

Lesson 8

Sexual Stereotypes

Activity 2

Let's think about how these stereotypes vary when they intersect with other identities. First, count the number of persons you thought of that were white versus another race/ethnicity. Is there any discrepancy? Why do you think this is? Many stereotypes involve individuals of a specific race, class, etc., excluding the consideration of other identities.

Were there any categories in which it was more difficult to think of someone? Which ones? Many people have difficulty finding persons with disabilities or Native Americans or Asian Americans. What does it mean that these people are invisible? Are there good consequences? Bad consequences?

What about gender? Did you make any assumptions about gender? For example, many of you may have thought of the beloved talk show host Ellen DeGeneres for the lesbian category. How would you rate Ellen on the sexy and sexual scales? Many would say that she would rate low on the sexy scale and moderate on the sexual scale. Does this fit common stereotypes for lesbians? But Ellen has other identities, too. For example, she is a white, upper class, able-bodied woman. Can you think of other lesbian women from popular media who don't fit Ellen's other identities? How do they vary on the sexy and sexual scale?

Questions for Writing or Discussion:

1. Imagine you are at a party and one of the following individuals begins to flirt with you. How would the stereotypes associated with this person's social group affect how you perceive him or her as a potential sexual or romantic person?
 - b. An individual with a physical disability
 - c. An African American individual
 - d. A Latino individual
 - e. An individual who identifies as bisexual
 - f. An Asian American individual
2. Can you think of how stereotypes may play out in the lives of GLBT individuals?
3. Are there any ways in which sexual and gender stereotypes and the moral distance between individuals of different groups might contribute to sexual violence?

4. How can we determine whether we hold sexual stereotypes and what those sexual stereotypes are?
5. Are we responsible for automatic sexual stereotypic associations that arise in us? Are we responsible for how sexual stereotypes affect our behaviors?
6. Can we internalize sexual stereotypes of our own group? How does that affect us?