are there more adverts aimed at women for makeup/hair products? • Do magazines talk about female celebrities' appearance more often than they do with men?	• Are there any famous men who you think are vain?
Men are braver than women	• Are the boys/men you know more likely to do challenges or dares? • Do you think girls would do challenges or dares if they were expected to?	• Do you know any girls who like to take on challenges? • Do you know boys who don't? • Are there other types of bravery?
	• Who are the main characters in action or horror films?	• Can you think of any action or horror films/TV shows where the main character is a woman?

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