

F. E. W. HARPER: UPLIFTED FROM THE SHADOWS

STUDENT HANDOUT 2: STEREOTYPES ARE EVERYWHERE AND THEY POLLUTE THE AIR

Read the stereotypes in the left column and the possible effects in the right column. Think about how people you know might be impacted by these (and other) stereotypes.

Stereotype	How Could This Hurt the Stereotyped Person?
Old people are forgetful.	Mrs. Jones is 90 years old and isn't told information about the medicine she takes because it's assumed that she will forget it because of the stereotype that <i>old people forget everything you tell them</i> . One of the pills she took was very dangerous, but she didn't know it because she'd never been told. One day she took two of the pills and nearly died. She had to go to the hospital to get her stomach pumped.
Boys are better at math and more interested in it than are girls.	Mary has good math grades and wants to be an engineer, but she is not accepted in an A.P. math course because it's assumed that she's not as serious about math as male students who apply for the course.
Tall African American boys love to play basketball.	Ted is African American and very tall. Everybody thinks he plays basketball and is a huge basketball fan. But, basketball is not his favorite sport. In fact, he wants to be on the tennis team. He often feels that people are disappointed that basketball isn't his favorite sport. When he tried out for the tennis team, the coach asked: "Shouldn't you be trying out for the basketball team?" This made Ted feel unwelcome, but he persevered and his tennis skills soon won over the coach.
Rich kids are happy because they get a lot of things they want.	Johnny's dad is a rich doctor and they live together in a big house with a pool. Johnny has the best computer, cell phone, and all the latest computer games. He lives with his dad but he doesn't see his mother much. He feels sad because he is an only child and alone a lot. His parents say they care about him but he hardly sees either of them. They buy him things, but he doesn't feel their love. When he tries to talk about his feelings to friends they say "you've got everything" or "how can you be depressed, you're rich!" This makes him feel even more isolated and sad.

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