

Objective: To train partners of the opposite sex in awareness of sex-role stereotyped perceptions of one another.

TIME REQUIRED	Several days
RISK LEVEL	Moderate
PARTICIPANTS NEEDED	Two or more participants; a facilitator may be needed to guide discussion on the experience after completion
PROCEDURE	Please take the following steps: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Explain to the students that sex roles resemble cultures as they shape individual values, perceptions, and decisions.2. Divide a larger group of colleagues into male-female partners.3. Distribute the list of sex-role stereotypes in Exhibit 5.4. Each partner should respond to the questions or tasks in the exhibit and then exchange responses to discuss their perceptions with one another.4. Tell the participants to confirm or disconfirm each hypothesis as it relates to them and their partners and to write the response on the same page as the statement and question. Remind the participants to not discuss the responses or the items with their partners until each has responded and exchanged text booklets.5. After they have responded to each of the items, have the partners exchange booklets and discuss their responses.

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6. After all partner teams have completed their responses and discussed their perceptions, have them assemble into one large group to discuss the effect of sex-role stereotyping in their particular organization or group.
7. Explain that sex-role stereotyping has become a topic of controversy giving rise to accusations, counteraccusations, anger, and victimization of both men and women. This experience will attempt to reduce the conflict between different-sex colleagues in several ways:
 - a. The experience will relate to factual, data-based research conclusions about sex-role stereotyping rather than emotional accusations or unfounded generalities.
 - b. The experience will be limited to the private and confidential exchange between two different-sex colleagues without involving other outsiders.
 - c. The experience requires the two participant colleagues, one male and one female, to apply the research findings to their own and their partner's situation thereby personalizing the otherwise abstract research conclusions.
 - d. The objectives of this experience are to facilitate a private, nonformal educational exchange between a man and a woman colleague on sex-role stereotypes in their organization or group.

DEBRIEFING

The research for this list of questions was conducted in the 1970s, but a surprising number of the stereotypes still exist. The statements are intended to provoke a private discussion between partners on the topic of sex-role stereotypes. The optimum outcome of participation in this experience will be to increase the participants' motivation for a more comprehensive training program in sex-role stereotypes; to exchange perceptions with a different-sex colleague on how partners see themselves in relation to the other, and to strengthen the trusting relationship with a colleague from the opposite sex on issues of sex-role stereotyping. Some questions for discussion are as follows:

1. How relevant are the data-based statements, given that they are based on research from the 1970s?
2. How would more recent research be different from what is reported in this list?
3. Do you believe that gender role resembles a "culture"?
4. Were you surprised by your partner's responses to any of the items?
5. Having completed this experience, do you feel that your relationship with your partner is stronger than previously?

INSIGHT

Gender cultural differences are frequently overlooked in judging cultural salience.

Exhibit 5.4 *Sex-Role Stereotypes*

Identical products are evaluated more highly when attributed to a man rather than a woman.

- Can you think of an example where you may have evaluated a behavior by someone from one sex differently than the same behavior by someone from the opposite sex?
- Can you think of an example where your partner may have evaluated a behavior by someone from one sex differently than the same behavior by someone from the opposite sex?

As they grow up, women are taught to value men more and themselves less.

- Can you recall a statement from your own childhood where boys were described as superior to girls by a respected adult?
- Would you expect your partner to teach his or her children that boys are superior to girls, even though he or she may not be aware of having taught that lesson?

Women have greater verbal ability than men, whereas men excel in visual-spatial and mathematical ability and tend to be more aggressive.

- What differences did you first become aware of between yourself and those of the opposite sex?
- How do you think your partner saw himself or herself as different from the opposite sex as a child?

Women with a more innovative role or lifestyle tend to have nonstereotypical views of themselves in terms of sex roles.

- Would you describe yourself and your partner as innovative in your lifestyles?
- Would you describe yourself and your partner as having stereotypical views of yourselves in terms of sex roles?

The learning of adult sex roles is seen primarily as occupation directed for men and family directed for women.

- What did your parents want you to be when you grew up, and why?
- What are some other careers in which you think your partner might have enjoyed success?

Women with nontraditional attitudes toward the family not only fantasized more achievement but actually achieved higher grades in college.

- Would you describe the high-achieving women you know as having nontraditional attitudes toward the traditional family?
- Describe one nontraditional attitude of your partner toward the family.

Women who are competent and achieve are viewed as deviant from women's norms and thus anxious, whereas women who see themselves as lacking these traits may suffer low self-esteem.

- If you were given the choice, would you prefer to be viewed as competent, but deviant, or traditional, but lacking in self-esteem?
- Are competent and achieving men less anxious than competent and achieving women?

Women have a more difficult time seeking a career congruent with their self-concept than men.

- Is your career congruent with your self-concept?
- Is your partner's career congruent with his or her self-concept?

Women who have clearly differentiated concepts of career woman and homemaker are more likely to have work plans congruent with their self-image, whether that is as homemaker or career woman.

- Do you differentiate between career woman and homemaker roles as two legitimate directions for men *and* women?
- Does your partner differentiate between both roles as legitimate for men *and* women?

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Exhibit 3.4 *Sex-Role Stereotypes (Continued)*

Men who see themselves as competent or successful have higher self-esteem than men who do not.

- What are the criteria by which you might describe yourself as competent?
- What are the criteria by which you might describe your partner as competent?

Men and women do not differ on the perceived locus of control until college, when women tend to score higher on measures of external locus of control than men.

- Do you tend to believe that most of your decisions are controlled by others or by external sources of power?
- Do you think your partner feels that most decisions are controlled by others or by external sources?

High school women who scored higher on internal locus of control measures chose more innovative careers than did those with higher external locus of control scores.

- Are you attracted to unusual and innovative career choices?
- Do you think your partner is attracted to unusual and innovative career choices?

Sex-role stereotypes of greater male control and power occur even in elementary school textbooks, in which male characters cause good things to happen by their own actions, whereas female characters profit from the actions of others or from fortuitous circumstances.

- Give an example of a fictional hero or heroine who would rescue others and whom you admired or enjoyed learning about.
- Give an example of a fictional hero or heroine that reminds you of your partner in some way.

People with higher scores on internal locus of control measures work harder for success.

- Do you consider a high score on internal locus of control measures to be "sex-fair" as an evaluation criterion?
- Do you think your partner would describe this measure as sex-fair or unbiased?

Women who blame sexism on "the system" aspire to less typical feminine roles and are more likely to seek careers outside the home.

- Do you think it is good and right to blame the system for being sexist?
- Do you think your partner would say it is good and right to blame the system?

College students of both sexes who have strong internal locus of control beliefs describe themselves more positively and with more traits seen as stereotypical characteristics of the opposite sex.

- What are some of your personality traits that you would characterize as more typically belonging to the opposite sex?
- What are some of your partner's personality traits that you would characterize as more typically belonging to the opposite sex?

Increases in internal locus of control beliefs are reported following participation in a community action program when links between old successes and new goals are explicitly pointed out and when sources of possible reinforcement are described.

- Do you see yourself as tending to see your decisions more and more controlled by internal or by external factors?
- Do you see your partner's decisions as being more and more controlled by internal or by external factors?

Women do not achieve as much as men in the professions, politics, and sports according to traditional measures of success.

- In what ways would you consider yourself more successful than your partner?
- In what ways would you consider your partner more successful than yourself?

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Exhibit 5.4 *Sex-Role Stereotypes (Continued)*

Women experience a conflict between success and femininity, but they do not exhibit a greater "fear of success" than men.

- Can you describe a particular incident where you seemed to avoid success?
- Can you describe a particular incident where your partner seemed to avoid success?

Although women have as high an achievement motivation as men, they are more likely to focus their efforts on achievement in traditionally defined feminine tasks, just as men are more likely to focus on masculine task roles.

- In what ways do you think you have a higher achievement motivation than your partner?
- In what ways do you think your partner has a higher achievement motivation than yourself?

When a group of men and women are asked to predict how well they will perform on a specified task, women state lower expectations for their performance than men.

- Describe a particular task that you can do better than your partner.
- Describe a particular task that your partner can do better than yourself.

Women's expectancies of success in various tasks requiring visual-spatial or math abilities decline in adolescence.

- How have your visual-spatial or math abilities contributed or not contributed to your success?
- How have your partner's visual-spatial or math abilities contributed or not contributed to his or her success?

Men and women do not differ significantly in the accuracy of their performance estimations but do differ in the direction of error, with men tending to overestimate their performance and women to underestimate theirs.

- Give an example of when you overestimated your performance and an example of when you underestimated your performance.
- Give two similar examples for your partner.

Women may be underrepresented in many prestigious occupations not only because of external barriers that limit access but also because of internal attitudinal barriers that lead women not to aspire to such professions.

- Give an example of an external barrier and an internal barrier that inhibited your career.
- Give an example of an external barrier and an internal barrier that you think inhibited your partner's career.

Compared to women, men have higher career aspirations and anticipate more successful performance in a variety of tasks.

- Do you have career aspirations that are higher than your partner's aspirations?
- Does your partner have higher career aspirations than you do?

Men and women tend to have different patterns of attribution to explain the outcomes of their performance, with women tending to attribute unexpected success to luck and expected failure to lack of ability.

- Describe a recent success of your own, explaining why it was successful.
- Describe a recent success of your partner's, explaining why it was successful.

Women tend to attribute both success and failure to external causes such as task difficulty or luck, so that they feel less pride in success and less shame at failure than men.

- Describe a recent failure of your own, explaining why it was a failure.
- Describe a recent failure of your partner's, explaining why it was a failure.

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Exhibit 5.4 *Sex-Role Stereotypes (Continued)*

There is sex discrimination in the awarding of financial assistance for college students so that women get less than their share of available money.

- How much scholarship assistance did you get toward the completion of your post-high school education?
- How much scholarship assistance would you estimate your partner received?

Fields are viewed as being masculine or feminine, with more women in professions stereotyped as feminine and more men in professions stereotyped as masculine.

- List the names of at least six people, known to you and to your partner personally, who are in careers that would traditionally be characterized as more appropriate for the opposite sex.
- Have you ever considered a career that might seem more appropriate for someone from the opposite sex?

Over the past decade the proportion of first-year college women planning to enter previously masculine fields such as business, medicine, law, and engineering has nearly tripled.

- What are the careers you would like to see your sons and daughters strive for?
- What are the careers you would expect your partner to want his or her sons and daughters to strive for?

Counselors of both sexes perceive deviant career goals as less appropriate than conforming goals for their female clients and tend to perceive male or female clients with deviant goals as more in need of further counseling.

- If your son or daughter chose a career counselors describe as deviant, would you encourage your son or daughter to continue?
- If your partner's son or daughter chose a career that counselors described as deviant, would your partner encourage his or her son or daughter to continue?

Traditional counselors impute greater maladjustment to female students than to identically described male students.

- Among the eccentric friends you and your partner may both know, cite one male and one female example, indicating which is the most eccentric.
- In what ways do you see yourself as more or less adjusted to stress situations than your partner?

Male counselors in training, while subscribing to a universal standard for healthy men and adults, hold another stereotypical conforming standard for healthy women.

- Write a brief description of a healthy man and a healthy woman.
- Do you expect your partner's comparison to be similar to yours or dissimilar?

In counseling, men are more likely to be rated as having vocational–educational problems, whereas women are more often rated as having emotional–social problems.

- Describe an educational–vocational problem and an emotional–social problem you have experienced or are experiencing.
- Describe similar problems you think your partner might be facing.

Counselors are less well informed to counsel women, especially innovative women, than they are to counsel men.

- Describe the characteristics of a counselor you would seek out for help on your own problems.
- Describe the characteristics of a counselor that you think your partner would seek out.

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Career interest measurement inventories contain a sex bias in their use of language.

- Give some examples of how career interest inventories might contain a sex bias in the use of language.
- Would you expect your partner to disregard advice from career interest measurement inventories if it ran counter to his or her preferred career?

Textbooks frequently portray women in a negatively biased stereotypical manner.

- Why do you think this might be true?
- Why do you think your partner would say it might be true?

It has been harder for a woman to get admitted to an undergraduate college than for a man.

- Do you believe a more qualified male applicant should be rejected in preference for a less qualified female applicant to college, or should sex be disregarded in the question of admissions?
- How do you expect your partner to respond to that question?

The majority of professional women (70%) are concentrated in a few professions traditionally considered feminine, such as teaching, nursing, library science, secretarial positions, and social work.

- Do you expect future men and women to move into professional roles reserved for the opposite sex in the past?
- Do you think your partner expects future men and women to move into one another's professional roles?

In 1970, nearly one half of all women were working because of financial necessity rather than for pleasure or self-fulfillment.

- What would happen if you were to quit your job?
- What would happen if your partner quit his or her job?

Occupations stereotypically associated with high levels of competence, rationality, and assertion were viewed as masculine, whereas occupations stereotypically viewed as feminine were associated with dependency, passivity, nurturance, and interpersonal warmth.

- Describe some masculine and feminine characteristics required for your job.
- Describe some masculine and feminine characteristics required for your partner's job.

Although more women are working today than were before, they are not aspiring to positions as high level as women did 30 years ago.

- Would you describe yourself as aspiring to a higher level position than your parents achieved?
- Would you describe your partner as aspiring to a higher level position than his or her parents achieved?

Role models, especially the maternal model, are closely related to the occupational choices of women and their motivation to pursue these choices.

- Describe how your parents influenced your choice of career.
- From knowing your partner's attitudes, describe what you imagine his or her parents' abilities might have been.

Women preparing for nontraditional, male-dominated fields (e.g., math and science) think men make little differentiation in male and female work roles and other related behaviors or attitudes.

- Do the male colleagues in your workplace differentiate between male and female work roles?
- Do you think your partner will say that male colleagues differentiate between male and female work roles?

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Exhibit 5.4 Sex-Role Stereotypes (Continued)

Sex-role perceptions are affected by parental role behaviors, with maternal employment outside the home resulting in smaller perceived sex-role differences.

- How were you influenced by your mother working or not working outside the home?
- Do you believe your partner's mother worked outside the home?

In research on sex-role stereotypes, men are described by traits called *competency attributes*, such as being independent, objective, competitive, self-confident, and logical, whereas women are seen as lacking these competency traits and possessing traits of *warmth and expressiveness* such as being gentle, tactful, sensitive to the feelings of others, quiet, and tender. Neither men nor women were typically seen as possessing the traits characteristic of the opposite sex.

- Which traits of the opposite sex do you admire most?
- Which traits of the opposite sex do you think your partner will claim to admire most?

Generalized self-esteem measures are as high for women as for men.

- What could you accomplish that would increase your self-esteem?
 - What could your partner accomplish that would increase his or her self-esteem?
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