
Effective Youth Development Programming

5.3 Checking Stereotypes and Cultural Assumptions

Objectives: Participants will identify common stereotypes and assumptions adults have of young people.
Participants will identify ways to make program environments more inclusive and safe.

Material: Sheets of newsprint, labels or photos, markers, tape

Slides: Manifestations
Interventions

Handout: 5.3. Addressing Stereotypes

Time: 60-70 minutes

Audience: Service providers, schools, after school care

Lesson Plan

In advance: Gather 4-5 pictures of young people that represent a sub group such as skateboarders, goths/punks, athletes, princess, computer wiz, thug, LGBTQ, recent immigrant, youth with disability.

Young people come from an increasingly diverse background. In addition they experiment with personal expressions – from dress code to music to language and behavior. We as adults are sometimes challenged by this and we might jump to conclusions about who they are and what they do. I would like us to explore some of the stereotypes attached to young people.

Step 1> Small group activity (20-30 min)

Divide group into 4 to 5 smaller groups. Hand out youth pictures, a different one to each group.

Take a look at the young person on the picture; discuss and write down reactions and assumptions people might have about this youth in regards to who they are and how they behave. Take 5 minutes to do that. Then we will switch pictures.

Have each group look at a minimum of 3 pictures. Process all the pictures that have been circulating. Ask each group to describe some of the assumptions they discussed. Positive and negatives ones. Facilitate a brief discussion on the implications: How do stereotypes influence the interaction between adults and young people? What are the repercussions of these stereotypes?

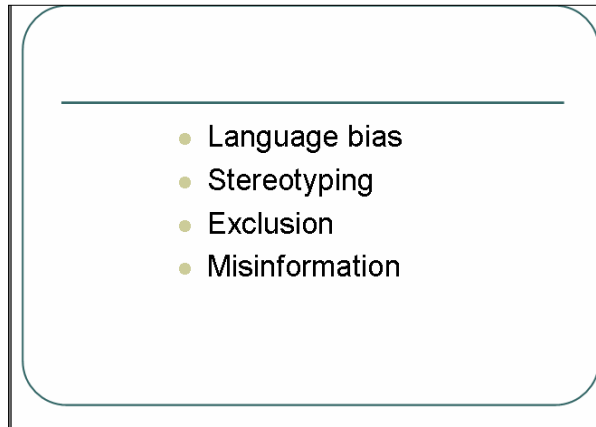
Step 2> Small group activity (40 min)

We talked about many of the stereotypes young people are facing. Individually, we can be deliberate about not giving in to assumptions, but we also need to be work on this in our work environments. Let us think about our work places, the climate and environment, and talk about ways to enhance and create safer environments for all young people – independent of race, ethnic group, gender, sexual orientation and disability.

There are lots of ways to express - subtle and not so subtle - stereotypes and biases. I would like us to look at several ways they can manifest themselves.

Distribute handout: 5.3 Addressing Stereotypes. Use the following slides to go over the handout.

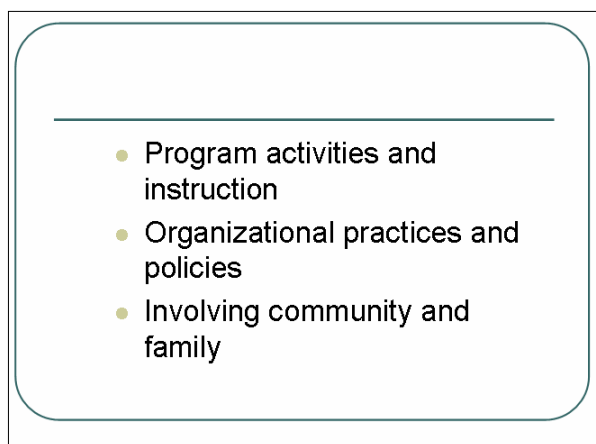
Slide - Manifestations



Review slide using examples on handout or others.

So, first I want you to think about how stereotypes can manifest themselves in your program and organizations. Then, think about things we can do to counter those? We can intervene on different levels:

Slide - Interventions



Review slide.

Ask participants if there are clarification questions.

Divide participants into 4 groups. Give each group one sheet of newsprint and markers.

I would like each group to take on one area and develop strategies to address that particular issue. Think about things you can do on a program and organizational level and by involving community groups or families.

Once each group has outlined several strategies, they will BUMP IT UP (hand it on) to the next group. The new group will think of ways to enhance one of the strategies listed. Then we will BUMP IT UP one more time. This way we all will benefit from everybody's experience and creative thinking.

Assign each group a topic. Ask them to write their topic on top of the newsprint. Give them 10 minutes to develop action steps and ideas. Then ask groups to bump it up to the group next to them. Give them 5-7 minutes to enhance one strategy. Then bump it up one more time (5 minutes).

Each time when it is time to switch, call BUMP IT UP.

Process. Ask each group to present their strategies. Invite clarification questions and additional comments. Refer to afterschool and cultural diversity education manuals for additional training and information material (see references).

Optional: If there is interest to have strategies typed up, ask for a volunteer who will type and disseminate the information.

Facilitator Tips

1. For step 1 of the activity, pictures of young people from magazines or internet reflecting a subgroup work well. It is best to reflect several racial groups.
2. Participants might feel uncomfortable doing the first step; stress that they write down society's stereotypes; that they are not asked to make personal statements. The goal of this activity is to acknowledge that those stereotypes do exist and influence how adults interact with young people, and that they need to be intentionally dealt with.
3. It is best in combination with activity 5.2 Feeling Safe.
4. To prepare for the activity, review material on safe environments in Community Network for Youth Development: Youth Development Guide (www.cnyd.org) and cultural diversity education manuals (see references).