



LESSON

Challenging Gender Stereotyping and Homophobia in Sports

This lesson discusses common characteristics and stereotypes that are associated with athletes.

Grade Level 6-8, 9-12

Topic: Gender & Sexual Identity, Bullying & Bias

Subject: Reading & Language Arts, Social Studies

Social Justice Domain: Action

Handout: Stereotype of Male and Female Athletes and Artists

OBJECTIVES

- identify qualities that they associate with male and female athletes;
- identify the attitudes they have about gender, sexual orientation, and athletics;
- understand what stereotypes are and how they harm and limit people;
- explore what stereotypes they may believe about gender and sexual orientation;
- discuss how those stereotypes show up at their school, and
- make a plan for how to debunk stereotypes about gender and sexual orientation at school.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What characteristics do you associate with athletes? Which are positive and which are negative for male athletes? Which are positive and which are negative for female athletes?
- How do gender stereotypes and homophobia affect students?
- What can you do at your school to change homophobic attitudes?

MATERIALS

Article: "Can the NFL Tackle Homophobia?"

Handout 1: Stereotypes of Male and Female Athletes and Artists

Vocabulary

homophobia [,hōmə'fōbēə] (*noun*) The irrational fear or antipathy toward LGBT people and homosexuality.

stereotypes ['sterēə,tīp; 'sti(ə)r-] (*noun*) A set of preconceived ideas or beliefs, usually negative, over-generalized to all or most members of a group based on their membership in that group. Stereotypes can be based on race or ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, physical appearance, class or socioeconomic status, occupation, etc.

Procedure

1. What is a stereotype? What is homophobia? In small groups, have students define the terms. Use books or web sites. Students will write a one- or two-sentence definition of each word. Compare group's definitions with other groups' definitions to make sure students understand the terms.
2. Each group should complete the handout, Stereotypes of Male and Female Athletes and Artists.
3. Students read "Can the NFL Tackle Homophobia?" Ask students: When you think back to stereotypes about male athletes, what, if anything, in the article surprises you? Why do you think no professional football players self-identified as gay while they were playing pro ball?
4. Have students write a journal entry about gender stereotypes and homophobia in professional sports and at your school. Tell students to bring their ideas to a group discussion about what they can do at school to help combat homophobia and gender stereotyping. Students make a plan and identify the steps involved in carrying out the plan, and take on the task as an ongoing class project. Students can keep records of your progress in your journal.
5. Have students think about what they have learned in this lesson, then answer these questions in a journal.
 - Do I have stereotypical ideas about gender and sports?
 - What can we at our school do develop more positive relationships that dispel stereotypes and misinformation about sports and gender?
 - How might knowing what I know now affect what I say to people or things that I do?
 - What have I learned? What would I like to know more about this topic?

EXTERNAL LINKS

Young Gay Athletes Find A Place Out on the Field <http://articles.latimes.com/2007/jul/28/sports/sp-gay28>

Come Out of the Dark Ages <http://views.washingtonpost.com/theleague/panelists/2009/06/nfl-homosexuality-f...>