



# Youth Work and Gender (YLT)

## Training Material

### The Aim :

To raise the awareness of the issue of gender for leaders working with the single-sex or mixed-sex groups.

### Learning Outcomes :

**At the end of this training session participants will be able to:**

- To define what is meant by “gender”
- To understand what we mean by stereotyping and how to avoid it in a BB setting
- To increase the confidence of leaders working in mixed-sex companies

### Resources :

Pink and blue badges/scarves/hats or stickers  
Colour prints of the two pictures or laptop and screen  
Copies of sections 9 and 10 of the regulations (Girls Association and Amicus)  
Leaflet on mixed gender work  
Handout: Pink or Blue?

### Timing:

90 minutes

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**Exercise I: What's the difference between "sex" and "gender"? (20 minutes)**

Introduce the subject to the group by saying that now the BB has decided to work with girls and young women as well as with boys and young men, it has given us the opportunity to look more closely at the issue of gender and our work with children and young people.

This short session is intended to look at the wider issue of how gender roles and characteristics are communicated to children and to look at how BB leaders can play an important role in breaking down some of the more limiting stereotypes that young people are presented with.

First of all it is important that your group understands the difference between "sex" and "gender".

On a flipchart, draw a line down the middle to make two columns – one headed "sex" and one headed "gender". Ask the group to call out words or phrases that they associate with each heading. NB You are not necessarily looking for a definition, but more like a word association

You will probably get lists that would include the following:

**Sex**

- Male/female
- Biological
- XY chromosomes
- Reproduction
- "Opposite" sex
- Sex Discrimination
- Genetic

**Gender**

- Masculine/feminine
- Behaviour roles
- Cultural roles
- Dress codes
- Gender roles
- Gender bender
- Trans gender
- Gender reassignment



Pretty little girl?

No – King Louis XV.  
Shows how societies  
change their ideas on the  
appearance and dress  
codes for girls and boys.

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During WW2 women filled otherwise male dominated jobs.

Are gender roles biologically determined?  
Do our expectations of a woman's role change with the times and society's needs?

Show the pictures on a screen or as printed sheets and make the point that while a person's **sex** is fixed, their **gender** is a combination of behaviour characteristics, including dress code, appearance, roles within the home and within the workplace. These can change depending on the demands of the society or culture we live in.

As Youth Workers we need to understand where inequalities and injustices (small or large) can occur as a result of gender conditioning.

Summarise this discussion by saying that this session helps us to be more aware of the pressures on young people to conform to their gender role.

**Exercise 2: Pink or Blue? The differences for boys and girls (30 minutes)**

Introduce this next exercise by saying that we are going to look at what our culture (the UK) in the 21<sup>st</sup> century says about gender roles.

Say that for this exercise there is going to be a blue team and a pink team.

As it is important that you mix people up randomly you can put equal numbers of pink and blue stickers/badges/scarves/wigs or hats into a bag and ask each participant to take one from the bag (without looking!) Make a mental note if there is any laughter or joking whenever a man draws a pink item.

Ask the groups to think about the colours pink and blue. Why do they think that we associate pink with girls and blue with boys? Listen to the answers and then show the "Pink or Blue?" handout on a slide or give out as a printed sheet.

You can make the point that there is nothing biologically based about pink for girls and blue for boys, but it does illustrate that from birth, we begin to encourage and reward different behaviours and characteristics in boys and girls.

You could also point out that our culture can be very disapproving if, as parents, we don't conform to these traditions. For example, a mother that dressed her son in pink and bought him Barbie dolls would encounter some bewilderment, if not downright hostility. Ask the group why they think that might be and why we might not be as upset by a girl dressed in blue playing with cars?

Many boys and girls experience extreme pressures to "fit" into their ascribed gender role.

The sanctions applied to young people who step outside their gender roles can range from teasing to ridicule, bullying and exclusion. Ask the group for any examples of this from their own experience. You could also remind them of any jokes that were made or laughter at any men in the group who drew a pink badge from the bag.

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### Handout: Pink or Blue?

Each group should be given a sheet of flip chart paper and pens. The pink group should write down all the characteristics that are ascribed to women and girls in our society. It is important to say that for the purpose of this exercise they should write everything down – it doesn't necessarily mean that they agree with it.

The blue group do the same for men and boys.

Emphasise that the groups should write down both positive and negative qualities and characteristics.

After 10 minutes ask for feedback from each group.

You will probably find the following included:

Female:

- Caring
- Motherly
- Domestic
- Unselfish
- Capable of multi-tasking
- Likes shopping
- Home-maker
- Emotional
- Illogical
- Better with words and language
- Physically weaker
- Greater stamina
- Risk averse
- Better at relationships
- Victim of hormones
- Manipulative
- Bitchy
- Better academically
- Relationship-driven
- Better at arts than sciences
- Peace-making
- Less confrontational than men
- Passive
- Etc

Male:

- Ambitious
- Logical
- Single-minded
- Selfish
- Competitive
- Less stamina
- Physically stronger
- Less in touch with emotions
- Better at maths and sciences
- Sporty
- Less complicated
- Adventurous

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- Risk taking
- Inventive
- Success-driven
- Aggressive
- Violent
- Active
- Etc

### Key Learning Point!

It is very important that you make the point that the lists are not what we necessarily believe but are widely held views based on imagined traits. Introduce the idea of **stereotypes** and say they exist not just for male and female but for nationalities (eg French/German/Italian, race or ethnicity, body type (fat/thin) hair colour (dumb blonde/fiery redhead) etc. If you actually try and apply stereotypes to real people they often don't fit at all. Most stereotypes tend to make us feel superior to the person or group being stereotyped.

Summarise this exercise by saying that even when stereotypes appear to be positive, they are still limiting (eg “young women are caring and find careers in the caring professions”)

What happens if a young woman doesn't feel she is “caring” or perhaps has no desire to have children or work in the caring professions? Can she feel comfortable in saying this? Or would she be made to feel different or “unnatural”? Why are so-called “women's jobs” lower paid than men's?

### Exercise 3: What has this got to do with BB? (30 minutes)

Explain that we are now going to look at how to combat stereotypes and challenge discrimination in our BB work.

In order to do that we need to understand the concept of “internalised oppression”. This is when a person or group starts to **believe** the stereotype that society holds about them. For example, a girl who believes she can't grow up to be an astronaut or a racing driver has internalised the oppressive ideas about her gender.

When young black men think they can only achieve recognition through sport or music or in street gangs, they have internalised stereotypes about their race and gender. (Nothing wrong with careers in sport or music, but why not medicine, the law, architecture?)

When we work with children and young people, part of our role is to help that young person think more widely about what they are capable of, and support them in trying out new experiences and reaching their true potential.

Ask the group to think whether they can think of any examples from their own companies where young people “live up” to their stereotypes. (Exaggerated macho behaviour in boys for example.)

Now ask the group to think about programme activities and whether or not we need to offer programmes that are different for mixed groups as opposed to for all male groups.

Listen to the feedback and then pose the following dilemma:

It is most leaders' experience that the programmes for Anchors and Juniors needn't have different elements for boys and girls, but after the age of eleven, girls and boys will have internalised the “approved” behaviours and preferences for their gender. For example, girls might want to have access to a dance studio while boys might prefer football. Or it may be the case that the boys in a boys-only company ask to do a non-traditional activity – how would leaders respond? However, the dilemma for BB leaders is this:

*Do we adopt good practice regarding participation and give young people the activities and resources they ask for, or do we try and challenge some pre-conceptions about what is appropriate for girls and what is appropriate for boys? Is it right to try and widen their perceptions of “acceptable” activities?*

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Listen to the feedback and summarise by saying that while we should be guided by what young people say they want to do at BB, we should at the same time encourage boys and girls who wish to take part in activities that are non-traditional for their gender. We should also be prepared to challenge any teasing that result from a young person's choices.

### **Exercise 4: Practical issues and conclusions (10 minutes)**

#### **Handout: BB Regulations**

Issue the copies of sections 9 and 10 of BB regulations (GA and Amicus). Go through these and take any questions.

#### **Mixed Gender Youth Work Leaflet**

Issue the BB leaflet "Mixed Gender Youth Work" and point out the guidance about when you would need to have female leaders. (Available from <http://www.boys-brigade.org.uk/mixedgenderleaflet.pdf>)

Use the last 10 minutes of the session to allow an open forum for questions/comments and sharing of experience.

#### **Trainers' Tip!**

Don't worry if you think you are not an "expert" in this area. If you don't know the answer to a question or feel unable to comment, just ask the group for ideas. Always remember – there are no special skills needed to work in a mixed sex BB company, only an awareness of gender stereotyping and a commitment to challenge prejudice.

Bring the session to a close by emphasising that there are no special skills or knowledge needed to work in a mixed sex BB group. The focus should be on good youth work practice: relationship building, participation, empowerment and treating people fairly and justly.

Thank people for their contributions and wish them well in their BB work.

End.

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# Youth Work and Gender

## RESOURCES

**Handout: Two Pictures**

**Handout: Pink or Blue?**

**Handout: BB Regulations (Girls Association and Amicus)**



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Handout



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Handout

## Pink or Blue?

Why do we dress baby girls in pink and baby boys in blue? Why is pink considered a feminine colour?



In Western culture, the practice of assigning pink to an individual gender began in the 1920s. From then until the 1940s, pink was considered appropriate for boys because being related to red it was the more masculine and decided colour, while blue was considered appropriate for girls because it was the more delicate and dainty colour, or related to the [Virgin Mary](#).

Since the 1940s, the colours swapped gender! Pink became used for girls and [blue](#) for boys, a practice that has continued into the 21st century.



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Handout

## Brigade Regulations Sections 9 and 10

### SECTION 9 AMICUS

#### Amicus

38 The Organisation shall be called 'Amicus'.

39 The Object of Amicus shall be the advancement of Christ's Kingdom among young people.

40 The Object shall be promoted by Christian teaching, programmes of activity and any such methods which may include sport, adventure and learning as may be recognised by Brigade Council as being of value in the personal development of its members.

#### Membership

41 Membership shall be open to individuals from school year 11 in England (or equivalent in other Regions) to 25 years.

#### Leadership and oversight

42 All members have an equal opportunity to contribute to the running of the group.

43 Leadership arrangements for Amicus shall operate as specified in Brigade Regulations.

44 Amicus groups that operate independently of a Boys' Brigade Company shall be under the authority of a leader in charge who will have undertaken the Boys' Brigade's Captain's Training scheme.

45 Leaders are appointed by the local church on completion of Youth Leader Training, their role being to co-ordinate the group activities and programme but not necessarily to deliver it.

46 Amicus leaders shall be appointed in accordance with Brigade Regulations (ie. Clause 5A, Organisation – Regulations and Procedures)

#### Uniform

47 Uniform is optional and it is up to the group members to decide whether to have any kind of uniform.

#### Brigade Regulations

48 Where Amicus operates and unless specifically stated otherwise, Brigade

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Regulations shall apply.

49 Clause 4 shall apply for setting the upper and lower age boundaries of Amicus members for the purposes of the Age Regulations.

### Activities and sport

50 Amicus members may take part in mixed physical contact sports:

50.1 Where it has been prescribed as permissible by an appropriate governing body, or

50.2 Where none exists, only as might be considered appropriate by a reasonable adult having regard to the comparative age, capability, experience, weight and strength of the participants.

51 Activities and sports shall be open to Amicus members except where:

51.1 Clause 13 above applies, or

51.2 Brigade Regulations prescribe otherwise

51.3 The Brigade Executive have published operational guidance relating to the delivery of services; eg. Health & safety, competitions etc.

### Approval

The Amicus Regulations were approved by Brigade Council on 6 September 2008 to be effective from 1 January 2009 and are a Brigade Regulation pursuant to Article 86 of the Articles of Association.

### Amendment

The Amicus Regulations may be amended by an ordinary resolution of Brigade Council.

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## SECTION 10 GIRLS' ASSOCIATION

### The Girls' Association

1 The Organisation shall be called 'The Girls' Association'.

2 The Object of the Girls' Association shall be the advancement of Christ's Kingdom among Girls.

3 The Object shall be promoted by Christian teaching, programmes of activity and any such methods which may include sport, adventure and learning as may be recognised by Brigade Council as being of value in the personal development of its members.

4 The Girls' Association shall be a uniformed Christian youth organisation.

5 The purpose of the Girls' Association shall be to support those Companies of The Boys' Brigade who wish to work with Girls.

### Girls's Association badge and emblem

6 The Girls' Association shall have its own badge and/or emblem.

7 Leadership arrangements for the Girls' Association shall operate as specified in Brigade Regulations.

8 Girls' Association leaders shall be appointed in accordance with Brigade Regulations (ie. Clause 5A, Organisation – Regulations and Procedures)

### Uniform, badges and emblems

9 Boys' Brigade Uniform Regulations shall apply for Girls' Association members with the exception that in place of The Boys' Brigade badge and/or emblem, the Girls' Association badge and/or emblem shall be used

### Brigade Regulations

10 Where the Girls' Association operates and unless specifically stated otherwise, other Brigade Regulations shall apply.

11 Clause 10 shall apply for the purposes of implementing the Age Regulations for Girls' Association members.

### Awards

12 Girls' Association members may work for all Brigade awards.

### Activities and sport

13 Girls' Association members may take part in physical contact sports with Boys:

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13.1 Where it has been prescribed as permissible by an appropriate governing body, or

13.2 Where none exists, only as might be considered appropriate by a reasonable adult having regard to the comparative age, capability, experience, weight and strength of the participants.

14 Activities and sports shall be open to Girl's Association members except where:

14.1 Clause 13 above applies,

14.2 Brigade Regulations prescribe otherwise, or

14.3 The Brigade Executive have published operational guidance relating to the delivery of services; eg. Health and safety, competitions etc

**Approval**

The Girls' Association Regulations were approved by Brigade Council on 6 September 2008 to be effective from 1 January 2009 and are a Brigade Regulation pursuant to Article 86 of the Articles of Association.

**Amendment**

The Girls' Association Regulations may be amended by an ordinary resolution of Brigade Council.