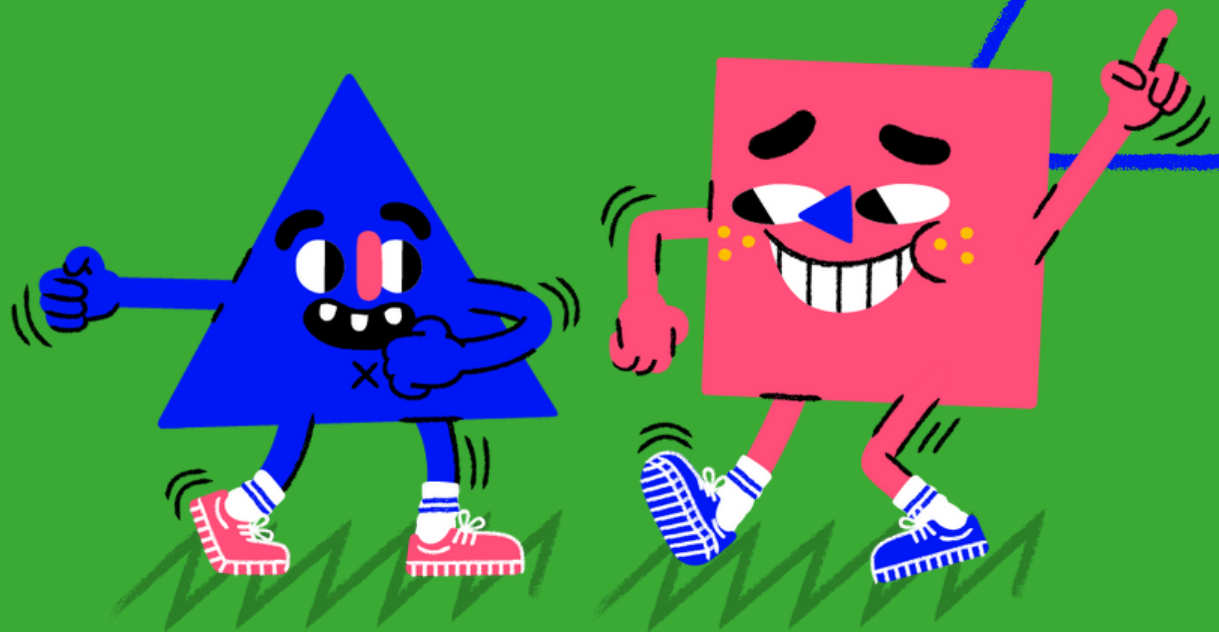


YEAR 5-6: LESSON 2

LEARNING NOT TO FEEL LIMITED BY GENDER STEREOTYPES

Friendship and Feelings

A curriculum designed by The Children's Society, Lifting Limits, and Equimundo as part of the Global Boyhood Initiative's Beyond Gender Stereotypes Programme



**Beyond Gender
Stereotypes**

a curriculum by

**GLOBAL
BOYHOOD
INITIATIVE**

**Lifting
Limits**

The
Children's
Society



CONTEXT

This lesson is the second of four lessons for pupils in upper key stage 2. In this lesson, pupils recognise how gender stereotypes can affect the way people respond to and handle their emotions. They reflect on the pressure this can cause for people to behave in a particular way. They discuss the importance of all people, whatever their gender, being able and supported to express their emotions in healthy ways.

Statutory Relationships and Health Education – Primary (DfE)

Respectful relationships:

- Practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships.
- What a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive.

Caring friendships:

- The characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties.
- That healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded.

Programme of Study for PSHE Education – Key Stage 2 (PSHE Association)

Health and wellbeing:

- H18. about everyday things that affect feelings and the importance of expressing feelings.
- H20. strategies to respond to feelings, including intense or conflicting feelings; how to manage and respond to feelings appropriately and proportionately in different situations.

Relationships:

- R10. about the importance of friendships; strategies for building positive friendships; how positive friendships support wellbeing.
- R15. strategies for recognising and managing peer influence and a desire for peer approval in friendships...

Living in the wider world:

- L4. the importance of having compassion towards others; shared responsibilities we all have for caring for other people and living things; how to show care and concern for others.
- L9. about stereotypes; how they can negatively influence behaviours and attitudes towards others; strategies for challenging stereotypes.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Pupils learn about how gender stereotypes might influence friendships and feelings.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Pupils will be able to:

- explain how people can feel pressure from gender stereotypes.
- recognise that gender stereotypes can stop them from sharing their feelings honestly.
- explain ways to overcome gender stereotypes.

RESOURCES

- PowerPoint: Year 5/6 - Lesson 2
- Sticky-notes, 3 pieces of flipchart paper and marker pens
- A4 paper with one heading on each: strongly agree, agree, neither, disagree, strongly disagree
- **Resource 1: Emotion scenarios**
- Paper/exercise books, pens/pencils

POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND KEY VOCABULARY

Before teaching this lesson, ensure that you have set a positive learning environment. Please read the Teacher Guidance document, which explains how to do this effectively and includes a glossary with explanations of key terms which may be referred to during the lesson.



LESSON SUMMARY

Activity	Description	Timing
1. Introduction	Ground rules reminder / Stereotypical characteristics • Remind pupils of ground rules. • Pupils write gender stereotypical characteristics and discuss how these put people 'in a box'.	10 minutes
2. Main Activity 1	Gendered emotions • Pupils stand on a line of continuum of agreement with statements about gender, emotions and friendship.	15 minutes
3. Main Activity 2	Expressing emotions • Pupils discuss scenarios influenced by gender expectations and share healthier approaches to expressing emotions and supporting each other.	25 minutes
4. Main Activity 3	The human box • Pupils go back to the introductory activity and choose healthy gendered characteristics to redefine as human characteristics, not limited to one gender.	5 minutes
5. Plenary	Sentence starter • Pupils complete a sentence about the importance of healthy emotional expression for all people, whatever their gender.	5 minutes
Total		60 minutes

LESSON PLAN

Introduction (10 minutes)

Ground rules reminder / Stereotypical characteristics

Before teaching this lesson, make sure you have a class agreement about respectful behaviour for approaching the subject matter and positive ways of working together.

Remind pupils of the previous lesson – exploring gender stereotypes and how gender stereotypes are reinforced.

Stick two pieces of flipchart paper at the front of the classroom, one headed: boy/man, and the other: girl/woman. On each piece of paper, draw a large box or square in the centre.

Ask pupils to think of some stereotypical characteristics of boys/men and girls/women, write them on sticky-notes and then put them in the corresponding boxes/squares on the flipchart paper.

If needed, explain this is how are people expected to behave when they are told 'act like a boy/man' / 'be more masculine' (e.g. be or act tough) or 'act like a girl/woman' / 'be more feminine' (e.g. act or be more caring).

You may also want to explain the word, 'characteristic', such as – defining features or qualities of something, someone, or a group of people.

If it was raised in the previous lesson, ask pupils to reflect on stereotypes that relate to other aspects of people's lives, as well as gender, (including those related to ethnicity, cultural background, social background or class, and age), as this might help pupils to suggest additional descriptive wording for different characteristics, e.g. 'timid' old women, or 'rowdy' teenage boys (age).

Summarise the pupils' ideas by reading aloud some of their suggestions, comparing the different genders.

Explain that this is like putting all boys/men and all girls/women in a box – like saying that everyone in the box is the same, which we know is not true, and that some of these characteristics can have a negative influence on people (e.g. thinking boys/men always have to fight, or girls/women always have to be quiet).

Ask them: What happens if someone acts outside of this box? (For example, if a boy is 'caring', or a girl is 'tough'.) You may want to ask pupils to think of TV programmes, films or books – as well as real life - for examples.

You might want to move the word from the other flipchart or write the word on a new sticky note, and stick it outside the box, so pupils have a visual image of the characteristic being outside the box.

Pupils may say things like:

If someone acts outside of the box, they might get teased or laughed at; they might get rejected or left out; people might think they are different and don't like them; they might get told off more; people might think there is something wrong with them; they might think there is something wrong with themselves; or they are not good at doing or being that thing. Or, others will respect them for being true to themselves; value and celebrate that person's personal characteristics, respect them for being brave.

Encourage pupils to reflect on their own experiences, and behaviour they have noticed inside and outside of school, but explain that they do not need to share their personal experiences with the class.

Pupils may or may not experience gender stereotypes in their everyday interactions. So teachers can use this activity as a baseline to see the kinds of things that may or may not be happening in the school, and in pupils' wider experiences. You may also want to reiterate how things have changed over time.

For pupils requiring support:

Provide example characteristics already written on sticky notes for the pupils. They can then decide whether the gender stereotype would be matched to boys/men or girls/women.

For pupils requiring challenge:

Ask the pupils to discuss whether the particular characteristic is the same for boys, as for men (e.g. tough), and for girls, as for women (e.g. caring). If it is the same or different, discuss why this might be.

Main Activity 1 (15 minutes)

Gendered emotions

Across the length of the classroom display the following words on a line of continuum: "strongly agree", "agree", "neither", "disagree", "strongly disagree".

Read one of the statements (below) and ask pupils to stand next to the word they think best sums up their view. Ask some pupils to share their views and explain their thinking – What makes them think that? Repeat with the next statement.

Statements:

- Friendships where people talk about their feelings are more important to girls than boys.
- Boys would never want to cry or tell a friend they are scared.
- Girls like to give their female friends a hug, but boys don't like to hug their male friends.
- It is more difficult for boys to remain calm when they feel angry.
- People don't like it when girls express big emotions like anger, loudly.
- Girls are more kind than boys.
- People of all genders should be able to share their feelings with close friends.

You can read all the statements, or just choose some. Which you choose and how many, will depend on the needs and interests of the class and the time you have available.

Pupils should be encouraged to respond openly and honestly. If pupils feed back that they don't experience gender stereotypes in this way, praise them for contributing to a school that values gender equality and inclusion, and how they, by acting so positively, have contributed to that. You may find you need to probe further, saying things like, 'Can you think of a time or a place when this might have happened?'

Main Activity 2 (25 Minutes)

Expressing emotions

Organise the pupils into groups (three or four pupils in each group) and give out copies of [Resource 1: Emotion scenarios](#).

Ask the pupils to read about the characters (who are all in Year 5 or 6 at school), and the emotions they are experiencing. Then discuss the following questions:

- Why might the character/s be responding in this way?
- Could the character/s be finding it hard to share their emotions openly because of pressure from others to act in a gender stereotyped way? (Are there other stereotypes that could also be influencing the situation?)
- If they want to share their emotions but feel they can't, what might be stopping them?
- What can they do about it?

You may want to refer back to the introductory activity to help pupils explore these questions. For example, if boys/men are stereotypically meant to be tough, they may find it more difficult to show softness in relation to their emotions, such as crying for example; if girls are stereotypically meant to be quiet, calm and demure, they might find it more difficult to express emotions like anger.

It is important to recognise that there may be other issues or stereotypes that also affect the characters' reactions. These might relate to their ethnicity or cultural background, or other expectations around their behaviour. This, therefore, can be an opportunity to explore the influence of some of these issues, alongside gender. During the feedback, you may want to raise whether the receptivity of the other people in the scenario depends on the person's ethnicity – for example, if Amber is a Black girl, would people respond differently to if she were an Asian girl, or a white-British girl. This will depend on the time you have available, the level and ability of your class, as well as the context of the school and the pupils being taught.

You could give each group a different scenario, or you may choose some scenarios for the whole class to focus on, with each group discussing the same examples.

Choose examples that best suit the needs of your class context and school community. All children, whatever their gender, are likely to be influenced by binary thinking about gender and gender stereotypes, so these scenarios should be relatable for all pupils, whatever their gender. On the other hand, teachers should be mindful that any scenario that refers to 'girls' or 'boys' may leave non-binary children feeling they do not fit.

After the pupils have had time to discuss the scenarios in their groups, take feedback about the different characters and their situations.

Information to support pupil feedback:

- **Henry** – because boys are stereotypically expected not to cry or show weakness, Henry feels he can't cry in front of others, but holding his feelings inside could make him feel worse.
- **Amber** – because stereotypically, it is not seen as desirable for girls to be loud, Amber feels she has to hold back some of her personality, so she is not showing her true self. Pupils may raise they think girls who are Black, Asian or of mixed ethnicity may be more likely to be criticised for being angry or loud, or you could ask: Might Amber be labelled as aggressive in this situation - why might this be?
- **Jamal** – because boys are not stereotypically expected to talk about their feelings, and to deal with things on their own, Jamal does not talk about his worries.
- **Kyle** – stereotypes about boys sometimes mean they are told or expected to get their anger and aggression out through fighting.
- **Freya** – seems afraid to share her angry feelings that she has inside and chooses to keep quiet so as not to make a fuss. Stereotypically this is sometimes one way girls are expected to behave.
- **Chang** – wants the approval of his friends who may think boys should stand up for themselves if someone says something that offends them through fighting.
- **Inaya** – is upset about what other people are saying about her looks. Gender stereotypes can mean people can feel pressure to look a certain way, that how you look is the most important thing, or that as a girl, someone is either clever or pretty.
- **Oliver and Muhammed** – gender stereotypes can give the message that boys should not be close with each other, but in fact children need supportive friendships with other children, whatever their gender. Oliver and Muhammed should be able to have a close friendship at school without being teased, others should see this a positive friendship, celebrate and value it.

There are many different ways the characters could express their feelings in healthier ways. For example, stomping on the ground, journaling, expressing feelings through art or drama, listening to music, walking outside, taking a deep breath, stepping away from a situation, taking 'cooling off time', talking to a friend, doing the opposite to what they think they 'should' do - e.g. telling someone, rather than keeping the feelings in and ignoring them, etc. It is important that they seek help or advice from a trusted adult, especially in a situation that seems unsafe or that is upsetting them. They might choose one or multiple options to express the range of their emotions.

Discuss how in some of the scenarios, the characters did not express their emotions fully and some of the reasons for this were to do with their friends' reactions, or how they thought their friends might react. How easy or difficult might it be for some of the characters to behave differently because of pressure from friends?

Ask the pupils: What could their friends or classmates do to support the character if a similar situation happened again (making sure they are not being limited by gender stereotypes)?

Discuss the importance of things like:

- Noticing and acknowledging how the person is feeling.
- Showing care and concern for the person.
- Telling them it is ok for them to feel...
- Offering them an opportunity to talk about their feelings.
- Making time to talk to them.
- Listening, without judging them.

Making suggestions about what the person could do next to handle the emotions in healthier ways, including talking to a trusted adult.

Ask the pupils to choose one of the scenarios to focus on and working in groups of three, role-play part of the scenario. One of the pupils acts as the main character in the scenario, and the other two as their friends.

To begin, ask them to freeze-frame the end of the scenario. The two friends role-play being supportive to the main character, and the pupil playing the main character can role-play expressing their emotion openly or explaining how they are feeling to their friends.

After a short while improvising their role plays, you might want to invite some groups to show their role plays to the class.

To safely manage role play, pupils should be given the opportunity to opt-in and only participate in sharing their role play with the class if they want to. Only positive behaviour should be rehearsed through role play. Before beginning the role play, pupils should 'step into role' (such as when they sit on the chair, they are in role) and afterwards 'de-role' (standing up from the chair and shaking off the character).

Main Activity 3 (5 Minutes)

The human box

Go back to the introductory activity (Stereotypical characteristics) and the flipchart paper showing the stereotypical characteristics of men/boys and women/girls. On a clean piece of flipchart paper, write the heading 'human'.

Ask the pupils whether they would move any of the boys/men or girls/women characteristics to the human characteristics, and which they would choose.

Pupils can go up to the chart individually to choose and move the sticky notes.

Explain that these characteristics can apply to people of all genders. So instead of having a 'boys/men box' and a 'girls/women box', we can choose characteristics we would like to have in the 'human box' – positive qualities whatever a person's gender.

Move some of the characteristics from the other two flipcharts to the new piece, headed 'human', asking some pupils to help. For example, positive qualities from the girl/woman box might include spending time with children, expressing a range of emotions, being caring and kind. Some positive qualities from the boy/man box might include being a decision- maker, leader, being active and athletic, etc.

Ideally, the children will decide that all positive human characteristics are positive whatever a person's gender – and move them all to the 'human box'.

Plenary (5 Minutes)

Sentence starters

Pupils complete the sentence starters:

- Something I think people should know about gender and expressing emotions is...
- Something I will do to help myself or others express emotions in healthier ways is...

This can be a written activity, with pupils recording their ideas on paper, in journals or exercise books, or it can be a spoken activity with pupils sharing in pairs, or as a whole class.

ADDITIONAL / EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Share this e-book with the class: <https://elisegravel.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/artsyboys.pdf> which encourages people to be proud of their different qualities and characteristics, and express different emotions, no matter their gender.
- Pupils can design a positive poster for boys, girls or all children whatever their gender, encouraging them to express their emotions in healthy ways.
- For ideas or inspiration for posters, to download these examples for display in the classroom or to give to pupils to take home, see:
- <https://elisegravel.com/en/blog/boys-can-be/>
- <https://elisegravel.com/en/blog/girls-can-be/>

