

Athletes As Leaders



Session 2: Challenging Gender Stereotypes

Make sure you have:

- List of group agreements to refer to during "Warm Up"
- Ball to throw during "Cool Down"
- Technology to show YouTube video

Warm Up

Welcome to our group, Athletes As Leaders!

As a reminder, here are our group agreements we created last week [refer to the group agreements created last session]. Let's take care of each other and stick to these commitments.

Introduce topic (1 min)

Today we are talking about challenging gender stereotypes and traditional gender expectations. A stereotype is an assumption or widely held belief about an entire group of people. So today we are going to be talking about stereotypes about women and girls, and how to challenge them. We also want to acknowledge that not everyone identifies as a "woman" or a "man," and that by keeping this in mind, we can challenge gender stereotypes while keeping this a safe space for all.

Introduce & Show Video (4 min)

Now are going to watch a video with interviews of young people. This advertising campaign is called "Like a Girl" produced by Always. In addition to selling their products, the campaign promotes a positive message and challenges traditional gender expectations for girls and women. When you watch this video, think about what it means to different people to do something "like a girl".

"Always #LikeaGirl" (3:29)

<https://youtu.be/XjJQBjWYDTs>

Work Out

Discussion Questions: (5 min)

- ① *Traditionally, when someone says “you run like a girl” or “you play like a girl,” is it usually meant as a compliment or an insult? Why do you think that is?*
- ② *What differences did you notice between the younger people and older people’s responses? Why do you think that is?*
- ③ *People are not born with these ideas that girls and boys are all that different. But then often in childhood and early adolescence, kids get the message that girls are not as good at certain things. Where are these messages often learned? [possible answers: through toys, clothing, TV, movies, ads, families, peers].*

Talking Points: (2 min)

- » *It is clear that people your age have challenged some of the traditional gender expectations far more than any generation before them. Women athletes play a big leadership role in this area, because they often represent what it means to be strong, powerful, tenacious, and courageous.*
- » *Some common phrases in sports that we may not often think of are based on gender stereotypes. For example, doing push-ups on your knees is often called a ‘girl push-up’, which implies that girls are weaker. Coaches and athletes of all genders widely use these terms, and it’s important to consider how those kinds of subtle phrases can actually be based in gender stereotypes.*
- » ***So here is a challenge for you...**think about the ways that our society stereotypes people based on gender, and try to challenge those messages. For example, think about any younger people you have in your life and how you can teach them that girls can be strong, powerful, and they can succeed in something amazing.*
- » ***As student leaders and athletes...** you can challenge the idea that boys have to be a certain way or girls have to be a certain way. There is no right way to be a girl or a boy; and all genders deserve equality and fairness.*

Cool Down

Team Talk: (8 min)

Now it is time for you to lead the Team Talk! The purpose of the Team Talk is to come up with some ideas for action based on today's topic. We will get in a circle and I'll ask you a few questions. You can pass the ball to your teammate who is willing to share their idea. Only the person who has the ball should be talking.

We want to hear your opinions and ideas on how to challenge or shine positivity to the topic at hand. The circle will allow you to see each other, hear each other, and speak to each other. We all want to hear your ideas to promote healthy relationships and a more supportive and equitable community. In this circle we are going to think of things that you can all do as student leaders & athletes. Don't worry, if you get stuck we will be here to support, add on, or help clarify. Hopefully these will be things everyone in the group can agree to do, when you are interacting with people on your team, at school, on social media, or in the community. We are hoping they will become the new team norms that will last beyond the season and in your everyday lives.

This week we are going to brainstorm ways that we can challenge gender stereotypes:

- ① As we discussed, historically, "like a girl" has been used as an insult to mean "slow or weak". More recently, "like a girl" has been reclaimed to mean something that is positive and empowering. We are going to do that now, so I want you to fill in the blank with a word or short phrase... and I would love to hear lots of your voices on this one! Girls can be _____.
- ② How can you challenge the social messages and limited roles for girls? Like if someone told a young girl she can't play the superhero, the football player, the doctor, or the president?
- ③ What would you say to a girl who is trying to change the way she looks or acts because she wants to fit in with a certain group of girls?

Thank you for all of your participation and sharing. This team has so many great ideas to make the community more empowering for women and girls and more inclusive for everyone. It's time to break for the day (or get to practice).

Facilitator Notes

You may choose to build on the Team Talk, especially if you have a little extra time, and the proper resources and permissions. Ideas include: making a poster & posting it in locker room, videotaping the athletes saying statements from the Team Talk, or taking pictures of them holding up signs with positive statements or action items from the Team Talk. These could be posted on the team's group messages or social media page (if you have consent from everyone and approval from the school).

Close the circle with a team cheer.

Facilitator Notes

You can say "Athletes As Leaders!" or a powerful word or phrase that relates to the Team Talk. You could also do any other team cheer that the team normally uses to end huddles. If this is the beginning of the season, it can be a great time to have team captains or veterans teach new team cheers.