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ACTIVITY 1.1

Blue and Pink Snowballs

CONCEPT

This activity is designed to get students to acknowledge the stereotypes they hold regarding gender. This activity purposefully uses binary stereotypes to get students to examine their own preconceptions about gender.

MATERIALS

Cut up 10-15 slips of pink and blue paper for each student (or pair).

TIME

This activity takes no more than 25 minutes, depending on the length of discussion allowed.

INSTRUCTIONS

On the blue slip of paper, students will write terms and/or phrases that describe male characteristics. On the pink paper, students will write terms/phrases that describe female characteristics. These terms or characteristics should reflect traits they think of when they think about males or females in general (e.g., athletic, doesn't talk about feelings, talkative, likes to hang out with friends, artistic), and may include positive or negative characteristics about either gender.

Then, students will crumple up the papers and pretend they are tossing "snowballs." Students will gently toss their snowballs (papers) around the room and then gather other students' snowballs. With a partner or small group, students should analyze the slips of paper, answer the following questions, and comment on any insights that emerge:

- Are there any terms that overlap?
- What terms surprised you for either gender?
- How does this demonstrate how we view and speak about gender?

Students should be encouraged to consider what they know from psychology as they consider these questions.