



## SESSION # 4 CULTURE

### (OPTIONAL CULTURAL PRESENTATION ACTIVITY AT END OF SESSION)

Orientation	Mid-Year
Session Overview	This session explores stereotypes, the dangers of stereotypes and how NOT to stereotype. Students will describe what they have heard about different groups and will then look at how misconceptions and stereotypes are dangerous and hurtful. The importance of looking closely and analyzing stereotypes will also be explored as the facilitator confronts some stereotypes and corrects misconceptions using a fact sheet. The session also includes an optional cultural presentation so students can think more about their own culture.
Participants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Students <input type="checkbox"/> Host Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Host Siblings
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Highly Active / Interactive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> Some Activity / Interactivity <input type="checkbox"/> Independent
Duration	45 minutes (optional activity – additional 20-30 minutes)
Group Size	Any size
Minimum Staffing	1- 2 leaders
Materials Needed	Flip chart paper Markers for students to write ideas Fact Sheet for facilitators For optional cultural presentation activity, poster supplies such as scissors, glue, markers, crayons, magazines to cut and paste for a collage.
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create flipcharts labeled with the name of different groups. Chose groups that students can relate to and those who are associated with common stereotypes. Include as much variety as possible, such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ American Teenagers</li> <li>○ “Star” Football players</li> <li>○ Cheerleaders</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Christians</li> <li>○ Muslims</li> <li>○ American Black People</li> <li>○ Latino Americans</li> <li>○ Homeless</li> <li>○ Elderly</li> <li>○ Include a flip chart labeled: “What others say about YOU” .</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● For culture discussion, note student responses’ on flipchart to share later with host parents.</li> </ul>
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**FACILITATOR NOTE:** This session is designed to help students think about how harmful stereotyping can be and how stereotyping does not support exchange goals. When facilitating this session, the facilitator needs to be very conscious of one’s own bias and needs to be ready to confront stereotypes and misconceptions and **correct these**. The stereotypes that students put forward during the activity **might be very offensive and incorrect**. Stereotypes can lead to xenophobia, racism, sexism, and behavior that is disrespectful to others. It is important to include in the debrief WHY and HOW stereotypes and generalizations do **not** promote cultural understanding. It is important to prepare thoroughly for this session and as a facilitator make an effort to reflect a bit on one’s own biases and try to leave these “at the door.”

***Mission statement of YFU: YFU advances intercultural understanding, mutual respect and social responsibility through educational exchanges for youth, families and communities.***

**INTRODUCTION:** Video (5 MINUTES)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDTVasxLNho>

1. Tell the students that they will watch a short video (either on their phones or if there is a laptop with projector, pull up the clip for all to see).
- 2 . After watching the clip have a short de-brief using the questions below. Then explain that they will now do an activity to take closer look at stereotypes
  - What is this clip about?
  - How does this relate to you?

**ACTIVITY: Stereotypes in the US Walkabout** (15 minutes)

1. Post each of the prepared flipcharts, with headings listed on page 1, around the room and present each “group” to the students.
2. Students will walk around the room and write on the flipcharts what they have heard about these groups. Encourage the students to be honest and remind them that there is no judgement on writing down what they have heard or what others say about these groups.

3. Explain that when they come to the YOU chart, they should think about what others might say about them and what stereotypes are associated with their culture.

3. Students have 10 minutes to walk around the room and write what they have heard about these groups.

4. As students finish-up writing their ideas, provide 3-5 minutes for students to simply walk around and read their peers' responses to the prompts.

## **DEBRIEF AND DISCUSSION: Stereotypes in the US** (20 minutes)

1. Bring the group back together. Have a conversation to debrief the activity. **CORRECT all the misconceptions using the fact sheet provided with this lesson.**

2. Use the following questions to talk about the activity and the dangers of stereotyping

- What do many of the comments written down have in common? (*many are stereotypes, many of the comments are not true, many of the comments are hurtful*)
- Is everything that was written down true? Can anyone identify some ideas that are not true? (**USE THIS QUESTION TO CORRECT MISCONCEPTIONS**, see the fact sheet at the end of this lesson)
- Where did these ideas come from, why do some people say these things?
- Have you ever felt “stereotyped”, tell us about that, what happened and how did you feel? (*answers will vary*)
- Have you ever felt misunderstood because of your cultural background, where you are from, or how you look? Tell us about this? (*answers will vary*)
- Why are stereotypes harmful?
- How can we avoid stereotypes? (*get to know individuals; don't make judgements or generalize, especially based on images in the media; learn the facts and question the source of stereotypes; study history to understand where certain stereotypes came from*)

3. During the discussion, be sure to bring up these points if students do not touch on these; expand as necessary:

- ✓ YFU's mission: YFU advances intercultural understanding, mutual respect and social responsibility through educational exchanges for youth, families and communities.
- ✓ Supporting stereotypes does not support this mission. Stereotypes can lead to xenophobia (*the fear of that which is perceived to be foreign or strange*), racism, sexism, and behavior that is disrespectful and harmful to others. It is important to understand HOW stereotypes and generalizations do **not** promote cultural understanding and peace building.
- ✓ Everyone wants to feel understood.
- ✓ Try to connect with individuals and not buy-in to common myths and misconceptions about others who are different from you.
- ✓ We all have bias and while we may not use stereotypes on purpose, it happens.
- ✓ By being aware of our own bias and the negative impacts of stereotypes we can try to prevent negative stereotyping.

- ✓ Making connections with individuals and getting to know others helps us not “buy-in” and promote stereotypes.
- ✓ By confronting stereotypes and educating oneself with facts, we can prevent stereotyping.
- ✓ Part of your exchange is sharing yourself with others, so people can know your culture through you, as an individual. Getting to know individuals is key way to prevent stereotyping.
- ✓ When talking about American culture (or your interactions with other cultures, groups, and people), always start with “in my experience”. Speak about how you have interacted with people and your relationships. In most cases, your experiences are different than what the media portrays about certain groups.

## OPTIONAL ACTIVITY & PRESENTATION – Overcoming

### Stereotypes- Cultural Presentations (20- 30 MINUTES depending on group size)

**FACILITATOR NOTE:** The goal of this activity is for students to think deeply about their home culture, especially in light of their recent experiences in the US and occasions when they have felt stereotyped because of their culture. The presentation is a way for students to address misconceptions and stereotypes about their culture.

1. Instruct the students that they are going to have 7-10 minutes to create a short presentation (no more than 2 minutes) that represents the culture of **their home country** in order to educate others on the real culture, not the stereotype.

#### **Instructions**

- Divide the students into country groups (ideally 2-3 students per country group), with no more than 4 students per group.\*
- Students can create a poster, do a skit, write a song, do a mock news report, or use whatever method they want to prepare their presentation. Everyone in the group must contribute to the presentation. **The presentation should highlight important aspects of their home culture and address misconceptions and stereotypes about their culture.**

\*For counties with more than four students, ask a second or third group to form. Ask these groups to create a skit or presentation that **summarizes aspects of America culture that have surprised them and not followed American stereotypes**. In this case, encourage students to think about any experiences that have had that prove that stereotypes and generalizations about the US were untrue, based on their unique experiences in their specific community in the US.

- Tell the students they have 7-10 minutes to create their presentation. Make sure you have markers and poster board available if people want to be artistic.

2. After 7-10 minutes bring all the students back together and begin the short presentations. Keep a close eye on time and limit the presentations to 2-3 minutes per group.

3. After each presentation, have a quick debrief and ask students what they liked about the presentation and anything new that they learned about the culture.

## **WRAP UP:** (2-5 minutes)

Close the discussion with these points

- ✓ Thank the students for speaking openly and honestly about stereotypes.
- ✓ Being a Global Citizen sometimes means you have challenging conversations.
- ✓ As you encounter stereotypes, think critically and try to learn where these come from.
- ✓ If you have had hurtful experience with stereotypes, let's talk more about these.

## FACT SHEET FOR FACILITATORS

This fact sheet is provided to help facilitators dispel and correct some of the comments/stereotypes that may be written on the flipchart in the *Stereotype Walkabout* activity. As this is an open-ended activity, not all comments written by the students will be on this list. Use this fact sheet to educate, dispel myths, as well as teach empathy and understanding.

### **Stereotype: Latinos are lazy.**

**Not true-** In 2014, Hispanics and Latinos accounted for 16.1 percent of the 146.3 million **employed** people in the United States. ( <http://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2015/hispanics-and-latinos-in-industries-and-occupations.htm>)

### **Stereotype: Most Latinos in the US are illegal.**

**Not true-** Of the 55 million people in 2014 who identified themselves as of Hispanic or Latino, 35% (19.4 million) were immigrants (both legal and illegal). **65% were born in the US and are citizens.**

According to MPI estimates, about 7.8 million (of the 55 M) are unauthorized (illegal) immigrants in the United States. This is around 14% of Hispanics and Latinos. Many other articles also state a similar figure: 10-14%. **This is far from a majority and proves that this myth is not true.**

<http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states#Unauthorized>

### **Fun fact: What is the difference between Hispanic and Latino?**

Many people use Hispanic and Latinos interchangeable words. They're not. While there is a huge overlap between the two, they don't mean the same thing and cannot be used as if they do. Hispanic refers to language. Latino refers to geography. Basically, you are Hispanic if you and/or your ancestry come from a country where they speak Spanish. You are Latino if you and/or your ancestry come from a Latin American country. Hispanic excludes the nearly 200 million Brazilians who, while accurately labelled Latinos, speak Portuguese. They are Latinos, they are not Hispanic. They are Latinos, they are not Hispanic.

Hispanic includes the nearly 50 million Spaniards (population of Spain) who could never be called Latinos.

<http://hispanichouston.com/hispanic-vs-latino-whats-the-difference/>

### **Stereotype: American teenagers are selfish.**

**Not true-** Teenagers (16- to 19-year-olds) continued to have a relatively high volunteer rate, at 26.4% percent

<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/volun.nro.htm>

### **Stereotype: Teenagers are addicted to technology and social media is bad for their friendships and real world relationships.**

**Not true-** “For American teens, making friends isn't just confined to the school yard, playing field or neighborhood – many are making new friends online. 57% of teens ages 13 to 17 have made a new friend online, with 29% of teens indicating that they have made more than five new friends in online venues. Most of these friendships stay in the digital space; only 20% of all teens have met an online friend in person. But research also says that: teen friendships are strengthened (and challenged) within social media. Social media helps teens feel more connected to their friends' feelings and daily lives, and also offers teens a place to receive support from others during challenging times. 83% of teen social media users say social media makes them feel more connected to information about their friends' lives; 70% of social media-using teens feel better connected to their friends' feelings through social media; 68% of teen social media users have had people on the platforms supporting them through tough or challenging times. In addition, teens spend time with their closest friends in a range of venues. Texting plays a crucial role in helping close friends stay in touch.”

<http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/08/06/teens-technology-and-friendships/>

**Stereotype- Today's teenagers are irresponsible and undisciplined.**

**Not true-** "The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recently released a major report on the state of Americans' health as of last year, that included these findings on teens:

(1) The number of teens who report having had sex has dropped significantly in the past twenty years. The teen birth rate is lower than it's been since we started collecting data. The teen abortion rate has dropped dramatically, too. Teens are also much more likely to use birth control if they do have sex.

(2) Cigarette smoking among teens has dropped by 30% since 1980.

(3) Fewer teens are smoking marijuana and their use of harder drugs such as cocaine has dropped to all-time lows.

(4) The percentage of teens who report trying alcohol has declined from a high of 70 percent in 1980 to less than 40 percent in 2012. And a separate report from the CDC says that the number of teens who drive after drinking has dropped by 54% since 1991.

Of course, this doesn't address every aspect of teen behavior. But it certainly doesn't paint a picture of irresponsibility and lack of self-discipline. "

<http://www.ahaparenting.com/blog/how-to-avoid-spoiling-overparenting-helicopter-parenting>

**Stereotype- Homeless people are homeless because they don't want to work**

**Not true-** Homelessness is, in fact, caused by tragic life occurrences like the loss of loved ones, job loss, domestic violence, divorce and family disputes. Other impairments such as depression, untreated mental illness, post traumatic stress disorder, and physical disabilities are also responsible for a large portion of the homeless. Many factors push people into living on the street. **Acknowledging these can help facilitate the end of homelessness in America.**

<http://www.homeaid.org/homeaid-stories/69/top-causes-of-homelessness>

**Stereotype- Black people are uneducated and from the "hood."**

**Not true-** The number of blacks age 25 and older with a high school diploma has nearly tripled in the last 30 years. The number of blacks age 25 and older with college degrees or higher has nearly quadrupled over the last 40 years.

<http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/02/black-stats-racism-debunk>

**Not true-** "The thought that all black people come from the hood is obviously perpetuated by rap. No, all Black people are not from the hood. Some Black people would not know what the hood was if they stepped in one. You have many Black people who grew up in nice neighborhoods in a house. So, to say all Black people are from the hood is ridiculous."

<http://ontheblacklist.net/7-unbelievable-stereotypes-african-americans-still-believed-today/>

**Stereotype: Most black Americans are poor.**

**Not true:** "The size and influence of affluent African-Americans is growing faster than that of non-Hispanic Whites across all income segments, and the impact is being felt across industries," said Cheryl Pearson-McNeil, Senior Vice President, U.S. Strategic Community Alliances and Consumer Engagement, Nielsen. "These larger incomes are attributed to a number of factors including youthfulness, immigration, historic educational attainment and constant, relevant dialogue across various social media channels that have an impact on African-Americans' decisions as brand loyalists and ambassadors."

<http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/press-room/2015/nielsen-african-americans-upending-stereotypes-in-education-income-media-and-more.html>

**Stereotype- Older people contribute little to society.**

**Not true-** Nothing could be farther from the truth. With years of personal skills and professional expertise, older adults are a highly valued volunteer force. Senior Corps, for example, boasts 500,000 members ages 55 and up, meeting community needs that range from mailing newsletters for nonprofits to fostering hard-to-place children [source: [Senior Corps](#)]. And older adults who participate in [MENTOR: The National](#)

[Mentoring Partnerships](#) advise and encourage high school students in navigating the challenges of school, relationships and career planning.

Older workers can be assets to businesses, too. In surveys, employers have reported that older workers are more reliable and have a stronger work ethic than younger workers. They also take fewer sick days. And some people blaze [history-making trails in later life](#). American primitivist painter Anna Mary "Grandma" Moses took up the art at age 75 when arthritis made embroidery too difficult. One of her paintings sold for \$1.2 million in 2006. And Mary Harris "Mother" Jones hit her stride as a workers' rights activist when she was in her 60s, earning her the title of "the most dangerous woman in America" [source: [AFL-CIO](#)].

<http://health.howstuffworks.com/wellness/aging/aging-process/5-stereotypes-about-aging3.htm>

### **Stereotype- All Jews are cheap.**

**Not true-** The stereotype of the stingy and cheap Jewish person has been around since the Middle Ages. Christians weren't allowed to lend money and charge interest. This meant that while not all Jews were money-lenders, more Jews were in the role than Christians since it was restricted by the church. Thus began a now centuries-old stereotype.

Instead of getting bogged down in such a negative representation, turn it around to represent what Jewish people really care about: taking pride in our work, making smart decisions with our finances, and investing in important matters like family and education.

<https://www.jdate.com/jmag/2016/03/jewish-stereotypes/#qB5FAdXHraVOaVMu.97>

### **Stereotype- Christians don't "believe" in science and climate change.**

**Not true-** Pope Francis has urged Catholics and all Christians to confess sins against the environment. "In his message marking the World day of Prayer for the Care of Creation on Thursday, the pontiff said climate change is caused in part by human activity, leads to extreme weather and disproportionately affects the least advantaged around the world."

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/sep/1/pope-francis-calls-climate-change-sin/>

### **Stereotype- All Muslims are terrorists.**

**Not true-** In 2015, American- Muslims faced a greater threat of being killed **for being a Muslim** rather than that of being killed by a Muslim.

<http://www.herculture.org/blog/2016/5/7/problematic-stereotypes-muslims-are-not-terrorists#.WBihFyorKmw>

Terrorism, unjustified violence and the killing of non-combatant civilians (and even intimidating, threatening or injuring them) are all absolutely forbidden in Islam. Islam is a way of life that is meant to bring peace to a society whether its people are Muslim or not. The extreme actions of those who claim to be Muslim may be a result of their ignorance, frustration, uncontrolled anger or political (not religious) ambitions. Anyone who condones or commits an act of terrorism in the name of Islam is simply not following Islam and is, in fact, violating its very tenets. These people are individuals with their own personal views and agendas. Fanatical Muslims are no more representative of the true teachings of Islam than fanatical Christians are of the true teachings of Christianity, or fanatical Jews are of the true teachings of Judaism. Extremism and fanaticism are problems not exclusive to Muslims. Anyone who thinks that all Muslims are terrorists should note that terror groups like ISIS (or ISIL), Al-Qaeda and Boko Haram kill Muslims as well. Also, the former boxer Muhammad Ali, perhaps the most celebrated person of our era, was a practicing Muslim.

"Islam" means "surrender" or "submission". "Salam" (which means "peace") is the root word of "Islam". In a religious context the word "Islam" means "the surrendering of one's will (without compulsion) to the true will of God in an effort to achieve peace".

<http://www.3ofactsaboutislam.com/>

When stereotypes arise, discrimination abounds. The impact of the stereotype that all Muslims are terrorists is felt heavily by the Muslim community in the United States. An article by The Pluralism Project at Harvard University reads: “Individuals have experienced discrimination in housing and employment, or even harassment and attacks from strangers on the street; mosques and Islamic centers across the country frequently report vandalism.”

**Stereotype- All cheerleaders are stupid and ditzzy.**

**Not true-** According to information collected by statisticians via the National Cheerleaders Association, 82 percent of cheerleaders maintain a grade point average equivalent to a B or higher. The study also notes that 82 percent of cheerleaders are accepted into college.

**Stereotype- Cheerleaders are not athletes.**

**Not true-** The skills involved in cheerleading leave no doubt that cheerleaders are [exceptional athletes](#). To perform their activities, they must be as strong as any football player, as poised as any dancer and as flexible as the best gymnasts. They are athletes by every definition of the word.

Many might argue that cheerleading is not a sport, but the American Association of Cheerleading Coaches and Administrators argues otherwise. Cheerleaders practice and perform various stunts and gymnastic-like routines, dance, clap, stomp and cheer. Cheerleaders must expend energy to get the crowd involved in the game, to toss a fellow cheerleader into the air and catch her in their arms. Cheerleading provides a strength-training and cardiovascular workout that keeps girls healthy and fit, as well as maintaining a positive attitude.

**Stereotype- All football players are “dumb jocks”.**

**Not true-** It is widely believed by coaches and NFL executives that offensive linemen are among the smartest players on the field.

<http://www.si.com/vault/2003/08/11/347727/the-smartest-players-in-football-they-may-look-like-big-slow-brutes-to-the-casual-fan-but-offensive-linemen-are-proving-on-and-off-the-field-that-they-possess-uncommon-intellect>