

STEREOTYPES

Their Effects and How to Overcome Them

Definition

- Generalizations about a group of people whereby we attribute a defined set of characteristics (which are often wrong) to this group
- Includes race, gender, religion, sexual orientation
- Do not necessarily have to be negative or derogatory



Effects of Stereotyping

- ❑ Leads to discrimination or violence
- ❑ Causes group members to try to "fulfill" the stereotype
- ❑ Damages self-image
- ❑ Perpetuates social prejudice and inequality
- ❑ Gives us a false sense of understanding of our partners
- ❑ Influences how we process information



Common Stereotypes

African Americans

- Criminals/gang members
- Athletes
- Aggressive/violent
- On welfare

Asian Americans

- Bad drivers
- Martial artists
- “Perpetual foreigner”
- Women as geishas

Arab Americans

- “3 B syndrome”
 - ▣ Bombers
 - ▣ Belly-dancers
 - ▣ Billionaires

Latino Americans

- Illegal immigrants
- One ethnic group
- Gangs/drug lords
- Very religious

Some Explanations

African Americans

- Seen as confrontational and violent by others
- See their “tell it like it is” approach as real and honest

Asian Americans

- Don't usually express strong emotions as part of culture
- Others may conclude that they are secretive or cold

Arab Americans

- Increasingly being profiled as terrorists from Muslim organizations
- About 10% are actually Christians

Latino Americans

- Often seen as lazy or lacking initiative
- Culture emphasizes respect for authority, usually wait for orders from a boss

New and Preferred Terms

- African Americans
- Arab Americans
- Asian Americans
- Euro-Americans
- Jewish Americans
- Latino Americans
- American Indians



Overcoming Stereotypes

- Start a meaningful dialogue with an individual whose group is being stereotyped
- Try to keep communication lines open, especially throughout conflict, to avoid misunderstandings
- Question stereotypes and recognize them as “overly simplistic representations”

