

Gender Stereotypes and Dominant Cultural Values Handout

These stereotypes about how men and women should act have become part of U.S. cultural values. These values represent the dominant culture here in the U.S. Not everyone who lives in the U.S. is from here originally, although there are many other cultures that have similar values to these. Even though individuals and families may not believe in these values, they are so common that they can influence people without them even knowing it.

Values associated with Men

Strong = Not needing anyone's help; standing by the decisions you make; confident and independent; physically strong

Tough = Able to withstand emotional and physical discomfort; not crying if you're hurt; heterosexual; not "girly"

In Control = Makes decisions for self and others, others don't make decisions for you; can do what you want to do and say what's going to happen; being responsible for the safety of others

Values associated with Women

Emotional = empathy (able to relate to others and their emotions); showing or expressing feelings, especially sadness, excitement, fear, happiness, and nervousness; talking about feelings, "talking things out"; sharing emotions with others

Polite = good manners – saying please and thank you; deferring to authority; not speaking out of turn; not hurting other peoples' feelings

Taking Care of Others = putting the needs of others first/before their own; nurturing others; noticing the needs of others & responding to those needs; doing things for others/helping others; not hurting others emotionally or physically

Scenarios Activity

Complete the example scenario with the whole class – make sure to fill in the answers on your own sheet. Complete additional scenarios in small groups.

EXAMPLE: Felicia complains to her friends when her boyfriend hurts her feelings, but doesn't tell him.

What cultural value (or values) is likely influencing Felicia's actions?

How could she use the same value (or a different cultural value) to help express her feelings to her boyfriend?

1. Bruno joins in when his teammates are calling someone homophobic slurs.

What cultural value (or values) is likely influencing Bruno's actions?

How could he use the same value (or a different cultural value) to resist the pressure to victimize someone?

2. Jin wants to wear a pink shirt but is afraid it makes him look like a sissy.

What cultural value (or values) is likely influencing Jin's actions?

How could he use the same value (or a different cultural value) to help him wear what he wants?

3. Cooper tells his girlfriend that he wants to have sex tonight, but doesn't ask her what she wants to do.

What cultural value (or values) is likely influencing Cooper’s actions?

How could he use the same value (or a different cultural value) to include his girlfriend in the decision?

- 4. Dominique calls her friend’s boyfriend, Kenneth, “pathetic” because he apologized for hurting her feelings at lunch.**

What cultural male value (or values) is Dominique reinforcing with her comment?

How could she use the same value (or a different cultural value) to support Kenneth in apologizing to his girlfriend?

- 5. Aleesha goes along with her boyfriend when he wants to have sex (even if she’s not in the mood) because she doesn’t want to hurt his feelings.**

What cultural value (or values) is likely influencing Aleesha’s actions?

How could she use the same value (or a different cultural value) to express that she’s not in the mood?

- 6. Diante doesn’t insist on using condoms because her boyfriend says they don’t feel good.**

What cultural value (or values) is likely influencing Diante’s actions?

How could she use the same value (or a different cultural value) to encourage her boyfriend to wear a condom?

Sexual Attitudes Survey

Please rank each of the following 5 statements. In the first column please record how strongly you agree or disagree with each of them. In the second column please record how strongly you believe other people your age would agree or disagree with the statement. There are no right or wrong answers, just write what you honestly think. Please DO NOT put your name on this survey.

Statement	YOUR answer	How you think your peers would answer
I would stop sexual activity when asked to, even if I were already aroused or “turned on.”	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat agree <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat agree <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
It is important to get consent, or permission, before sexual touch with a partner.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat agree <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat agree <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
I think someone should stop the first time their partner says no to sexual activity.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat agree <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat agree <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
Even if two people have had sex in the past, it is still important to make sure the other person is giving consent the next time they want to have sex.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat agree <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat agree <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
In a sexual relationship, it is important for partners to talk about what they are comfortable with and respect the other person’s boundaries.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat agree <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat agree <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree

This survey was adapted with permission from “*Violence Related Behaviors and Beliefs (VRBB) Insert*” created by Western Washington University’s Prevention and Wellness Services.