

Understanding Stereotypes, Prejudice, & Discrimination

Defining Terms (Myers 2005)

- **Stereotype (Cognition)**

- A belief about the personal attributes of a group of people
 - Sometimes overgeneralized, inaccurate, resistant to new information”

- **Prejudice (Cognition)**

- Preconceived negative judgment

- **Discrimination (Behaviour)**

- Unjustified negative behaviour towards or its members

Stereotype (Mullaly, B 2009)

Sweeping statement(s) of how a person views a group or individual –
how they should look or act.

- Ignores distinctiveness of the
individual

- Represents the end point of a
person's understanding

- Discourages further investigation

Stereotype or generalization

<https://pantherfile.uwm.edu/gjay/www/Whiteness/stereotypes.htm>

• Generalizations

- “A statement based on a finite set of observations and experiences which claims to hold true for the larger set, even for those cases that have not been seen or experienced”
- All statements – facts or fiction - require us to make generalizations
- They offer a theory about how things are in general – an effort to categorize things

Stereotype or generalization

<https://pantherfile.uwm.edu/gjay/www/Whiteness/stereotypes.htm>

- **Stereotypes:**
- A a particular kind of generalization
 - A subset of generalization.

Stereotype or generalization

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- ***Stereotypes***

- ***Come from*** - a history of socio-political struggle between unequal groups within a region, nation, or society
- present generalizations which ***function*** to create or sustain inequalities of value, power, and/or wealth among socially constructed groups (by race, age, sex, class, religion etc.)
- are intended to harm or have a negative ***effect*** as regards the object of the stereotype, or can reasonably be predicted to do so
- ***circulate*** repeatedly and systematically in a culture so that they are accepted as "common sense" truths by many people in the culture, even those who are the object of the stereotype

Stereotype or generalization

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- Stereotypes (continued)
 - ***disguise or distort*** the truth through caricature and misrepresentation based on only partial aspects of a person or situation
 - ***appeal to the prejudices*** of the audience, exploiting these by attaching them to emotions of pleasure or hatred that are reinforced often by casting stereotypes within frameworks of ***entertainment***

Common stereotypes

- List some common stereotypes in our society today.
- Does every group have stereotypes about it?
- Which groups have the most stereotypes?
- Which has the fewest?

Prejudice

A preconceived negative judgement

The link between Prejudice & Discrimination

- Does prejudice automatically lead to discrimination?
- Resources
 - Tapped

Where does prejudice come from?

(Myers 2005)

- Cognitive
 - Stereotypes
 - Perceived similarities & differences
- Society
 - Unequal status – which groups do we belong to
- Motivation
 - Competition for resources
 - Frustration & Aggression – the scapegoat

Cognitive sources of prejudice (Myers 2005)

- To figure out people
 - Categories
 - The “in-group” - diversity
 - & “out-group” – homogeneity
 - Categorization has consequences
 - In-group seen more positively
 - Illusory correlation – over estimation of negative behaviours among the out-group

Forming Perceptions

(www.nationalserviceresources.org/filemanager/.../B6Diversity)

- Life, experiences teach us about our place in a group or society
- We tend to be:
 - Be raised in groups just like us
 - Gravitate to similar people
 - Be uncomfortable with differences

Forming Perceptions (con't)

(www.nationalserviceresources.org/filemanager/.../B6Diversity)

- We mistakenly believe that:
 - Surface similarities – people who are similar to us on the surface must be similar in other ways
 - Surface difference – people who are different to us on the surface must be different in other ways
- We view others through lens of group stereotype

Social sources of prejudice (Myers 2005)

- Societal pressures
 - Competition for scarce resources
 - More or less prejudice in hard economic times?
 - Why?
 - Implicit messages of the “norm”
 - What is important about these crayons?

Social sources of prejudice (continued)

- Society pays more attention to some things than others
 - What was so important about the last American presidential election?

Motivational sources of prejudice (Myers 2005)

- Social identity
 - Sense of belonging
 - In group vs out group
 - Which do we want to be better?
 - What are the clothes telling us?

Reference

- Myer, D., (2005). Social psychology. 8th Ed. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.
- Mullaly, B., (2009). Challenging Oppression and Confronting Privilege. Canada: Oxford Press