



# CONVERSATION STARTERS: FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS OF STUDENT ATHLETES

## SUMMARY:

*Parents and caregivers examine how media shapes beliefs and behaviors, informs self-concepts, and perpetuates limiting stereotypes of 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. We are pleased to bring our parent and caregiver resources to you. These tools are designed so that parents and caregivers of student athletes can engage in discussions that address ways that media shape beliefs about girls and women.

We encourage you to participate in both conversations and hands-on activities that explore the harmful ways that stereotypes limit the opportunities available for girls and women.

We hope that by using these tools you will spark conversation that brings about real dialogue and introspection. We have also provided 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 children. For more information and additional resources visit our website [therepresentationproject.org](http://therepresentationproject.org). *Please also share your thoughts and photos of your projects with us on Twitter using @TheRepProject.*



**THE  
REPRESENTATION  
PROJECT**



# CONVERSATION STARTERS:

## FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS OF STUDENT ATHLETES

### DRAWING IDEALS

#### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:



JOURNALS



PENS

#### JOURNALING ACTIVITY:

##### DRAWING IDEALS (45 min)

1. Ask your children if they know the definition of 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 your children to think about how to describe the ideal woman.
3. Tell your children 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 children’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 children 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 children’s or your own) of an ideal man or woman are stereotypical.

9. Define the term objectify. If your children are unaware of the definition inform them that *“to objectify”* is to symbolically turn a human into an object. Ask your children do the characteristics objectify.

10. How does advertising and media influence both your and your children’s perceptions of the ideal man and woman?

11. Share your thoughts with your children. Both you and your children should write your responses in your journals.

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED:



SONG LYRICS

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION:

### WHAT'S IN A SONG? (45 min)

1. Ask your children to identify a song that currently plays on the radio or online that describes women.
2. Print the lyrics to the song.
3. Review the lyrics with your children.
4. Remind your children that media teaches us things.
5. Ask your children what the song teaches us about women.
6. Ask your children 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.

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 children 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 children find any stereotypes about women or men in the lyrics to the song?
11. Have your children heard other songs recently that had stereotypes?
12. Ask your children 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 children how they feel when they hear songs like this one on the radio or online.
15. Have your children 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 children deal with pain and difficulty?
18. Remind your children that you are an available resource.
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. When the collages are complete, display them in a room in your home.
5. Ask your children why they selected the images chosen. What is stereotypical about the images?

6. Did you and your children identify similar kinds of stereotypes?
7. What makes the stereotypes in these images harmful?
8. What are some ways that you might avoid stereotyping? Being stereotyped?





# CONVERSATION STARTERS:

THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES ARE FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS WITH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN:

## DRAWING IDEALS

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:



CONSTRUCTION PAPER



MARKERS



COLORED PENCILS

### ART ACTIVITY:

#### DRAWING IDEALS (45 min)

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

4. Tell your children 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 children should decide how you would like to portray her. What does she look like? 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 children’s or your own) of the ideal girl are stereotypical. Do they objectify?

7. Work with your children 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 children.
13. Display the drawing in a room in your home.

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED:



SONG LYRICS (last page)

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION:

### WHAT'S IN A SONG? (45 min)

1. Print the lyrics to the “Billy Boy” song.
2. Review the lyrics with your children.
3. Ask your children 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.
4. Remind your children that media teaches us things about gender identities.
5. Ask your children what the song teaches us about “Billy Boy.” What does it teach us about his wife?
6. Ask them how the song portrays gender identities.
7. What does the song tell women they are supposed to do? How are they to behave according to the song? What about men?
8. Ask your children 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 children find any stereotypes about women or men in the lyrics to the song?
10. Have your children heard other songs recently that had stereotypes?
11. Ask your children 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 children deal with pain and difficulty?
14. Remind your children that you are an available resource.
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 “Boys and Men” and the other “Girls and Women.”
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 in a room in your home.





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.