Counsellor's Newsletter

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From a very young age, children are often taught to connect certain colours with specific genders—pink for girls and blue for boys. This becomes a general way of distinguishing between the two genders right from birth. The image highlights the importance of moving beyond traditional gender labels and allowing children the freedom to express themselves without limits. Let's understand such labels or stereotypes in detail.

Unfolding Stereotypes:

The fixed idea about a particular type of person or thing, which is often not true in reality, is called a "Stereotype". They can be based on:

- Gender
- Appearance
- Culture or language

- Interests and abilities
- Background or community

Although stereotypes may arise from society, media, or traditions, they fail to reflect the uniqueness of each individual. Labelling and stereotypical thinking remain significant issues in our society, as they impose expectations about how a person should behave or live based on gender, race, personality, or other characteristics. This can negatively affect individuals who enjoy different interests or think differently but feel embarrassed or hesitant to express themselves because of these beliefs. Common examples include ideas such as "all men like sports," "women are not as strong as men," "household responsibilities belong to women," "men should hide their emotions," or "fathers who spend more time with their children are less masculine." Such stereotypes are often passed down from one generation to the next and become deeply rooted in society.

For individuals who believe in change, confronting stereotypes can be emotionally challenging and exhausting. These attitudes influence children's future lives, the subjects they choose to study, career paths, relationships and the decisions they feel free to explore. Over time, this may lead to low confidence, delayed decision-making, self-doubt, and even difficulties with self-identity.

At DYPIS:

Gender stereotypes and biases are very common in our community. We believe children's thinking is shaped from an early age. Therefore, it is essential to create awareness among children and guide them toward more open and accepting perspectives.

As we observed and noted the importance of such biases impacts children. The school believes in nurturing change right from our youngsters. We conduct sessions on topics like "Colours are for all, instead of pink for girls and blue for boys." Also, they were natured with "Expressing emotions is not gender specific." Boys have the right to express their emotions by crying and they need not be compared with girls.

Our PYP learners were understanding the importance of not differentiating between girls and boys. Gender does not determine emotion. Our focus was to rebuild the thought of emotional expression.

The most common stereotypes about teens are that they are risk takers in a negative or unhealthy way, they are moody or emotional, they fight a lot with parents, and they are rebellious. As a result, guiding adolescents during this stage can feel challenging. To address this, we conduct sessions with our secondary learners to raise awareness about the everyday challenges they experience.

The aim of these sessions is to reshape perspectives and reduce biases related to emotional expression, personal choices, attraction, body stereotypes, communication, and body image. Learners actively participate in discussions and share their thoughts and experiences.

Parental approach:
Teens look to their parents as role models, guides, and a source of moral direction in their lives. When parents hold stereotypical beliefs, they may expect adolescents to make unhealthy choices. As a result, they fail to set effective boundaries, assuming that their children will break them anyway. Such attitudes can cause teenagers to behave according to the low expectations placed upon them. Parents may then overreact and become overly controlling, which can negatively affect the parent– teen relationship. Therefore, it is important to share strategies to parents in a positive and supportive manner.

Perspective of family: The foundation of a child's thinking and beliefs begins at home. Children observe their family members and carry these observations into their daily thought processes, including emotional expression, social perceptions, and decision–making skills. Therefore, families need to engage in open conversations, reflect on their own biases, and adapt to positive changes.

Discuss media critically: Increased exposure to technology brings both benefits and challenges. Children may sometimes become overly engaged and lose track of appropriate content. Parents should monitor screen time and be aware of what their children are watching, while also guiding them to think critically about media influence.

Open conversations: With today's children, communication plays a vital role. Bias is not removed by one talk – it is removed by daily small habits. Children raised in a fair environment show empathy, respect, have higher self-esteem, and make healthier relationships


PARENTING
Habits to Avoid

1. Overindulgence

Leads to entitlement and a lack of appreciation.

2. Overly Praising Results

Creates dependency on external validation rather than internal motivation and focus.

3. Comparison

Support their improvement without comparison.

4. Constant Criticism

Balance feedback with praise and encouragement.

5. Overscheduling

Kids need time to create, process experiences and just be kids.

6. Passive Listening

Kids feel disregarded and unheard.

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Stereotypes can limit children's thinking and create unnecessary divisions among people. As parents and educators, we have the responsibility to guide our children to look beyond labels and treat everyone with kindness and respect. By challenging stereotypes, we nurture an inclusive environment where every child feels valued, accepted, and free to be themselves.

LET'S BREAK THE STEREOTYPES

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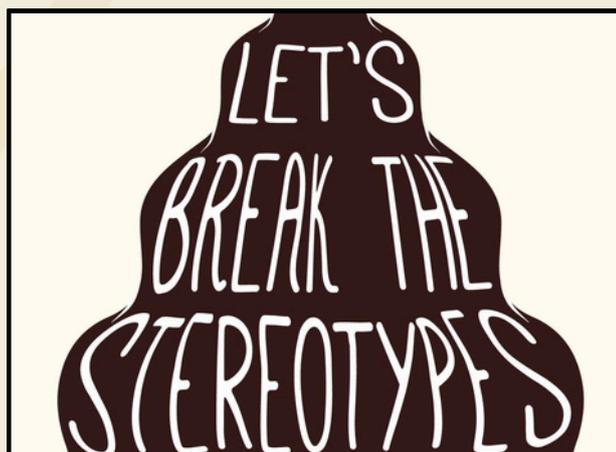
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