



CONVERSATION STARTERS: FOR STUDENT ATHLETES

SUMMARY:

Student athletes, use these tools to examine how media shapes beliefs about behavior, informs self-concepts, and perpetuates limiting stereotypes about girls and women.

Using film as a catalyst for cultural transformation, **The Representation Project** inspires individuals and communities to challenge and overcome limiting stereotypes so that everyone, regardless of gender, race, class, age, sexual orientation, or circumstance, can fulfill their human potential.

These tools are designed to allow student athletes to consider the ways mainstream media shapes their beliefs about girls and women. We hope to empower student athletes to engage in conversations about ways that media informs your self-concepts. We encourage you to participate in both discussions and hands-on activities that explore the harmful stereotyping that limits possibilities available for girls and women.

We hope that by using these activities you will spark conversations that bring about real dialogue and introspection. Provided are a list of references to national organizations that you can use as additional resources. Please feel free to let us know how these activities worked for you and your peers. For more information and additional resources visit our website therepresentationproject.org. *Please also share your thoughts and photos of your projects with us on Twitter using @TheRepProject.*



**THE
REPRESENTATION
PROJECT**

CONVERSATION STARTERS: FOR STUDENT ATHLETES

DRAWING IDEALS

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:



JOURNALS



PENS

JOURNALING ACTIVITY:

DRAWING IDEALS (45 min)

The following activity is to be done with a peer partner.

1. Ask your peer partners if they are familiar with the term “ideal.” If they say no or are unable to provide the correct definition, tell them that ideal means a standard that is considered perfect.
2. Ask them to think about how to describe the ideal woman.

3. Tell your peer partners that each of you will make a list of characteristics that make up the ideal woman in your journals. In each of your lists, you will write adjectives that describe her.
4. Answer questions about her such as, “who does she resemble?” — for example, an athlete? How does she act or speak? What does she care about?
5. Compare lists. How are the peer partner’s concepts of an ideal woman either different from or the same as your concepts?
6. Repeat the exercise to make two lists that compare characteristics of the ideal man in your journals.
7. What are the differences between how your peer partners describe and define an ideal woman and man and how you describe and define the ideal woman or man?

8. Consider if any of the characteristics (either your peer partner’s or your own) of an ideal man or woman are stereotypical.
9. Ask your peer partners if they are familiar with the term “objectify.” If your peer partners are unaware of the definition, inform them that “to objectify” is to symbolically turn a human into an object. Ask you peer partners if the characteristics they listed for the ideal man or woman are objectifying characteristics?
10. How does advertising and media influence both your and your peer partner’s perceptions of the ideal man and woman?
11. Share your thoughts with your peer partners. Both you and your peer partners should write your responses in your journals.

WHAT'S IN A SONG?

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:



SONG LYRICS (*last page*)

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION:

WHAT'S IN A SONG? (45 min)

1. Ask your peer partners to identify a song that currently plays on the radio or online that describes women.
2. Download the lyrics to the song.
3. Review the lyrics with your peer partners.
4. Ask your peer partners if they know the definition of the term gender identity. If they say no or are unable to provide the correct definition, inform them that gender identity is a person's private sense of and experience with being a boy or man, girl, or woman, or a gender that may or may not correspond with the individual's biological sex.
5. Remind your peer partners that media teaches us things about gender identities.
6. Ask them what the song teaches us about women.
7. Ask them how the song portrays gender identities.
8. What does the song tell women they are supposed to do? How are they to behave according to the song? What about men?
9. Ask your peer partners if they know the definition of the term "stereotype." If they say no or are unable to answer, remind them that stereotypes are generalizations, usually exaggerated or oversimplified and often offensive, that are used to describe or distinguish a group or an individual from that group.
10. Did your peer partners find any stereotypes about women or men in the lyrics to the song?
11. Have your peer partners heard other songs recently that contain stereotypes?
12. Ask your peer partners if they know the definition of the term "misogyny." If they say no or are unable to answer, remind them that misogyny is contempt for, dislike of, or hatred towards women that can be manifested in numerous ways including discrimination, violence, and objectification.
13. How does misogyny impact women and girls? Does misogyny also harm men and boys? If so, how?
14. Ask your peer partners how they feel when they hear songs like this one on the radio or online.
15. Have your peer partners witnessed misogyny in their everyday interactions?
16. If they found the lyrics to be stereotypical or misogynistic, did this make them feel uncomfortable?
17. How do your peer partners deal with pain and difficulty?
18. Share available resources with your peer partners.
19. Tell them that your goal is to provide a safe space to discuss topics that concern them.

BREAKING FREE OF STEREOTYPES

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:



BUTCHER PAPER OR POSTER BOARD



MAGAZINES, NEWSPAPERS



SCISSORS



GLUE



MARKERS

ART ACTIVITY:

BREAKING FREE OF STEREOTYPES (45 min)

1. Divide your paper into two sections or boxes: one for female "stereotypes" and one for male "stereotypes."
2. Cut out stereotypical images of women and men from advertising and editorials and paste them into the corresponding sections.
3. Next write words around the images that describe what you see.
4. Ask your peer partners why they selected the images chosen. What is stereotypical about the images?
5. Did you and your peer partners identify similar kinds of stereotypes?
6. What makes the stereotypes in these images harmful?
7. What are some ways that you might avoid stereotyping? Being stereotyped?





CONVERSATION STARTERS:

THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES ARE FOR YOUNGER STUDENT ATHLETES.

DRAWING IDEALS

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:



JOURNALS



PENS

ART ACTIVITY:

DRAWING IDEALS (45 min)

1. Ask your peer partners if they know the definition of the term ideal. If they say no or are unable to provide the correct definition, tell your peer partners that ideal means something that is perfect.
2. Ask your peer partners to think about how they might describe an ideal girl.
3. What does she look like? How does she behave?

4. Tell your peer partners that both you and they will work together to draw a picture of the ideal girl.
5. Before you begin drawing the picture, both you and your peer partners should decide how you would like to portray her. How old is she? Where will she be in the drawing? Is she alone or with others? What will she be doing?
6. Consider if any of the characteristics (either your peer partner's or your own) of the ideal girl are stereotypical. Do they objectify?
7. Work with your peer partners to draw the picture of the girl.
8. Does the picture of the girl look like the ideal girl you had in mind?

9. How is the picture the same? How is it different?
10. Is the drawing perfect? If yes, why? If not, why not?
11. If you answered no, is it okay that the drawing is not perfect?
12. Share your thoughts with your peer partners.
13. Display the drawing.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:



SONG LYRICS (*last page*)

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION:

WHAT'S IN A SONG? (45 min)

1. Print and distribute the lyrics to the “Billy Boy” song.
2. Review the lyrics with your peer partners.
3. Remind your peer partners that media teaches us things.
4. Ask your peer partners what the song teaches us about “Billy Boy.” What does it teach us about his wife?
5. Ask your peer partners if they know the definition of the term “gender identity.” If they say no or are unable to provide the correct definition, tell your peer partners that someone’s gender identity is a person’s private sense of and experience with being a boy or man, girl, or woman, or a gender that may or may not correspond with the individual’s biological sex.
6. Ask them what the song teaches about gender identities.
7. What are women supposed to do according to the song? How are they to behave? What about men?
8. Ask your peer partners if they know the definition of the term “stereotype.” If they say no or are unable to answer, remind them that stereotypes are generalizations, usually exaggerated or oversimplified and often offensive, that are used to describe or distinguish a group or an individual from that group.
9. Did your peer partners find any stereotypes about women or men in the lyrics to the song?
10. Have your peer partners heard other songs recently that had stereotypes?
11. Ask your peer partners how they feel when they hear songs like this either in school, on the radio, or online.
12. If they found the lyrics to be stereotypical, did this make them feel uncomfortable?

13. How do your peer partners deal with pain and difficulty?
14. Share available resources with your peer partners.
15. Remind them that your goal is to provide a safe space to discuss topics that concern them.

BREAKING FREE OF STEREOTYPES

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:



BUTCHER PAPER OR POSTER BOARD



MAGAZINES, NEWSPAPERS



SCISSORS



GLUE



MARKERS

ART ACTIVITY:

BREAKING FREE OF STEREOTYPES (45 min)

1. Divide your paper into two sections or boxes: one for female “stereotypes” and one for male “stereotypes.”
2. Label one side “Men and Boys” and the other “Women and Girls.”
3. Cut out stereotypical images of women, girls, men, and boys from magazines and paste them into the corresponding sections.
4. Next cut out words and glue them around the images. The words you cut out should describe the images you chose.
5. What is stereotypical about the images?
6. What makes the stereotypes in these images harmful?
7. What are some ways that one might avoid stereotyping? Being stereotyped?
8. When your collage is complete, display the poster.



Oh, where have you been, Billy Boy, Billy Boy?

Oh, where have you been, Charming Billy?

I have been to seek a wife, She's the joy of my life, She's a young thing
And cannot leave her mother.

Did she ask you to come in, Billy Boy, Billy Boy?

Did she ask you to come in, Charming Billy?

Yes, she asked me to come in, There's a dimple in her chin. She's a young thing
And cannot leave her mother.

Can she make a cherry pie, Billy Boy, Billy Boy?

Can she make a cherry pie, Charming Billy?

She can make a cherry pie, Quick as a cat can wink an eye, She's a young thing
And cannot leave her mother.

How old is she,

Billy Boy, Billy Boy?

How old is she,

Charming Billy?

Three times six and four times seven, Twenty-eight and eleven,

She's a young thing

And cannot leave her mother.