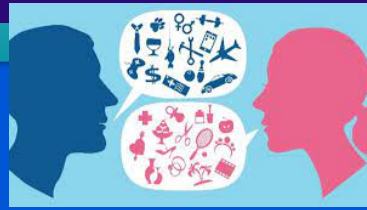


Gender Stereotypes and Violence against Women and Girls.

There is a direct link between gender stereotypes and gender inequality and gendered-based violence including rape, sexual assault, FGM, stalking, harassment, cyber-flashing, revenge porn and up-skirting.

In September 2021, the ‘Tackling Violence against Women and Girls’ strategy was launched. Priti Patel, the Home Secretary, made it clear that schools play a vital role in combating Violence against women and girls (VAWG) by addressing gender stereotypes.

By understanding unconscious bias, we can begin to minimise the harmful effects of gender imbalance and stereotypes. Everyone has unconscious biases. They are the assumptions we make that are based on our own personal reality. Having unconscious biases does not make us sexist, misogynistic or racist but if we are aware of them, we can take steps to ensure they don’t affect our beliefs or treatment of others.

Below are some ways in which we can see unconscious biases in the classroom.

1

PRAISING GIRLS FOR THEIR BEHAVIOUR

2

PRAISING BOYS FOR THEIR IDEAS AND EFFORTS

3

DISRUPTIVE GIRLS MAY ENCOUNTER MORE CRITICISM THAN BOYS WHILE QUIET BOYS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE OVERLOOKED

Sex and gender are different concepts.

Sex is determined at birth and is based on physiological differences. People are born as male, female or intersex.

Gender refers to sets of learned behaviours. They are socially defined characteristics and expectations about ‘being’ or ‘acting’ male or female. Gender is fluid and can change.

Unconscious bias arises because our brains have to process vast amounts of information every second. In order to avoid being overwhelmed, our brains have to make assumptions based on previous experience and find patterns to enable fast decisions.

How can we prevent Gender Stereotyping and Gender Inequality

- * Avoid segregating children according to their gender. Instead, try some of these terms ...
- * Tackle overt and explicit gender biases instantly, in front of children and with sensitivity e.g. "I heard you say that boys shouldn't hit girls. Let me just explain that people should not hurt any other person, their bodies or their emotions. That behaviour is not okay."
- * Be explicit and implicit when teaching about gender and identity. Use images and texts which break stereotypes e.g. women CEO's, men wearing make up etc, non binary people referred to as 'they' or 'them'
- * Use some of the resources listed below (the Gender Equality Toolkit has some great lesson ideas)



Gender Stereotypes are harmful for boys and men too. Patel is due to release more documentation about men and boys later in 2021 with regard to the VAWG strategy.

Childline has reported that boys were 6 times less likely to seek help for thoughts of taking their own lives.

What is Toxic Masculinity?

Toxic masculinity is an adherence to the limiting and potentially dangerous societal standards for men and masculine-presenting people. It is important to point out that masculinity is not inherently harmful but traits of toxic masculinity including mental and physical toughness, aggression, stoicism and defined gender roles can have an extremely detrimental affect on people of all genders.

MORE INFORMATION / FURTHER READING:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy>

<https://education.gov.scot/media/xcajagr4/gender10toolkit.pdf>

<https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/>