

Avoiding Assumptions and Stereotypes

(acceptance, tolerance/diversity, personal responsibility, respect)

Let's recognize and understand the power and impact of stereotyping.

From: Create a Culture of Kindness in Middle School

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Drawing a conclusion on limited information? That's an assumption!

Did you know that our assumptions are just as likely to be wrong as they are likely to be right?

We create boxes that house our assumptions. People oftentimes do not fit into the boxes we create.

Guess what? Sometimes people base their incorrect assumptions on stereotypes.

People have fixed ideas ... about a particular group of people on (some examples are):

- Looks
- Dress
- Dialect
- Actions
- Religion
- Gender
- Socioeconomic group
- Race/Ethnicity

THESE FIXED IDEAS TEND TO NOT ALWAYS BE TRUE OR FACTUAL. STEREOTYPES MAY APPLY TO SOME BUT DEFINITELY NOT ALL. ASSUMPTIONS ARE FOUNDED ON THE THOUGHT OF DEFINING AN ENTIRE GROUP INSTEAD OF THE FACTS GATHERED ABOUT AN INDIVIDUAL..

Scenario:

Bryan, a fourth grade boy asked his mom if he could invite his new friend Alex over for a playdate. Alex was new to their town and was a really good soccer player. Bryan loved soccer, and was excited to have a friend who enjoyed the sport as much as he did. His mom agreed, and together they set up a date and time. Bryan's mom spent some time thinking about how to make the playdate special. She thought about Alex being new to the town and wanted to make it nice for him. "I wonder what snacks he likes," she

pondered. She also thought maybe the guys would be on the same school soccer team. It made her happy to envision the two boys racing around the backyard, playing together.

When the day arrived, Alex was dropped off at the end of the driveway and started to walk up to meet Bryan. Bryan's mom stepped outside to wave to Alex's dad as he started to drive away.

Bryan's mom noticed immediately that she had made a wrong assumption. All this time she assumed Alex was a boy. Alex (Alexandria), the good soccer player, and friend of Bryan, was a fourth grade girl.

Teen thought:

"I never gave much thought to the saying, don't judge a book, by its cover till it happened to me." Daksha age: 15