



UNSTEREOTYPE

ONE **101** ONE

A GUIDE

TO STANDING UP

TO STEREOTYPES

IN EVERYDAY LIFE

UNSTEREOTYPE
ALLIANCE

SAY
NOTHING

CHANGE
NOTHING

WELCOME

SAY
NOTHING

CHANGE
NOTHING

Stereotypes are all around us: in the TV shows we watch; the books we read; and the stories we see on social media. They force us to make judgemental decisions about people before we've even met them. And they've led us to discriminate against groups of people over generations.

Stereotypes are a part of everyday life – but they don't have to be. Because a new generation is emerging. A generation of people like you who are no longer willing to stand by quietly and watch stereotypes do their worst.

Welcome to the **Unstereotype 101 Guide** to confronting stereotypes. By picking up this guide, you are one step closer to becoming an Upstander: a new group of people who are standing up against stereotypes and challenging them when you see them being used.

What this Guide isn't about is cancel culture, performative wokeism, or calling out individuals. It's about finding constructive and safe ways to point out the harm that stereotypes cause, and helping people use language that doesn't perpetuate those stereotypes. It's about starting from a place of empathy, where we can understand each other and feel more able to have difficult conversations.

Ready to begin your Upstander journey?

Then turn the page and step right in



BEGINNING YOUR JOURNEY:

Being an upstander, not a bystander

Upstander

- ✓ Takes action to help people when they're being stereotyped
- ✓ Uses empathy to gently point out when stereotyping is taking place
- ✓ Emphasizes the stereotype being used, not the person using it
- ✓ Is able to engage in a situation without making things worse
- ✓ Knows when to retreat or not act

Bystander

- ✗ Could do something to address the stereotype but does nothing
- ✗ Calls out trolls or people, especially from a distance (e.g., social media)
- ✗ Emphasizes blaming the person using the stereotype
- ✗ Doesn't assess a situation for potential danger to themselves or others
- ✗ Doesn't know when to retreat or not act



CULTURAL NORMS VS. STEREOTYPES

What's the difference?

Cultural norms

- ✓ Beliefs and behaviours that are common to a specific place or group of people
- ✓ Formed by those people
- ✓ Help us understand how to behave in a new place

*"BRITISH PEOPLE
like to form an orderly
queue (line)"*

*"AT JEWISH FUNERALS,
it's expected that guests
bring food to the family home."*

*"BRAZILIANS use
a lot of hand gestures when
communicating."*

Stereotypes

- ✗ False negative ideas about people that are different from us
- ✗ Used against people as the underpinnings of prejudice (thoughts and feelings) and discrimination (actions)
- ✗ Often used as excuses to justify bad behaviour and the harm that it causes

*"A DISABLED TEEN
has less going on
in their life than
able-bodied kids."*

*"It's unlikely that a
BLACK MAN would be
a lawyer"*

*"A NEW MOTHER
will be unfocussed at work."*

**# SAY
NOTHING** **CHANGE
NOTHING**

TAKING ACTION

Let's take a moment to reflect on the ways that we've all experienced stereotypes in our lives. If you start to feel triggered or upset, take a short break from the exercise or stop altogether.

REFLECTION EXERCISE

Before you begin, find a quiet place to sit where you won't be disturbed for a few minutes.

STEP 01

Close your eyes and take 2-3 deep breaths to help your body settle.

STEP 02

Think about stereotypes that you might have encountered in your life. Where did they come from?

STEP 03

Next, think of a time when you might have been stereotyped. What happened in that moment? How did you feel?

STEP 04

Then, think of a time when you might have stereotyped someone else. What happened in that moment? How did you feel? How do you think the other person felt?

STEP 05

Finally, think about how it feels to be stereotyped, and to use stereotypes against others. How do you feel right now when you think about the ways in which people are unfairly grouped together in this way?

STEP 06

Then take 2-3 deep breaths and open your eyes.

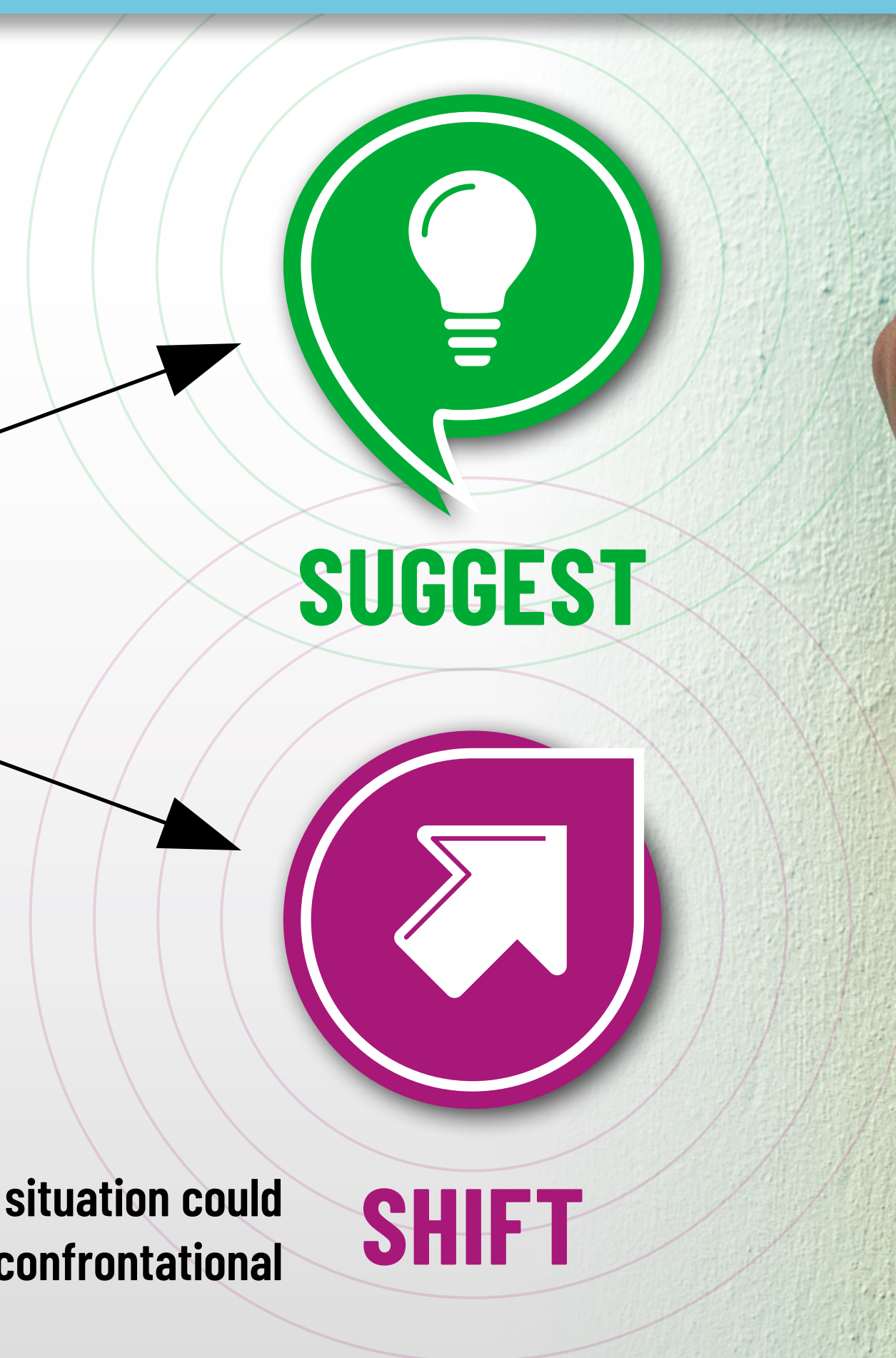
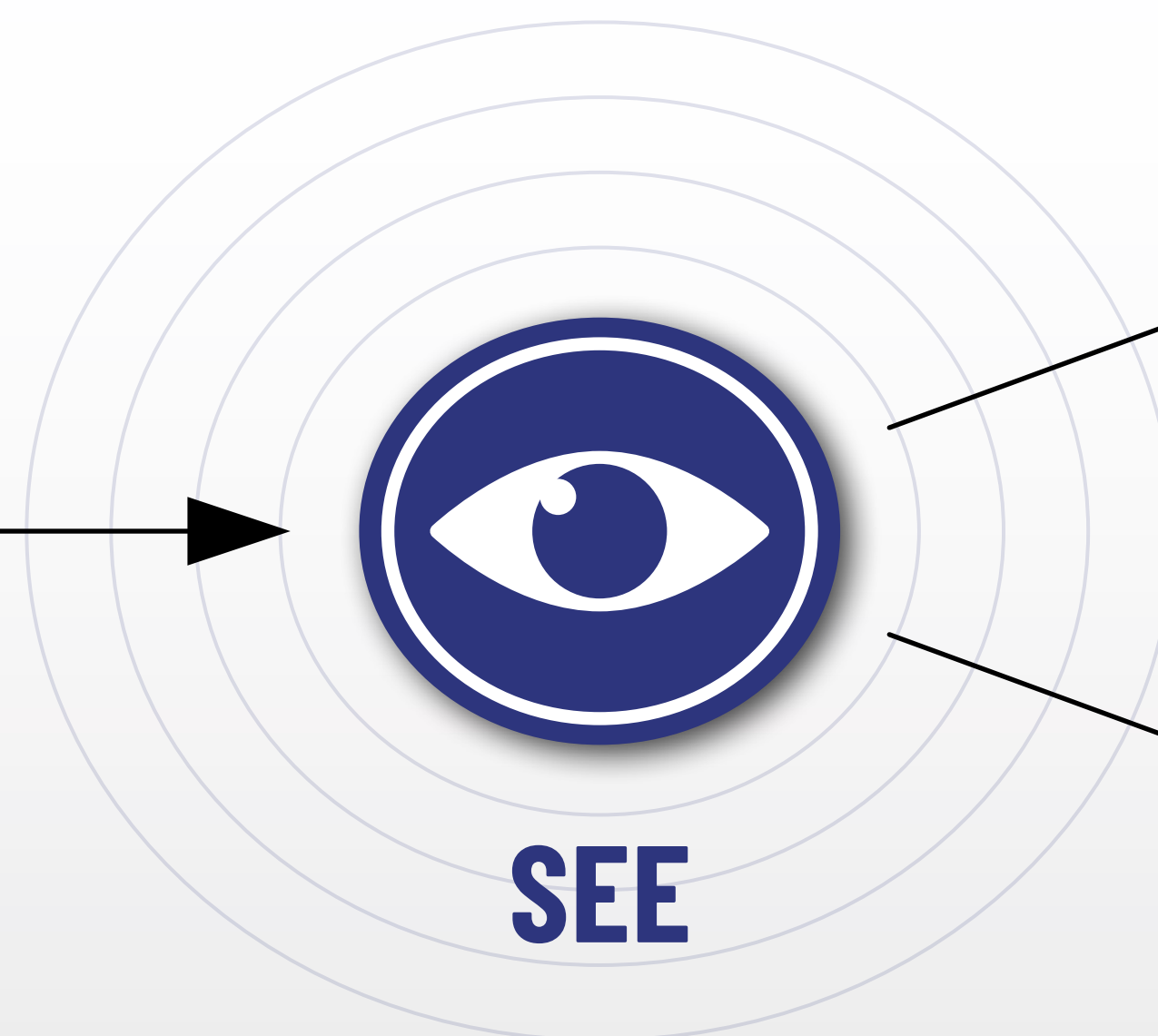
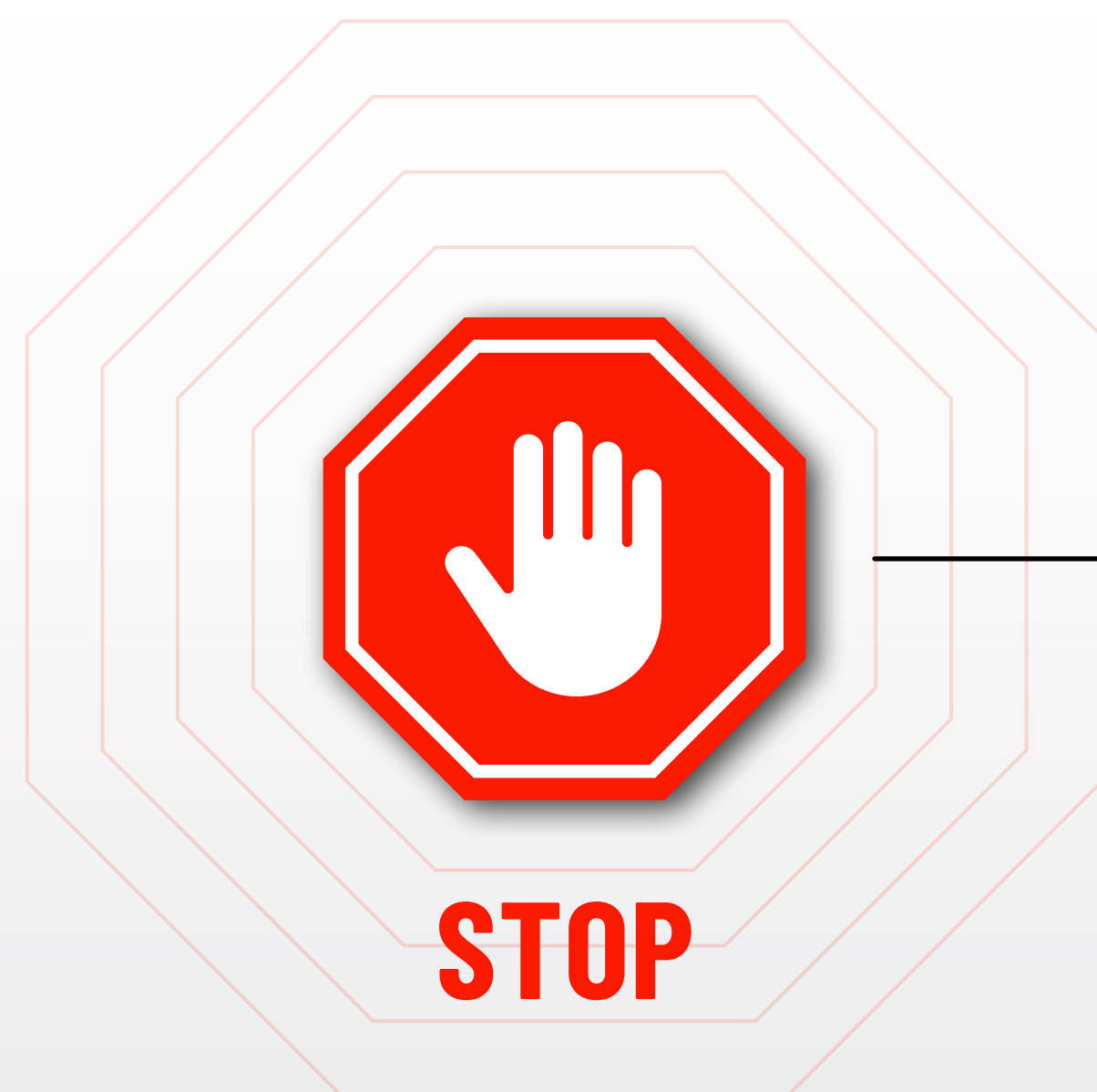
If you'd like, take a few minutes to write or journal about this experience.

If you start to feel upset or you notice your breathing change, let the memory go and think of something happy to calm yourself. If you continue to feel triggered, please visit our [appendix](#) for resources that could lend support.

SAY NOTHING **CHANGE NOTHING**

3 QUICK STEPS

TO STANDING UP TO STEREOTYPES



If the situation could
turn confrontational

SAY
NOTHING

CHANGE
NOTHING





MAKE AN

ACTIVE CHOICE

STOP

When someone uses a stereotype, it's likely that our "fight, flight or freeze" response will be triggered. We might want to do one of three things:

- **Fight:** get angry or upset and want to respond quickly
- **Flight:** get away from the situation entirely
- **Freeze:** do nothing and watch what happens passively

But this could make the situation worse. So before we can challenge a stereotype, it's important to **stop and make an active choice** as the first step.

By stopping and noticing what we feel, we're more likely to be ready to respond with kindness and openness, than with anger or indifference towards the stereotype user.

What to do when someone uses a stereotype

- ✓ Stop what you're doing
- ✓ Take a deep breath in and out through your nose
- ✓ Notice how you feel, and think about why you are feeling that way
- ✓ **Make an active choice of what to do next**



OBSERVE

Once you've stopped and made an active choice to not fight, fly or freeze, it's time to **decide whether you should challenge the stereotype** that has been used.

WHAT IS HAPPENING

SEE

Here's a checklist to help you decide:

- ✓ When the person using the stereotype seems open to having their view challenged
- ✓ When you are feeling mostly comfortable and safe
- ✓ When the power balance gives you the ability to speak up (e.g. you feel like an equal to the stereotype user)
- ✓ When there are enough people in the area that you feel safe and not alone

- ✗ When the person using the stereotype seems angry or unwilling to have their view challenged
- ✗ When you feel unsafe or like the situation might turn violent*
- ✗ When there is a large power imbalance that leaves you and others at risk (e.g., you could face serious consequences from your boss, parent, or teacher; or the person could try to intimidate you)
- ✗ When you're alone and can't be supported by others

*See next page for advice on what to do



IF THE SITUATION

COULD TURN CONFRONTATIONAL

SHIFT

If the situation does feel like it could turn confrontational or unsafe, **remove yourself and the person being stereotyped as quickly and quietly as possible.**

IF the situation happens online, the same advice applies. See if you can change the subject and make the stereotyped person feel welcome and included.

THINK about if you can speak with the stereotype user later, in private (like if they're your boss or teacher).

IF you aren't able to move away from the stereotype user immediately, move closer to the person being stereotyped and engage them in an unrelated conversation.

SEE if anyone else in the area can help out, like other bystanders or a trusted authority.

MAKE sure you feel psychologically safe before doing anything.

DO what you can to make the stereotyped person feel as comfortable as possible.

SAY NOTHING CHANGE NOTHING



OFFER UP ANOTHER WAY

Now that you have observed what is happening, challenge the stereotype with empathy.
Focus on what's been said, rather than the person who said it. Use "I" statements and speak with empathy.

SUGGEST

What you could say

- ✓ "When I hear or see you say [what they have said], I feel [describe what you feel]."
- ✓ "If someone were to say that [stereotype] about me, I would feel [describe the feeling you feel]."
- ✓ "I'm wondering how others might feel when they hear you say that."
- ✓ "Here's another way you could say that."
- ✓ "I think we use a different term now, such as [insert more appropriate language]."
- ✓ "If I were in that situation, I think I would feel [describe what you feel]."
- ✓ If the stereotyped person isn't present, you could praise qualities that you like or appreciate about that person.

What not to say

- ✗ "That's really rude."
- ✗ "You're being mean."
- ✗ "What is wrong with you??"
- ✗ "You should think more carefully about what you say."
- ✗ "You're so out of touch."
- ✗ If the stereotyped person is present, don't say anything that references them – you do not want to draw more attention to them or marginalise them further.

YES



- Focus on what's been said. Speak from your heart and from what you observe. Use "I" statements.
- For example, "If someone were to say that [stereotype] about me, I would feel [describe the feeling you feel.]"
- Or "Here is another phrase that you could use instead."

AFTERWARDS:

- Accept that you might not have changed that person's views forever.
- Do something to move your body and release any pent-up energy.
- Check in with the stereotyped person ONLY IF they seem like they want to talk to you. Don't make it about you; take their lead about what they want to talk about.

SOMEONE USES A STEREOTYPE



Before doing anything, take 1-2 deep breaths and make an active choice to challenge the stereotype



Does it seem safe to challenge the stereotype user?

NO



Don't challenge the stereotype user

- Make sure you feel psychologically safe before you do anything.
- See if anyone else in the area can help out, like other bystanders or a trusted authority.
- If you aren't able to move away from the stereotype user immediately, move closer to the person being stereotyped and engage them in an unrelated conversation.
- Think about if you can speak with the stereotype user in private later (like if they're your boss or teacher).

***Please see pages 11-12 for a simplified version of this information.**

UPSTANDERS

HOW TO

TAKE ACTION

SAY
NOTHING

CHANGE
NOTHING

UPSTANDERS:

How to take action



STOP: When someone uses a stereotype, pause and take 1-2 deep breaths, and make an active choice to challenge the stereotype.



SEE: Observe what's happening. Does it seem safe to challenge the stereotype user?

➔ **NO:**

- Don't challenge the stereotype user.
- Make sure you feel psychologically safe before you do anything.
- See if anyone in the area can help out, like other bystanders or a trusted authority.
- If you aren't able to move away from the stereotype user immediately, move closer to the person being stereotyped and engage them in an unrelated conversation.
- Do what you can to make the stereotyped person feel as comfortable as possible.
- Think about if you can speak with the stereotype user in private later (like if they're your boss or teacher).
- If the situation happens online, the same advice applies. See if you can change the subject and make the stereotyped person feel welcome and included.



SHIFT:

➔ **YES:**

- Move to the next step.

SAY
NOTHING

CHANGE
NOTHING



UPSTANDERS:

How to take action



SUGGEST: Focus on what's been said. Speak from your heart and from what you observe. Challenge the stereotype, not the person.

- "When I hear you say [what they have said], I feel [describe the feeling you feel]."
- "If someone were to say that [stereotype] about me, I would feel [describe the feeling you feel]."
- "I'm wondering how others might feel when they hear you say that."
- "Here's another way you could say that."
- "I think we use a different term now, such as [insert more appropriate language]."
- "If I were in that situation, I think I would feel [describe what you feel]."
- If the stereotyped person isn't present, you could praise qualities that you like or appreciate about that person.

AFTERWARDS:

- Accept that you might not have changed that person's views forever.
- Do something to move your body and release any pent-up energy.
- Check in with the stereotyped person ONLY IF they seem like they want to talk to you. Don't make it about you; take their lead about what they want to talk about.

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HELPFUL TIPS FOR UPSTANDERS



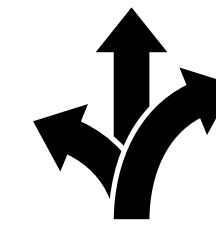
BE IN THE MOMENT

Challenge stereotypes where they're being used. So if a teacher has used a stereotype in front of the class, **it helps for everyone to hear the correction** of the stereotype.



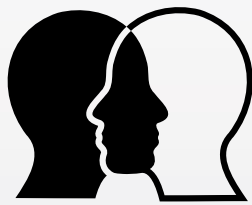
BE KIND TO YOURSELF

Remember that this is a lifelong process and **there is no "getting it right"** the first time. The most important thing is to keep trying and learning. By reflecting on our actions and experiences, we can find areas to grow as allies in the future.



BE FLEXIBLE

You might want to **change your approach depending on the situation**. For example, you might use humour to relate to the other person and help them see how the stereotype they have used isn't helpful. This won't be appropriate all the time, but sometimes it can make things feel less tense.



BE CLEAR IN YOUR CHALLENGE

You're aiming to **challenge a stereotype, not a person**. So don't make it personal; instead, focus on the stereotype being used.



BE EMPATHETIC

Empathy is the ability to understand how someone else is feeling. Start with what you are **observing and feeling**, rather than immediately attacking someone for what they have said.



BE WILLING TO LEARN

Making mistakes is a part of being an upstander. If you do make a mistake, **it's important that you accept that** and apologise if it's needed.

TAKING ACTION:

FOOTBALL MATCH SCENARIO

**Knowing what to do
in the moment can
feel challenging.**

Watch the video and check out some
suggestions of how to respond when
someone uses a **racial stereotype**.



SAY
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NOTHING



STOP

Make an active choice to challenge the stereotype.



SEE

Is it safe to challenge the stereotype?

YES

- We can easily get to safety if need be
- They don't seem angry or aggressive
- I'm their peer and surrounded by people I know



SUGGEST

- "When I hear you say that (you didn't know people like that could be lawyers), I feel disappointed because that type of belief can hold whole groups of people back from their goals. It could sound like other people have such low expectations, they have to work even harder to prove themselves. I wonder if you'd thought about it like that?"
- "I feel like that could sound narrowminded. We should try not to assume certain people are lawyers and certain people are criminals;" or...
- "You better hope you don't need any legal advice, otherwise our pal here might not be willing to help you!"
(This is a more humorous answer and you need to judge if that's appropriate in the moment).

NO

They seem like they're getting angry



SHIFT

- Move toward the stereotyped person and engage them in conversation about anything else; or...
- Move away from the stereotype user with the stereotyped person.

SAY NOTHING CHANGE NOTHING

TAKING ACTION:

WORKPLACE SCENARIO

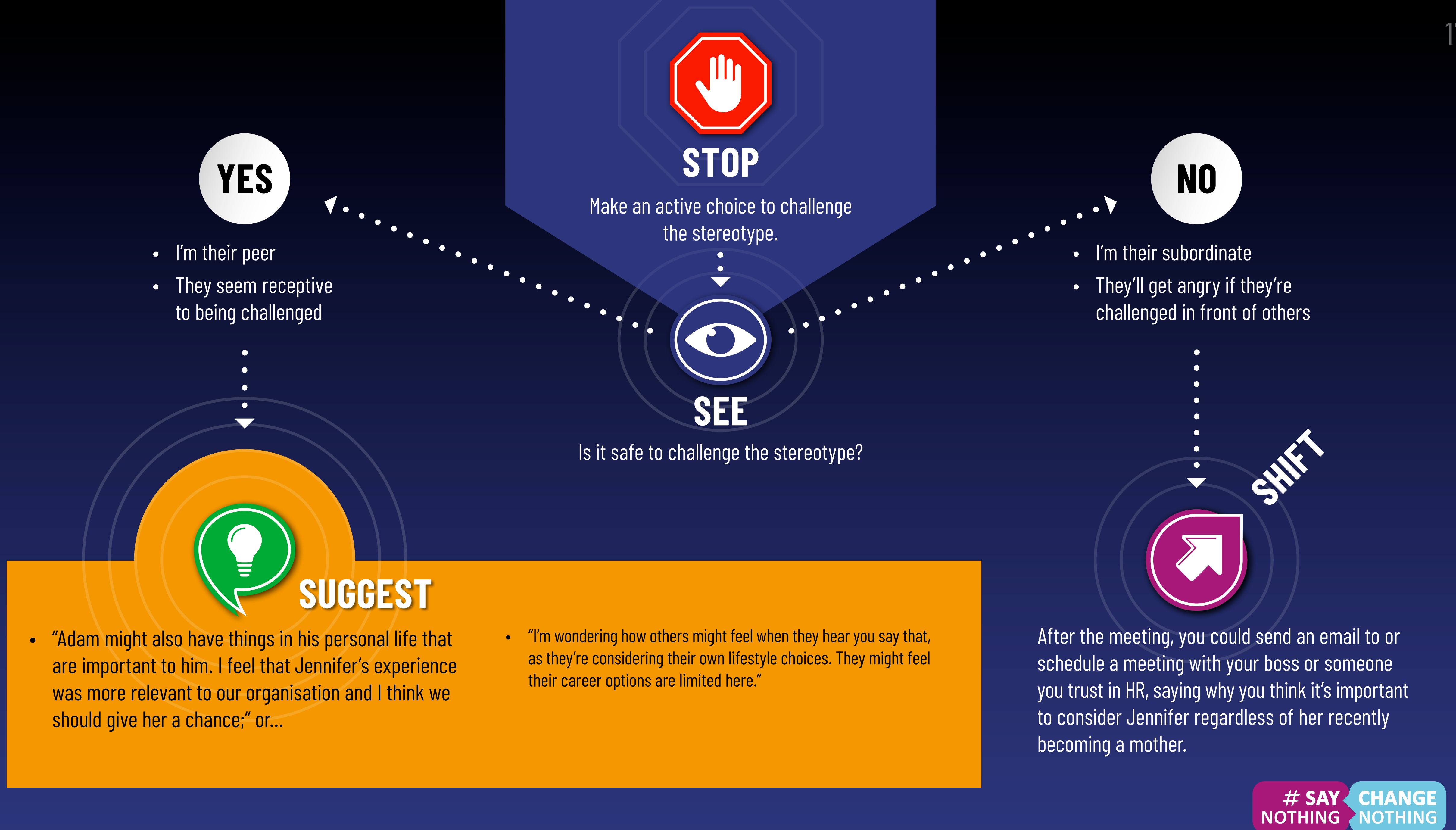
**Knowing what to do
in the moment can
feel challenging.**

Watch the video and check out some suggestions of how to respond when someone uses a **gender stereotype**.



SAY
NOTHING

CHANGE
NOTHING



TAKING ACTION:

GAMING SCENARIO

Knowing what to do
in the moment can
feel challenging.

Watch the video and check out some
suggestions of how to respond when
someone uses an **ability stereotype**.



SAY
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CHANGE
NOTHING



CONTINUING...

your upstander journey

You're on your way to being an Upstander, not a Bystander.

Besides using the STOP > SEE > SUGGEST tools when stereotypes are being used, there are other ways to combat them, such as:

- Posting your story or perspective on social media
- Watching and sharing positive content
- Writing a blog or article
- Talking with your community
- Learning more about different cultures and being curious

A great place to start is to share your story with us by using the hashtag **#SayNothingChangeNothing** and posting on social media.

You can also keep yourself inspired and curious by making sure you have a diverse social media feed. Some ideas of who to follow are in the appendix.

Remember that being an upstander is a journey, and a lifelong one at that. In order to dismantle stereotypes, we need to persevere, constructively challenge ourselves and others, and encourage one another.

**You've taken the first step –
here's to many more >>>**



SOURCES

for further

inspiration

Websites and Blogs

- [Equimundo](#)
- [Lila.help](#)
- [MenEngage Alliance](#)
- [MuslimGirl](#)
- [Right to Be](#)
- [The Micropedia](#)
- [You Won't Walk Alone \(Yalnız Yürümeyeceksin\)](#)

Social media feeds

Aaron Rose Philip	@aaron_Philip
Blair Imani	@blairimani
Check Your Privilege	@ckyourprivilege
Crutches and Spice	@crutches_and_spice
Danai Gurira	@danaigurira
Disability Reframed	@disabilityreframed
Ebru Nihan Celkan	@ebru_n_celkan
Everyday Racism	@everydayracism_
Including Society	@including_society
Kalpten Baba	@kalptenbaba
Kelz	@coconut_kelz
Melikşah Altuntaş	@meliksahtas
Munroe Bergdorf	@munroebergdorf
Muslim Girl	@muslingirl
Prejudictionary	@prejudice_tionary
Sarah Kate Smigiel	@justsaysk
Seda Yüz	@seda.yuz
Şule Denli	@sdenli89
The Micropedia	@themicropedia
Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği	@toplumsal.cinsiyet.esitligi

All resources have been recommended by the creators and contributors to this guide and are not endorsed by UN Women, the Unstereotype Alliance or any United Nations entities. Further resources will be added and updated regularly. TRIGGER WARNING: Some recommendations may include content which is triggering.

SAY
NOTHING

CHANGE
NOTHING

Books

Americanah	Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
Antabus	Seray Şahiner
Born a Crime	Trevor Noah
Detransition, Baby	Torrey Peters
Girl, Woman, Other	Bernardine Evaristo
Hood Feminism	Mikki Kendall
How to Be Antiracist	Ibram X. Kendi
Kadın Gibi Kadın	Sara Baherirad
Kadının Adı Yok	Duygu Asena
Me and White Supremacy	Layla F. Saad
Mutluluk	Zülfü Livaneli
My Grandmother's Hands	Resmaa Menakem
Noughts and Crosses	Malorie Blackman
Ölmeye Yatmak	Adalet Ağaoğlu
Sevgili Arsız Ölüm	Latife Tekin
Slay in Your Lane	Yomi Adegoke & Elizabeth Uviebinené
Tante Rosa	Sevgi Soysal

Podcasts

- Brown Don't Frown
- Call Me Mother
- Code Switch
- Convos & Cocktails
- Disability Visibility
- I Weigh
- Intersectionality Matters!
- Movement Memos
- Pod Save the People
- The Heumann Perspective
- The Waves

Games & Gamers

- [Feminist Frequency](#)
- [Fuslie](#)
- [Kayla Sims](#)
- [Loop Hero](#)
- [Nekkra](#)
- [Nikatine](#)
- [Paidia](#)
- [VikkiKitty](#)
- [Xbox Adaptive Controller](#)

Films & TV Shows

- Bir Başkadır
- Black Panther and Wakanda Forever
- Black Tax
- Black-ish and spinoffs
- Bridgerton
- Clair-Obscur
- Euphoria
- Everything Everywhere All At Once
- Fresh Off the Boat
- Kulüp
- Moonlight
- Mustang
- Mutluluk (Bliss)
- Noughts and Crosses
- Reservation Dogs
- Rocks
- The Hate U Give
- The Woman King

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Getty Images

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Getty Images
IPSOS
UN Women colleagues
UN Women Youth Council colleagues

UPSTANDERS:

How to take action

STOP: When someone uses a stereotype, pause and take 1-2 deep breaths, and make an active choice to challenge the stereotype.

SEE: Observe what's happening. Does it seem safe to challenge the stereotype user?

➔ **NO:**

- Don't challenge the stereotype user.
- Make sure you feel psychologically safe before you do anything.

SHIFT:

- See if anyone in the area can help out, like other bystanders or a trusted authority.
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- Think about if you can speak with the stereotype user in private later (like if they're your boss or teacher).
- If the situation happens online, the same advice applies. See if you can change the subject and make the stereotyped person feel welcome and included.

➔ **YES:**

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www.unstereotypealliance.org



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